

Woodside High School, a Business and Enterprise Specialist School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102158
Local Authority	Haringey
Inspection number	307918
Inspection dates	6 - 7 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Dr Stuart Charlton

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

Type of School	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11-16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	1019
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Andre Davies
Headteacher	Mrs Joan McVittie
Date of previous school inspection	09 October 2006
School address	White Hart Lane Wood Green London N22 5QJ
Telephone number	020 8889 6761
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Age group	11-16
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Woodside High School is of average size serving a very deprived area in north London. It now provides education for students aged 11 to 16, having closed its sixth form provision in July 2007. Students represent many different minority ethnic backgrounds and nearly three quarters receive support for learning English as an additional language. The number of students with learning difficulties and disabilities is well above the national average, although the number with a statement of special educational need is close to average. The headteacher took up her post in January 2006 and a significant proportion of both the senior leadership team and the governing body are new to their role. The school has specialist status in business and enterprise. At the inspection of October 2006, the school was given a notice to improve in relation to students' achievements, the standards they reach and teaching and learning.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Woodside High School is improving rapidly. It now provides satisfactory education and in accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) is of the opinion that the school no longer requires a notice to improve.

In the year since the last inspection, the headteacher and her senior management team have set and implemented a very clear agenda for improvement. They have been well supported by governors. They have established rigorous and robust procedures for self-evaluation and these are beginning to raise standards. This is clearly shown by the improvements in examination results for students aged 14 and, to a lesser extent, at GCSE. In both 2006 and 2007, the number of students obtaining the expected level or above at Key Stage 3 improved by over 5 percentage points. From 2005 to 2007, the percentage of students obtaining five or more GCSE grades A* to C has risen from under 20% to over 40%. However, the percentage of students obtaining five or more good GCSE grades including English and mathematics has not improved as rapidly. This is due to poor performance in mathematics, which the school is addressing. Given the below-average starting points of students on entry to the school, these results represent satisfactory achievement. There are now good systems in place to provide information about students' targets and the progress they make. However, these are not used consistently by all teachers in all lessons.

The ethos in the school has improved considerably so that the school is now a harmonious community in which all students, regardless of their background or need, work together and respect each other. The majority of students take pride in their school and their work. Through effective monitoring and evaluation linked to very good support, the quality of teaching and learning has been improved. Overall, it is now satisfactory and a good pace of progress has been set, although there is still some way to go in mathematics. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection and is the cornerstone for the rise in standards. The school has worked hard to develop the skills of subject leaders. However, not all accept that they are accountable for the standards that are achieved in their area and is one of the reasons for the weak performance in GCSE mathematics in 2007. The curriculum has an appropriate balance of academic, vocational and work-related opportunities, although the school is aware that the needs and aspirations of all its students are still not fully met. The curriculum is supported by a range of activities out of school and enhanced by visits and visitors to the school. These opportunities are much appreciated by students.

Students are encouraged to adopt a healthy lifestyle through a range of sporting activities and the meals and snacks available in the canteen. The behaviour and attitudes of most students have improved significantly and are now good. Students enjoy coming to school. Their relationships with each other and with their teachers are good. They respect the school rules and are enthusiastic about the lessons and activities that are provided. The school's procedures to promote and improve attendance have been effective so that the attendance rate is now close to the national average. The ways in which the school supports and guides students and promotes their welfare have been radically overhauled. This has been very positive in enhancing students' self-esteem and making it clear to them what they can achieve. The school is beginning to use its business and enterprise specialism to provide a context for developments within school and to enhance links with other schools and the community.

The commitment and determination of the headteacher and senior leadership team puts the school in a sound position to face the future and maintain the rate at which standards are rising.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that standards in mathematics, particularly at GCSE, rise to match those in other subjects.
- Develop a more consistent approach to the way in which teachers use information about individual students' needs and their progress to drive up standards.
- Ensure that all subject leaders are fully accountable for the standards that students attain in their subjects so that achievement improves.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

In both 2006 and 2007, there were improvements in the school's results at Key Stage 3. Standards are now only slightly below average and this represents satisfactory achievement. The number of students obtaining five or more good GCSE grades rose from 23% in 2005 to 41% in 2007. Again, this represents satisfactory achievement. However, when English and mathematics are included in this analysis the rise is less significant. This clearly shows that standards at GCSE are below average. Already a significant number of students in the current Year 11 have successfully completed coursework and modules, which shows that the school is well on the way to meeting its 2008 GCSE targets for the number of students achieving five or more good GCSE grades including English and mathematics. The school carefully analyses its results by ethnicity and gender and there are no significant differences in the performance of these students. The significant proportion of students for whom English is not their first language make satisfactory progress, as do those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Overall, achievement is satisfactory and standards broadly average.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students, parents and visitors to the school all comment very positively about the changes in students' attitudes and behaviour which have been established since the appointment of the new headteacher. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Most students enjoy coming to school and are keen to learn. They say they feel safe and that staff are easily approachable in the event of any concerns. Behaviour is good, both in lessons and around the school. One student said, 'Now, people are ready to learn.' However, a small number of Year 11 students still lack self-discipline. Although students are aware of the need for healthy lifestyles, and a high proportion take part in after-school sports clubs, not all take advantage of the facilities offered. Members of the school council are enthusiastic about their roles and they ensure that students' views are heard and acted upon. For example, as a result of consultation, there have been recent changes to the uniform, and pupils contributed very effectively to the debate about the renaming of the school. Year 10 students train as mentors, providing valuable support to their peers and new arrivals. Fund raising events for charity are popular and students engage enthusiastically in the school's recycling project. Preparation for students' economic well-being is satisfactory. The development of students' information communication technology (ICT) skills is well supported by the school's specialist status, but there are weaknesses in the development of their numeracy skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Since the last inspection, there has been a substantial improvement in the quality of teaching and learning. Although there is still a small residual proportion of teaching which is inadequate, over two thirds is now good or better. This improvement has been brought about by rigorous and robust monitoring, so that the school's senior leadership team are clear about strengths and weaknesses. Good systems have been implemented to help and support teachers to develop their practice. Lessons are now well planned and most teachers use the school's behaviour management strategies well. Relationships are generally good and some teachers use information about students' progress well to drive up standards. However, this practice is not yet consistent and, in many lessons, students are not given sufficient information about what they need to do to improve. In a number of English lessons, a clear focus was given to the development of students' literacy skills through the good use of level descriptors and pupils assessments of each other's work, which were particularly helpful to those students who speak English as an additional language.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory and improving curriculum, which meets the needs of the majority of the students. Provision in physical education is a particular strength. The school's specialist status now has a much higher profile than at the last inspection. It has enriched the curriculum and helped to raise standards in ICT. In Key Stage 4, students are able to choose from a range of academic and vocational courses, which are appropriate to their abilities and interests. Students are well prepared for future employment by a comprehensive programme of work-related learning and work experience. The curriculum is well supported and enhanced by a range of visiting speakers and subject related visits.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school has implemented systematic processes for the welfare, support and guidance of students. Targets are now set across all subjects so that students are clear about their level of attainment. However, marking and feedback to students in books is not yet securely linked to the steps they need to take to improve their work. In lessons where they are involved in evaluating their progress, students are enthusiastic about developing their skills to move on to higher levels. The newly developed role of attainment managers is helping to ensure that standards rise. The school has implemented a wide range of intervention strategies, targeted at individuals and groups, which have a very positive impact on raising achievement. There have been radical improvements in the systems for the early identification of students with learning difficulties and disabilities and these contribute well to the satisfactory progress made by these students. The school has implemented good systems to guide and support students' academic development. However, none of these systems has been in place for a sufficient length of time to ensure that their full potential has been reached. Partnership with a range of outside agencies and the development of multi-professional meetings is ensuring that there is improving support for the most vulnerable students. Health and safety routines and risk assessments are fully in place and child protection procedures are clear. The school fully meets its responsibilities to ensure that students are safe and secure.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall, with some good features. The headteacher provides very clear direction for the work of the school with a strong focus on improvement. She has brought together a strong senior leadership team and they have quickly established effective procedures for monitoring and evaluation. These ensure that the school has an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses. However, these systems have only recently been established and have yet to fulfil their potential in improving standards. Many heads of department are recent appointments and they have taken advantage of the opportunities offered by the school to develop their skills, particularly in the effective use of data and evaluation of classroom practice. Most recognise the need to work with their subject staff to secure further improvements in standards and quality. Good support is given through the link leadership team member. Following the inadequate 2007 results in mathematics, new line management systems have been put in place and these are already having an impact on raising standards. Governors discharge their responsibilities effectively. They are very supportive and they act effectively as a critical friend to the school, holding it to account for standards and quality. Financial management has improved significantly, staff and resources are now more effectively deployed and the school provides satisfactory value for money.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interest of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

¹ 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.

All white boxes must be completed. The grey boxes are used wherever the inspection team has sufficient evidence to come to a secure judgement.

² IE - denotes that insufficient evidence was available to inspectors for a judgement to be made.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

Letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection.

19 November 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Woodside High School, a Business and Enterprise Specialist School, London, N22 5QJ

Thank you for the help you gave the inspection team when we visited your school on 6 and 7 November 2007. You told us that Woodside has improved significantly over the last twelve months. In particular, you said that behaviour is now very much better and that virtually all lessons are more exciting and really help you to gain qualifications that will help you when you leave school. You told us that these improvements had started with the appointment of the new headteacher and the changes she had made in the senior management team of the school. We agree with you and we think that the headteacher and her senior management team are driving the school forward with determination. We were particularly impressed with the work that many of you do as peer mentors. Consequently we have recommended that the notice to improve, which the school was given at its last inspection, is now withdrawn.

We are concerned that the mathematics results, particularly at GCSE are not good enough and we have asked the school to improve the way in which mathematics is managed. We have also asked that in all lessons, teachers give you clear guidance about how to improve your work and gain the next level. We have also asked the headteacher and her senior managers to hold all subject leaders to account for the standards you achieve in their subjects. You can help in this by all of you making sure that you know your targets and what is required to improve.

Yours sincerely,

Stuart Charlton

Lead inspector

