

Woodlands School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112999
Local Authority	City Of Derby
Inspection number	338071
Inspection dates	16-17 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Gwen Coates HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11-18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1191
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	185
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ian Stewart
Headteacher	Mr Alan Brady
Date of previous school inspection	29-30 November 2006
School address	Blenheim Drive Allestree, Derby Derbyshire DE22 2LW
Telephone number	01332 551921
Fax number	01332 553869
Email address	headteacher@woodlands.derby.sch.uk

Age group	11-18
Inspection date(s)	16-17 September 2009
Inspection number	338071

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 47 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of students. They observed the school's work, and looked at students' work, the school improvement plan, faculty self-evaluations, school policies and safeguarding documentation. Approximately 270 parental questionnaires, 330 student questionnaires and 40 staff questionnaires were completed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the barriers to improving the achievement of all students and particular groups of students
- how effective have been strategies to improve teaching and their impact on raising achievement
- the extent to which the curriculum has improved; whether it now caters for the needs of all students and impacts positively on their outcomes
- the extent to which pastoral and academic support are effectively integrated
- how effectively the school promotes equal opportunity and community cohesion.

Information about the school

Woodlands School is an oversubscribed 11-18 mixed comprehensive school situated in Allestree, which is in north west Derby. Most students come from the immediate neighbourhood with a small proportion coming from the inner city. Most students are of White British heritage with a small number of other students coming from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average, although the proportion who have a statement of special educational needs is well above the national average. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is below the national average. Woodlands School has enhanced resource facilities for hearing impaired students of whom there are 16 across all years of the school.

Woodlands School has gained Investor in People, Artsmark Silver and Sports Mark awards. It is designated as a High Performing Specialist School by the Specialist School and Academies Trust and is enhanced by specialist technology, mathematics and computing status.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Woodlands School is a satisfactory school with good and some outstanding features. Its particular strength is in the care, guidance and support it provides for its students which results in students' good personal development and well-being. Students feel safe in school; their behaviour is generally good; they understand how to lead healthy lives; they make good, and sometimes outstanding, contributions to their community and they are well prepared for their future economic well-being with above average attendance at school and above average levels of attainment at the end of Year 11.

Students' achievement is satisfactory because they make the expected amount of progress. This is because:

- although much teaching is good, in general it is not matched closely enough to students' different capabilities to promote a fast rate of progress
- assessment to support learning is satisfactory
- the curriculum is not sufficiently broad and well planned to meet the needs of all students
- systems to monitor students' progress and to take action when they underachieve are not well developed.

The school is well led and managed by the headteacher and his senior leadership team. Together they have been successful in embedding ambition in the school so that teachers are committed to raising standards further and have high expectations of all students. They, together with the governing body, have been successful in driving improvement so that issues identified in the last inspection report, for example sharing best practice in teaching, have been thoughtfully introduced. The issues for improvement identified in this report have been accurately identified as priorities in the current school improvement plan and in the reports of the school improvement partner. As a result, the school has good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Broaden the curriculum and ensure that it is planned well to allow the individual needs of all students to be fully met.
- Plan lessons so that learning activities match students' different capabilities through:

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

- the more systematic use of assessment data
 - a review of interim goals that provide feedback on what students need to do to improve their work.
- Develop the existing assessment and monitoring system by:
- more frequent recording of assessments so that students at risk of underachieving are identified quickly and planned interventions take place early
 - aggregating and analysing assessment data to provide management information to support the monitoring of teaching and of learning.

About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

The attainment of students at the end of Year 11 is above the national average and this has been the case over the last three years. In 2009, according to the school's own data, 72% of students gained five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C, with 59% gaining this figure inclusive of mathematics and English. All students entered gained at least one GCSE at grades A* to G. The attainment of individual groups of students, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, reflects a similar picture.

Students are making expected progress given their starting points. Students' learning and progress in lessons observed during the inspection was often good but this is not yet supported by evidence of sustained good progress in the longer term. The quality of learning and the progress made by students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good and this is particularly the case for those with a statement of special educational needs and students whose hearing is impaired.

Students know how to ask for help and are confident that issues raised with staff are dealt with promptly. Bullying incidents are rare and the school's incidents log shows that when they do occur they are dealt with seriously. The vast majority of students are polite and sensible. Movement around the school at break and lunchtimes is orderly. Behaviour in most lessons is good and this contributes well to the positive learning ethos. No student has been permanently excluded in recent years. There are good participation rates in sporting activities.

All students are encouraged to take on positions of responsibility and many participate, for example, in peer mentoring schemes. Through the house and school councils, students are able to make their views known and have been active in seeking improvement. Students contribute well to the local community and have an excellent record of fund raising for local, national and international charities. They develop an appreciation of the interdependent nature of the global community

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

through their links with schools in Uganda and Gambia. Students display a clear sense of right and wrong and understand the nature of cultural diversity in the local and wider community. In this school, where most students are of White British background, a number of students from minority ethnic groups hold positions of responsibility, including that of head girl.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The variety of activities in lessons and their pace are good. This engages students' interest and as a result most are willing and able to participate and take learning seriously. There are good relationships between students and their teachers. Language development across the school, especially in respect of subject specific technology, is good. Teachers' have good subject specialist knowledge. There is good use of interactive white boards to facilitate learning. However, planning lacks sufficient focus on matching work to students' different abilities and in many lessons, the challenge in work is not always high enough for more able students and can be too demanding for those students who find learning more difficult. Assessment for learning strategies is not yet used effectively in all lessons. Students, even if they know their target grades or levels, are not always aware of what they need to do to improve in order to reach them. Teachers' management of behaviour in lessons is generally good. However, the school is aware of some inconsistencies in this area and is working hard to ensure that no disruption occurs in any lesson.

A broad based curriculum is provided in Years 7 to 9 that is clear and well organised.

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Students in Years 10 and 11 have a mainly academic curriculum, although an increasing number of vocational courses are being made available, as recommended in the previous inspection report. The school's specialist technology, mathematics and computing status ensures a strong influence on the range of courses on offer. Accelerated courses, for example in modern foreign languages, are available for the more academically able students. A number of students have a personalised curriculum to meet their needs, for example in off-site vocational courses that involve effective partnerships with other colleges and schools. However, because these students often miss out on lessons in core subjects while studying off-site, they have to catch up on the learning they miss.

Close work with external agencies and the effectiveness of in-school support ensures that the needs of all students are met at the highest level. Provision for minority groups, including those for whom English is an additional language, looked after children, those whose hearing is impaired, and those returning to school following fixed term exclusions, is extremely well managed. There is excellent support by adults other than teachers for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. For example, support for those students with hearing impairments is outstanding and ensures they take a full and active role in all aspects of school life. Transitional arrangements to support Year 6 students in feeder primary schools are excellent and this is confirmed by very positive comments from parents of current and older students as well as by comments from students themselves. The well structured house system strengthens the pastoral support system. The school is fully justified in its judgement that the quality of care, guidance and support for learners is outstanding and this confirms that Woodlands School really is 'a place where people matter'.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

The effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and senior leadership team have a clear vision for the school and ensure that all staff have high expectations for pupils and are committed to bringing about improvement. The senior leaders of the school have taken effective action to improve those areas identified in the previous inspection report. For example, they have done a lot to develop teaching, through the sharing of good practice, and have established a good, developmental culture within faculties. This is enhanced by the very effective input of, and impact on, professional development of the school's specialist technology, mathematics and computing status activities. As a result, the

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

professional development programme for staff is good. The introduction of learning walks has engaged heads of faculties and is building a culture of effective monitoring of teaching.

Improvement planning at whole school level is good. The school has identified accurately its main improvement priorities and has clear lines of accountability and regular review in place. For example, it identifies subjects that are underperforming and takes appropriate action. However, the present process of target setting for individual students is not sufficiently rigorous to bring about the rapid improvements in achievement that the school clearly identifies as a major priority in its improvement programme.

The governing body provides effective challenge and support for the school. It is well informed and knowledgeable and fulfils its statutory duties fully. Meticulous processes for the safeguarding of all students are in place and good value for money is apparent.

There is good communication with parents and many commented on how effective the school is at responding to their concerns and taking prompt action as appropriate. The school's partnership with other organisations and external agencies to promote the learning and well-being of students is good with outstanding features. In its specialist technology, mathematics and computing role it has highly productive partnerships with local schools and colleges and, in particular, with its network of feeder primary schools, where it is active in the professional development of staff.

The performance and experience of individual groups of students indicate how effectively the school actively promotes equal opportunities and tackles discrimination. The school makes a strong contribution to community cohesion both within the school, in its immediate neighbourhood and internationally through its work with schools in Uganda and Gambia.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Sixth form

The achievement of sixth form students is satisfactory because they make the progress expected of them. Significant numbers progress to higher education and the number of students leaving school who are not in employment, education or training is low. Sixth form students make a strong contribution to the life of the school and its wider communities, for example, by taking part in buddy reading schemes in feeder primary schools. There is a full tutorial programme in place that supports well students' personal development and economic well-being. The curriculum provides a wide range of GCE AS and A2 courses and specialist technology, mathematics and computing status is having a strong influence on the range and take-up of specialist subjects in the sixth form. However, there are no vocational courses or level 2 courses. Pastoral support is good but target setting and the tracking and monitoring of students' progress are inconsistent across faculties. The school has an accurate view of the strengths and areas for development in the sixth form. A new head of sixth form has been appointed recently. Plans are in place to improve students' outcomes.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

Views of parents and carers

Most parents were very positive in their questionnaire responses which confirm their strong commitment to the school. Their judgements and comments reflect closely the issues identified by inspection. For example, that the major strengths of the school are in relation to the care, guidance and support provided for students and in their resulting personal development and well-being. Areas that concern them are some inconsistencies in teaching, specifically in relation to behaviour management and in the curriculum. Inspection evidence supports concerns about teaching and the curriculum and these are noted in this report. Behaviour management observed during the inspection was judged to be good overall, although inspectors are aware of inconsistencies that the school is working hard to remove.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Woodlands School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 322 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1185 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	108	33	205	63	6	2	3	1
The school keeps my child safe	108	33	201	61	5	2	2	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	102	31	184	56	16	5	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	108	33	177	54	10	3	4	1
The teaching is good at this school	91	28	206	63	7	2	2	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	68	21	195	60	39	12	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	55	17	216	66	30	9	3	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	76	23	184	56	14	4	5	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	90	28	194	59	16	5	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	57	17	197	60	33	10	9	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	57	17	192	59	31	9	5	2
The school is led and managed effectively	103	31	188	57	13	4	3	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	123	38	182	56	7	2	2	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>the following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.



18 September 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Woodlands School, Derby DE22 2LW

During the inspection of Woodlands School, we observed many lessons and met many students individually and in groups. Thank you for this. We judged the school to be satisfactory overall but with good and some outstanding features.

The outstanding features are the care, guidance and support it offers to every one of you. As a result, you told us that you feel safe in school, your behaviour is generally good, you understand how to lead healthy lives, and you make good and often outstanding contributions to the school and its wider community. The school ensures that you are well prepared for your future economic well-being and this is confirmed by the above average levels of attainment at GCSE you gain at the end of Year 11. The school is well led and managed by your headteacher and his senior team and all staff working in the school are very committed to your well-being.

We judged the progress you make between entering the school and completing Year 11 to be satisfactory and have asked the school to improve this so that it becomes good. Your headteacher and his senior team already have this as a major priority for the improvement of the school but we have identified a number of strategies for them to take in order to hasten this improvement. These include:

- broadening the curriculum at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form and ensuring that its structure allows the individual needs of all of you to be fully met
- planning lessons so that they meet your individual learning needs and ensuring you know how to improve on your work and meet your target grades and levels
- developing the existing school assessment and monitoring system so that if you underachieve the school can identify this early and plan appropriate support to bring you back on track.

You can assist the school by continuing to attend regularly, by behaving well in all your lessons and by taking an active role in achieving your learning targets.

With best wishes for your future
Gwen Coates HMI

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.