

Woodfield School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125481
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	340776
Inspection dates	15–16 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Sarah Mascall

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	119
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	19
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Selby
Headteacher	Sharon Lawrence
Date of previous school inspection	20 March 2007
School address	Sunstone Grove Merstham Redhill RH1 3PR
Telephone number	01737 642623
Fax number	01737 642775
Email address	info@woodfield.surrey.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 15 lessons and observed 13 teachers, spending the large majority of their time looking at learning. Meetings were held with governors, staff and students. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at its procedures and policies for safeguarding children, records of students' progress and the 58 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

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

- how well the school uses information about its students to ensure that all make the progress of which they are capable
- the effectiveness of the curriculum in preparing students for life when they leave school and supporting them in adopting healthy lifestyles
- the effectiveness of leadership and management in post-16 in ensuring that there is a clear overview of provision.

Information about the school

Woodfield School caters for students with a wide range of special educational needs. All have statements of special educational needs for learning difficulties. Many have associated difficulties, including autism and Asperger syndrome, behavioural, social and emotional difficulties, physical difficulties and language needs. A very small minority of students speak English as an additional language. There are a small number of students who are in the care of the local authority.

Sixth form students attend the Woodfield Centre. Many have language and communication needs as well as learning difficulties. The centre takes students from all over Surrey who are not yet ready to make the transition to college.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Main findings

Woodfield is a good school. The school's ethos is very much one of care and support and it is successful in providing a safe, positive environment in which students thrive and develop. It places considerable importance on ensuring all students, regardless of their special needs and backgrounds, make at least good progress in their learning and personal development. As a result of the excellent care, guidance and support, students grow into sensible, mature young people who are well prepared for life when they leave school. Students in the sixth form benefit from excellent provision which is extremely well led and enables them to make outstanding progress in their learning and development.

Students in Years 7 to 11 achieve well, particularly in improving their reading and number skills. Staff are continually seeking ways to improve and extend students' skills. They do this through a thorough analysis of students' progress which they use to raise expectations of what students can achieve. Through good monitoring, staff know all students very well and use this information effectively in their teaching to ensure the needs of individuals are met. The school, through these very strong systems, is very successful in promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination. Students have a clear understanding of their targets, both for learning and personal development, and are frequently reminded of these in lessons. While there are examples of good practice throughout the school, not all teachers make clear to students how well they are doing in their work and what they need to do to improve further.

Students are very positive about school and many commented on how much they enjoy attending. They are very much part of the decision making processes within the school and are proud of their achievements in bringing about change. The school council challenges behaviour in school and as a result, behaviour is good and students say they feel extremely safe. Students talk enthusiastically about their involvement in the local community and how they have helped others. The school actively involves parents and carers in their children's learning through a variety of ways, such as ensuring they are aware of their children's targets and through homework activities. The excellent partnerships with outside agencies, other local schools and colleges do much to promote students' learning and well-being. This is reflected in students' involvement with other schools and the very good range of opportunities they have for work experience. There is very good practice throughout the school to ensure students are safe and high priority is given to students' well-being. Occasionally, though, the school's policies do not always reflect the strong practice that exists.

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Good leadership and management have enabled the school to develop well since its last inspection. Many aspects of provision have been improved, particularly the role of governors and the school's use of data to bring about improvements. Self-evaluation processes are now strong and effectively involve governors and staff. There is a strong commitment on the part of staff and governors to continue to improve further. As a result the school is well placed to develop further and has good capacity to improve. Leaders have accurately identified key areas for improvement, particularly in subjects. The school improvement plan, however, lacks sharp and measurable criteria by which governors and other stakeholders can effectively evaluate its impact.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve further the setting of measurable whole-school targets so that staff, governors and other stakeholders are able to challenge even more effectively the progress the school is making in improving the quality of its provision.
- Develop a more consistent approach to the use of assessment so that students are clearer about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.
- Ensure all policies reflect the very good practice that exists in the school.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Students are enthusiastic learners who clearly enjoy school. They talk positively about their lessons and all the activities they are involved in. In class they concentrate well and are keen to participate in discussions and practical activities. In a Year 7 mathematics lesson, for example, students listened carefully to explanations about weighing and were keen to use the interactive whiteboard to move objects to check whether they were heavier or lighter. Students make particularly good progress in number work because there are high expectations of what they can achieve and targets for learning are very challenging. These high expectations are also in place for reading and students are confident to attempt new words and activities. They are very patient with each other and supportive, even when others make mistakes when reading out loud. Where lessons are practical, such as a Year 9 lesson on myths, students are keen to be involved in acting out scenes and show good recall of previous lessons. Students enjoy recording their work and many write detailed pieces of work. The school has recognised that writing is an area for development and is in the process of setting more challenging targets for students to help them improve. By the time they leave school students have gained a range of accreditation including Entry Level qualifications and Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) qualifications and are well prepared for life when they leave school.

The school council plays an important role in the school and is a force to be reckoned with. Students are very clear about what is right and wrong and have been actively involved in addressing bullying. They say that there are now only a small number of incidents of bullying and inappropriate behaviour. Students value the opportunities they are given to work in the local community, such as helping at an old people's home and a

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local nursery. Their awareness of the plight of others less well off than themselves is very acute and they have worked hard to raise money for many charities. There is great enthusiasm for all the sporting activities they can do. Students are also very positive about the quality of school dinners and how healthy they are. They are very aware about what foods are good for them and were horrified at the inspector's suggestion that they might want more chips!

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	*
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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?

Teaching is well focused on the needs of individuals. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to work with individuals and small groups. This ensures that all students, regardless of their learning difficulties, make the progress they are capable of. Lessons are often very carefully planned and good use is made of resources to make learning interesting and active. For example, in an English lesson, students had individual packs

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

* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

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of tasks to work on. They worked independently and responded well to questions about their different topics. Teachers' good subject knowledge is reflected in subjects such as design and technology. Year 9 students had drawn up clear plans for designing a pod and showed good knowledge of how to use a file properly. Good quality assessment ensures that work is well matched to ability. Where students are given verbal feedback about their progress, teachers do not always record this so that they and the students can refer to it at a later date.

The school is continually looking to improve the curriculum. Good planning for learning in Years 7 to 9 ensures that students have a broad range of experiences. In Years 10 and 11 the school is trialling a new curriculum that offers a wider range of activities and a more vocational approach to learning. Staff are effective in ensuring that the curriculum supports individuals. For example, a Year 11 student who is struggling with attending school is being given more opportunities to experience work placements. Enrichment activities are very good and the majority of students take part in the many clubs that are offered. Excellent cross-curricular links have been developed in literacy and these are in the process of being replicated for numeracy and information and communication technology.

The care and welfare of students is given the highest priority. The excellent partnership between all agencies ensures that the care of each student is of the highest quality. Students are well supported by specialists such as speech and therapy and counselling professionals. Such expertise contributes very effectively to students' well-being.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The drive and ambition of senior managers to ensure that Woodfield provides high quality education and support for its students is shared by all staff. Senior managers are very clear about their roles and know the students and staff very well. Subject managers analyse students' progress and use this information to provide clear reports that identify how their subjects can improve further. This information is shared with all staff and governors and ensures that all have a clear understanding of the progress made by students. It confirms that no groups of pupils underachieve. Close tracking of provision for every student ensures equality of opportunity for all. Rigorous self-evaluation provides a clear understanding of how well the school is doing. The school has taken quick action to address identified weaknesses in teaching.

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Governors have developed their role well and are far better informed about students' progress. They are effective, through the teaching and learning committee, in challenging the school to raise standards. Governors are unable to make rigorous checks on the progress being made in tackling the priorities in the school improvement plan because it lacks measurable targets.

Procedures for safeguarding and child protection are good. Where there are concerns about a child, action is taken and excellent use made of other agencies to support students and their families. A few policies do not reflect the good practice that exists. For example, the policy for preventing bullying does not detail all the initiatives the school takes or its stance on issues such as internet bullying.

The school works closely with local schools and businesses to support and promote its work. Students have a good awareness of global issues and show considerable empathy for others in cases where disaster has struck. The school's plan for developing community cohesion further is appropriately linked to its curriculum provision, particularly through personal, social and health education.

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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
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

Excellent leadership and management have enabled the sixth form to develop and improve since the last inspection. There are very high expectations for what students will achieve and this is reflected in the very challenging targets that are set for each individual. As a result students make excellent progress. They achieve very well in Entry-level accreditation and other awards. The excellent curriculum ensures that very

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good attention is given to students' literacy and numeracy skills as well as work and healthy living skills. Students gain experience in attending college and work placements and develop into confident, mature young people. They show a great level of pride in their work. This was very evident in a design and technology lesson, where students were making picnic tables for the sixth form patio and were keen to show off their work. They enthusiastically put forward their own ideas and solutions for making improvements to their work. Students show a very good understanding of keeping safe and wear correct safety equipment and use tools sensibly.

Students benefit from excellent teaching that is lively and imaginative, as seen in a mathematics lesson where students were learning to measure using metre lengths. The teacher's use of 'magic' in making a rope get longer and shorter and the use of mathematical language was very successful in holding students' attention and in extending their skills. Students are very involved in their learning and in evaluating how well they have done.

The care guidance and support provided to students is excellent. Every aspect of learning is matched to their individual needs. College and work placements are considered carefully to ensure students are rightly placed. The excellent links with parents and carers are reflected in the very high level of positive feedback from the inspection questionnaire. Excellent use is made of local partnerships and other agencies to support students. Very good attention is paid to safeguarding and there is a strong focus on ensuring risk assessments of activities are in place.

The very high expectations of the manager are reflected in all aspects of provision. There is excellent monitoring of students' learning and this is evaluated continuously. There is very good awareness of what the sixth form is good at and what it needs to do to improve. Resources are managed extremely well to support learning.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	1
The quality of provision in the sixth form	1
Leadership and management of the sixth form	1

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents and carers are very positive about the school. Several commented on the progress their children had made since being at Woodfield. A number felt that their children had made especially good progress in their personal and social skills. One parent commented that her daughter had settled into school 'well and is happy for the first time. She is more confident and gets on well with teachers.' Another commented on the fact that staff 'make you so welcome and deal with any

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issues straight away.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

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

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 58 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 119 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	33	57	20	34	1	2	3	5
The school keeps my child safe	35	60	22	38	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	30	52	23	40	3	5	2	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	29	50	25	43	1	2	2	3
The teaching is good at this school	29	50	25	43	2	3	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	26	45	28	48	2	3	2	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	22	38	33	57	2	3	0	0
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)	30	52	23	40	2	3	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	31	53	24	41	0	0	2	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	29	50	26	45	2	3	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	21	36	33	57	1	2	3	5
The school is led and managed effectively	31	53	22	38	3	5	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	37	64	17	29	1	2	2	3

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 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	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

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

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>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. 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 pupil's 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.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



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18 March 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Woodfield School, Merstham, Surrey RH1 3PR.

Thank you very much for being so kind and friendly when we visited your school. We really enjoyed talking to you and seeing how hard you work. We found that your school is a good school. You work very hard in lessons and do well in your learning. It was good to see how happy you are in school and that you feel completely safe. The school is very good at making sure you are exceptionally well cared for. We were pleased that you have an excellent understanding of keeping healthy and it was good to hear about all the different sports and activities you are involved in. We were very impressed with the school council and the very important role it plays in school. Your teachers know you well and help you learn a lot of things. The planning for what you will learn is good and the school is going to make sure that the work in Years 10 and 11 is even more exciting than it is now.

The school is well led and we have asked the staff to do some things to make the school even better. We have asked the leaders to set targets to show how well they are doing in improving the school. We have also asked the teachers to make sure you understand how well you are doing and what you need to do to improve. Lastly the school needs to make sure that the policies it has reflect all the good work it is doing.

You have a lot to be proud of about your school.

We wish you all well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Mascal

Lead inspector

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