

# Weydon School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	125254
<b>Local Authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	328324
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–11 June 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Meena Wood HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	1126
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Peter Brinsden
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr John Winter
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 March 2006
<b>School address</b>	Weydon Lane Farnham GU9 8UG
<b>Telephone number</b>	01252 725052
<b>Fax number</b>	01252 717213

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<b>Age group</b>	11–16
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Weydon School is a comprehensive foundation school with specialist status in Science. It has been awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark and the FMSIS Charter Mark, together with the Investors in People accreditation in recognition of the excellence it has attained in these areas. There are low proportions of students from minority ethnic backgrounds, those for whom English is not the first language, and those who are in receipt of free school meals. The most common heritage language spoken is Urdu, as the school draws students from a small local Muslim community. The proportions of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with statements of special educational needs, is similar to that found in most schools. These include behavioural, emotional, social and communication needs, dyslexia, and autistic spectrum disorder. Absence and persistent absence is significantly low. The school has a Respite Centre in the town centre for vulnerable students who receive specialist support within the Centre. The school also has family learning provision on site used by local communities.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

Weydon School is an outstanding school, and as a highly successful school is a popular choice with potential Year 7 entrants. The headteacher and the senior leadership team have provided excellent direction for the school in driving up achievement and standards through developing a culture for learning. They have created a strong ethos for the school which is summed up in its vision statement 'promote respect for ourselves, each other, the environment and the community'. This fundamental aim, along with the excellent pastoral system, builds on students' aspirations and has contributed to students' outstanding personal development and well-being. Students are highly motivated, display exemplary behaviour and enjoy their learning immensely. Attendance is well above national averages. One parent said: 'I feel Weydon is a fantastic school and am privileged to send my son to such a school. The staff are wonderful and really go out of their way to accommodate each child's individual needs and to make the children happy.' Mutually respectful relations between students and their teachers, together with students' excellent attitudes to learning, provide a structured and inspirational learning environment. This has resulted in outstanding achievement and standards, as the majority of students enter the school with above national average levels of attainment, make excellent progress in their learning, and attain consistently high standards. These results are achieved through excellent teaching and careful tracking by teachers and managers of students' completed work, along with the progress they make against their predicted targets. In addition, students receive structured mentoring, and revision classes all year round. The school has developed an outstanding curriculum that is truly responsive to students' abilities and aspirations. This includes high levels of participation in the specialist subjects, and consistently high standards. All students have well-structured opportunities within the curriculum to develop their potential, with excellent opportunities for more-able students to follow AS-level subjects in Year 10. Academic guidance and monitoring of students' progress, through the newly established academic review system, enable all students to work well towards their personal and academic targets. They receive excellent advice and guidance on choosing their GCSE and vocational choices in Year 9 and their progression options for next stages at 16. Teaching and learning are excellent, because teachers inspire and stimulate students to learn and students work hard to achieve their potential. Learning support assistants provide additional help both in and out of lessons, so that students with dyslexia or learning and behavioural difficulties make excellent progress that stretches their potential. The school accepts that it needs to develop a wider range of teaching strategies in lessons to enable more-able students to achieve the highest grades, and that teachers need to have greater consistency in checking all students' learning and progress in lessons. Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher's highly visible leadership is inspirational to staff and students. His relentless drive has moved the school from strength to strength, and has successfully focused his highly committed staff on raising achievement for all students. The school's evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses is excellent, and has clearly addressed weaknesses from the last inspection. This gives the school outstanding capacity to improve further.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Managers and teachers should continue to develop a wider range of teaching strategies in lessons, so that those students with the potential to achieve the highest grades do so.
- Ensure that teachers focus more systematically, through a variety of means, on checking all students' learning and progress in lessons.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 1

Students enter school with significantly above average prior attainment, and leave school in Year 11 having made outstanding progress, and attaining GCSE standards that are exceptionally and consistently high. Students make relatively better progress in science and mathematics than in English, but overall the trend is an improving one, with current Year 11 students predicted to achieve even higher standards and levels of achievement in English. The school has recognised that boys do not appear to make as good progress as girls, and has put in place effective strategies that address this imbalance. For instance, in English, the choice of the GCSE set novel is intended to engage boys more in their learning. The school, having recognised that a proportion of highly able students are not stimulated by GCSE courses in English and mathematics, is addressing this through additional mentoring and General Certificate of Education (GCE) AS accreditation. Students attain exceptionally high standards in two or more GCSE A\* to C sciences and modern foreign languages. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those with English as an additional language, make excellent progress.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

Students' enjoyment of school is seen in their excellent attendance, and the high participation rates in all school activities. Relationships are highly positive; students are supportive of each other and extremely proud of their school. One student captured the views of many others when she described the 'happy attitude around the school', where 'everyone knows everyone' and 'there is no hatred towards anyone'. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, and they express their thoughts and feelings confidently and sensitively. Students take pride in organising fund-raising events and put much energy into raising substantial sums for charities. This care and concern for others is also reflected in their involvement in the recent Rock Challenge event held jointly with the local special school. Students demonstrate healthy lifestyles through regular exercise, and a considerable number take part in extra-curricular sports activities. Most make sensible choices about the food they eat at school and say that this has had a positive impact on their diet outside school. Students' excellent behaviour and aspirations contribute considerably to the high levels of progress that they make in lessons. Students report that they feel comfortable in approaching members of staff if they have any concerns, because 'if you have a problem, the school will deal with it'. They welcome structured opportunities that develop self-confidence, social skills and leadership qualities. For example, student council members contribute to teaching and learning observations, and influenced the design of the new science buildings. Additionally, students make an outstanding contribution to the school community through taking on a range of responsibilities such as positions as school councillors or prefects, or participating in school productions. Older students provide impressive role models as 'peer supporters' to younger ones. Students appreciate that the school consults them about all aspects of their education. They are justifiably proud of the impact that the 'awesome student voice' has had on the school, for example in the improvements to the outside environment. All these opportunities, together with good computing skills, work experience and the high standards which they attain in basic skills, prepare students as confident, mature individuals, and ready for next stages in further education and training.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 1

Students come to lessons highly motivated and eager to learn. The very good relationships between teachers and students enhance students' confidence and enjoyment of learning. Teachers ask them challenging questions, often encouraging students to think for themselves and to discuss their findings with classmates. Students work conscientiously on assessed class work and on home-study assignments set at regular intervals. They are justifiably proud of their efforts, as the written and spoken standards of the majority of students' work are excellent. Students talk confidently about what they have learned, and transfer their knowledge to other contexts. In the most outstanding lessons, learning is lively and inspiring. In a Year 10 GCE AS-level French lesson, students clearly articulated their thoughts in French on the use of mobile phones with confidence and appropriate humour. Teachers use good subject knowledge, set high expectations for students, and mostly use open-ended and targeted questioning and other activities to check all students' understanding. For example, in one lesson, students demonstrated a thorough understanding of probability by means of a whole-group dice-rolling task. This enabled them to make outstanding progress, not only with numbers but also in literacy. While the school encourages teachers to use different means to assess students' learning and progress during lessons, this is not always consistent, and so some students are unsure of what they have learned or the accuracy of their answers during tasks set. In some lessons, higher-attaining students are not given sufficiently challenging work or opportunities to develop their independent learning skills in order to achieve the highest grades. Learning support assistants work closely during lessons with students who have behavioural and moderate learning difficulties and those with English as an additional language, and this, together with additional support given to students outside lessons, ensures that they make outstanding progress.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 1

The school's outstanding curriculum is continually reviewed and developed to match students' interests so that all students are motivated to succeed. The recently introduced 'theme days' provide valuable opportunities for students of all mixed ages to work together through cross-curricular links and cultural activities, thus developing team-working skills.

The school's specialism in science is making a particularly strong contribution to the increasing number of opportunities for students to gain a range of certification. A condensed curriculum in Years 7 and 8 ensures that students have a sound base on which to build their future studies. The school ensures that the few students who enter the school with low reading levels are given additional support to further develop their literacy skills. Students in Years 10 and 11 value the personalised curriculum. This includes AS levels for gifted and talented students, applied GCSEs and Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) courses, with some students attending vocational courses at local colleges. Effective study support is given to students who might otherwise find it too difficult to manage the Year 10 and 11 curriculum. Personal, social and health education timetabled lessons include teaching of the citizenship curriculum. While students develop excellent knowledge and understanding of a wide range of issues, which prepares them for their future lives, there is not always a sufficiently clear understanding by students of the difference between the two subjects. Students benefit

enormously from the inspiring range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities, including visits, a school band and photography, as well as a varied programme of physical activities for both boys and girls, for which the school rightly merits its Sportsmark award.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The care and support given to all students, but especially the more vulnerable ones, are outstanding and contribute greatly to their achievement and enjoyment. The school is inclusive, as one parent said: 'I have two children with completely different requirements educationally, and Weydon is meeting the needs of both of them very well.' Robust and effective procedures are in place for child protection, safeguarding of students, and dealing with bullying and the very few racist incidents that occur. The school's commitment to students' welfare is evident in the excellent support that it provides, its strong links with a wide range of other agencies, and the high levels of parental involvement. Support for children in public care is excellent and is personalised through careful mentoring by senior managers. The Respite Centre is excellent in its support of those students at risk of exclusion and of those who self-refer, as the crisis referral unit draws on expertise from counsellors and other support agencies. Consequently, there have been no permanent exclusions at the school since the centre opened in September 2006. The advice and guidance on curriculum options that students receive in Years 9 and 11 lead them to make informed choices based on their best interests. Academic monitoring is in place, and students have a good understanding of the levels they are at and the targets they are working towards. Procedures for assessing progress have improved significantly since the last inspection, and there is outstanding practice. The recently introduced system of tracking and review by senior managers of students' levels and progress towards targets includes scrutiny of students' work through the on-line home-study programme. This is playing an important part in ensuring that all students make outstanding progress, as underachieving students are quickly identified and support is swiftly given by senior managers; other interventions, such as the daily coursework clinic and the homework club run by associate staff, provide good guidance and support for students who need help. The school has recognised that in order to improve their guidance even further they will need to modify the academic review and assessment system, notably, the moderation of curriculum marking, ensuring greater consistency across areas and secondly, guaranteeing that parents fully understand and can access this system.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

The headteacher's outstanding leadership, strong determination and clear vision have resulted in a continuously improving culture of learning and achievement. His senior leadership team share his commitment and enthusiasm, and through their excellent skills and expertise have together achieved the school's aims of 'realising the potential of all of our students by striving for excellence in teaching and learning'. Managers set challenging targets for students' standards in Year 9 and at GCSE, and they have met or exceeded these. Managers and teachers work well as a cohesive team and ensure effective sharing of teaching and learning practice, for instance through the excellent Champions of Learning programme. The performance management system uses student performance data and information from lesson observations. This leads to good professional development for staff, and has contributed to a significant change in the school ethos, with staff meetings increasingly focused on sharing of good practice in learning and

assessment. The school's self-evaluation process is collaborative and analytical, and provides an excellent account of the school's strengths and of the areas where the school needs to improve. For instance, evaluation of the lesson observation process has identified an insufficient focus on students' learning and progress in lessons, and managers have rightly incorporated changes to reflect this. Curriculum development plans reflect this rigorous approach, and contain a strong focus on raising achievement and standards. The work of associate staff is carefully planned and linked to school improvement priorities, and cover supervisors ensure continuity in students' learning and provide good administrative support for curriculum areas. Governance is excellent, as governors are knowledgeable and fully involved in the school's relentless drive to raise achievement and standards, as evidenced through a rigorous self-evaluation report. The school provides excellent value for money; it has successfully accelerated students' standards, while increasing the school roll and managing building works for the state of art new science facilities. Classroom accommodation, however, is cramped in some parts of the school, which has a negative impact on the quality of students' learning experiences. The school contributes well to community cohesion through, for instance, delivering family learning classes and many other activities, and is beginning to evaluate the impact of the provision on students' personal development. Parents and carers are highly supportive of the school, appreciating especially the quality of education and care provided for their children.



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## Annex A

**Inspection judgements**

<b>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</b>	<b>School Overall</b>
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**Overall effectiveness**

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

**Achievement and standards**

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

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<sup>1</sup>Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

24 June 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Weydon School, Farnham, GU9 8UG

Following our recent visit to inspect your school, I am now writing to let you know about our findings. We would like to thank you for your contributions to the inspection. Thank you in particular to those who gave up time to talk to us. It was a pleasure meeting with you and listening to you talk about your best pieces of work that you presented to us in small groups. Your school is an outstanding school. We enjoyed sitting in your lessons, and we were very impressed by your high levels of motivation and keen attitudes to learning, and observed that you enjoy your learning immensely. Your behaviour is exemplary, and we observed you to be respectful and polite young students in lessons and around the school. You are a credit to the school and to your local community. You informed us that you feel safe in the school, and benefit from the excellent choice of courses, as well as the wide range of extra-curricular activities the school has to offer such as sports, visits and the school band. Listening to you play and observing your rehearsals was a joy! You have made outstanding progress in your studies through your conscientious attitudes and the excellent teaching and support you receive from the school. Your teachers know you very well, and plan lessons that stimulate and inspire you. As one of you reported, 'I think the school and teachers are brilliant - I enjoy everything, including all the activities after school!' We have asked the school to help you to improve your results even more, through managers and teachers working to help more of you achieve the highest grades, and teachers checking your learning and progress more closely during lessons. You can help by letting your teachers know when you do not fully understand a learning point or when you feel that you are not sufficiently challenged in your learning. We hope that all of you will do well and, with the help of the school, realise your future ambitions.

Yours faithfully

Meena Wood

Her Majesty's Inspector