

# Woodfield School

Malmes Croft, Leverstock Green, Hemel Hempstead, HP3 8RL

**Inspection dates** 6–7 November 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Students make good progress over time, particularly in English and mathematics. In addition, they make significant strides in improving their communication skills.
- Children attending the Early Years Foundation Stage make excellent progress. This prepares them for learning and enables them to move on successfully to the next stage of their education.
- The sixth form is good. All students are prepared very well for the next stage of their lives beyond school.
- Teaching is good. Teachers make sure the work is hard enough and at the right level of difficulty for each student. This means that students make good progress towards their individual targets.
- Students' behaviour is outstanding. This is as a result of the highly effective care and support that staff provide. In all lessons, students are highly motivated and want to do their best.
- Students say they feel safe and happy at the school, as well as at the off-site provision they attend weekly. This is confirmed by their parents and carers and the school's own records.
- Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and her senior leadership team have improved teaching and students' achievement.
- The governing body is highly supportive of the school, knows it very well and understands what is needed to improve it further.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is insufficient sharing of good practice in lessons in order to make all learning creative and exciting.
- The checking of how well students are learning in lessons is inconsistent.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 12 lessons, taught by nine different teachers and one lesson taught by a teaching assistant. Five of the lessons were observed jointly with either the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- A meeting was held with a small group of sixth form students. Meetings were also held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, others with posts of responsibility and the Chair of the Governing Body. A telephone conversation was held with a representative of the local authority.
- The lead inspector took account of 20 responses to the online questionnaire Parent View, the school's own recent parents and carers' questionnaire, 28 responses to the staff questionnaire and the recent school council's student questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the school's practice and looked at a range of documentation, including the school's checks on how well it is doing and its improvement planning, information on pupils' progress, documents used by senior leaders to check the school's work, governing body documentation, and records relating to attendance, behaviour and safeguarding. An inspector attended the weekly parents' coffee morning and listened to three pupils read.

## Inspection team

James Bowden, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lynne Thorogood

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Woodfield School provides for students with severe learning difficulties. Many have additional complex needs including autistic spectrum disorders, epilepsy, physical and sensory impairments. Many also need regular medical intervention.
- Currently there are twice as many boys as girls. The majority of students are of White British background, with a minority of Pakistani or Asian British background. A few are from families where English is not the home language. All students have a statement of their special educational needs. A very few are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The majority of students are either in Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4 or post-16. Younger students join at different times during the year.
- The proportion of students at Woodfield eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children in local authority care and children from service families, is above the national average. Currently there are very few in local authority care.
- The school uses alternative off-site provision for one half-day per week at West Herts College Dacorum campus for small groups of Key Stage 4 and post-16 students.
- In 2012, the school achieved Autism accreditation.
- A new headteacher was appointed in September 2012.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency of the quality of teaching and make it all as good as the best by making sure that:
  - there is effective sharing of good practice in lessons in order to make all learning creative and exciting
  - there is greater consistency in checking effectively how well students are learning in lessons.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Attainment on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1 is low as a result of children's complex needs. Attainment remains below average in all year groups. However, in relation to their starting points, students, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds, make good progress and achieve well, whatever their abilities, in the main school and the sixth form.
- Effective support for all students means there are no significant differences in the rates of progress made by those with different levels of learning difficulties, boys and girls, the few who speak English as an additional language or those supported by pupil premium funding. Students known to be eligible for free school meals and the very few looked after by local authorities achieve as well as others. Extra support and resources helps these students make good progress, in line with their peers.
- Good progress is made in the key skills of literacy and numeracy, which are reinforced successfully in lessons. Students make significant strides in their communication skills, as a result of the consistent approach by staff use of visual communication symbols. A few of the older more-able students know how to sound out letters and groups of letters to help them in their reading. In addition, students make good progress in information and communication technology skills, particularly in Key Stage 3, as well as in their physical development throughout the school.
- At the end of Year 11, all students continue their education in the school sixth form. For the past two years, all sixth form students have attended further education colleges when leaving and have maintained their placements. The achievement of older students is supported well by work-experience placements, the weekly courses they follow at West Herts College and the school courses in enterprise and independence skills.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, staff check carefully the needs and difficulties of children when they arrive. Individual targets are then set for learning and development and, the excellent progress they make, prepares them well for moving on to Year 1.
- In all lessons, progress is at least good, which confirms the school's judgement based on detailed checking on how well pupils are doing over time. In a geography lesson, students made good progress in understanding the differences between the local area compared to that of central Hemel Hempstead.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching throughout the school promotes good learning for all. Teaching in English and mathematics is effective. Teachers plan their lessons well and make sure there is strong focus on the key skills of literacy and numeracy, as well as on improving students' progress in communication skills. In an Early Years Foundation Stage lesson, children showed developing understanding of managing their day as they moved visual activity cards to the 'happening now' chart before moving to their outdoor play session.
- Teachers and other adults supporting in lessons work highly effectively together. They use praise and encouragement very appropriately, which, despite the difficulties many have, keeps students motivated and on task throughout the lesson. This was particularly effective in a mathematics lesson where students were exploring two and three-dimensional shapes. The

teacher moved around the class checking that all were making progress in relation to the targets they had been set.

- Students are asked questions to test their understanding. On occasion, however, when checking progress being made, some staff do not give students sufficient time to respond before being moved on to the next task.
- Lessons include a range of lively activities that are used to interest and motivate students and set a positive tone for learning. In a music lesson, students were provided with a range of items so they were able to make good progress in understanding the differences in 'shake, strike and rub or shake' when learning to make sounds. There was an effective focus throughout on improving students' communication skills.
- In a sixth form young enterprise group lesson, well-planned and resourced activities ensured the work was matched closely to students' abilities. This enabled all to make good progress towards their individual targets as well as improving their literacy and numeracy skills.
- Parents and carers are overwhelmingly pleased with the progress their children make. Students say teachers help them learn much in lessons.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**

- Behaviour in and around the school is outstanding because of the consistent routines and high levels of sensitive staff supervision. Staff respect students' dignity, well-being and their developing independence. Highly effective relationships between all adults and students result in enjoyable, purposeful and safe learning throughout the whole school day.
- Typically, behaviour over time has been outstanding. There have been no permanent exclusions or instances where students have not been allowed to go to school for short periods of time because of poor behaviour. Since the last inspection, there have been no recorded instances of racism or homophobia and there have been no other instances of bullying. Management of students' behaviour in lessons and around the school is consistently excellent.
- Older students say the school is a safe place to be and that they get along well together. They say there is no bullying and they know about the importance of e-safety. In addition, students say that they feel safe and supported well at the off-site alternative provision they attend.
- Attendance, regardless of students' circumstances, is average and punctuality to school is not an issue. Students arrive happily in the morning, remain positive and friendly throughout the day and leave cheerfully at the end following the daily celebratory whole-school assemblies.
- Students' attitudes to learning are very positive. In lessons, they work alone or together in pairs or small groups. In a physical education lesson, highly effective organisation allowed students to work as small groups as well as having individual adult support.
- Without exception, parents' and carers' responses to Parent View show they are happy with the school's care for their children. This is also confirmed by the school's own parent and carer questionnaires.

**The leadership and management are good**

- The headteacher's drive and ambition have led to improvements, particularly in students' progress and achievement over the last year. In this she is supported effectively by her deputy, senior leaders and governors. All staff are highly committed and want the best outcomes possible for all students. The Early Years Foundation Stage and sixth form provision are well led.
- The headteacher and her deputy regularly and carefully check the quality of teaching, setting teachers targets to improve the quality of their work and making recommendations regarding additional responsibilities and training. Senior leaders are aware of inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and the steps needed for improvement, including the need for effective sharing of good practice across the school.
- As a result of the school's strong commitment to equality, it ensures there is no discrimination of any kind. All students, regardless of circumstances or needs, make good progress in relation to their starting points in their learning and personal development. All receive good advice and guidance for when they leave the sixth form.
- The subjects and topics students study mirror those in mainstream schools. Because they are tailored to match fully the abilities and individual needs of all students, all have equal opportunity to succeed. The strong focus on preparing students for the next stage of their education through personal and social education and improvements in communication skills develops their independence. This contributes significantly to their strong all-round personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Physical education has a high profile and all students benefit from regular swimming lessons.
- The school works highly effectively with other professionals both locally and across the local authority, as well as with its own team of therapists to support pupils' wide-ranging learning needs. It also works closely with parents and carers.
- Since the last inspection, the local authority has provided minimal support to this good school.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The highly effective Chair leads an improving and confident governing body which is prepared to challenge senior leaders. Governors undertake appropriate training to support them in their delegated roles. They recognise the importance of high quality teaching and how it might be improved. Governors check the work of the headteacher and other staff, which is helping them to make decisions about how well they are working, any action that needs to be taken, training opportunities and pay. They take their safeguarding responsibilities seriously, ensuring that the school is a safe place in which to work and learn. The finance committee is diligent in making sure the school's finances are balanced and overseeing the use and impact of pupil premium funding. Current funding is being used to provide extra support to ensure that all students, regardless of their circumstances, make the best possible progress in English, mathematics and communication skills. Although the use and impact of the funding for the support of primary physical education and school sport has been considered, this money has not yet been received by the school.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	117682
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	425180

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	57
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	17
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Kate Worden
<b>Headteacher</b>	Gill Waceba
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 October 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01442 253476
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