

Wood Green School

Woodstock Road, Witney, Oxfordshire, OX28 1DX

Inspection dates 17–18 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Sixth form provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Leaders at all levels, teachers and governors have effectively brought about improvement across the school.
- Leaders make very effective use of information on students' progress to identify where strengths and weaknesses lie.
- Subject leaders make a positive contribution to improvement by closely monitoring the quality of teaching in their departments.
- Achievement has improved and is now good. In most subjects, students are on track to meet their demanding targets.
- Disadvantaged students and those who are disabled or have special educational needs now make better progress.
- The sixth form is good because leaders carefully monitor students' progress. As a result, achievement in the sixth form is good.
- Sixth formers make a positive contribution through whole-school leadership positions and by acting as role models for younger students.
- The quality of teaching is good. Strong personal relationships between teachers and students contribute to students' learning.
- Teachers' effective marking and feedback help raise students' achievement.
- Teachers make good use of information on students' progress towards challenging end-of-year targets when they plan lessons.
- Leaders work closely with support assistants who have specialist expertise to ensure students are kept safe.
- Students' social, spiritual, moral and cultural development is promoted effectively across the school and strongly contributes to the school's caring ethos.
- Attendance is rising, and students behave well.
- The governors have a sharp understanding of how well students are achieving across all key stages. They use this to challenge the school to do better.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Students, including the more able and those in the sixth form, are not always provided with challenging enough work. Consequently, they sometimes do not make the rapid progress of which they are capable.
- Some teachers do not build well enough on students' previous learning, including that gained at primary school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed the quality of teaching in 26 lessons. They were accompanied by senior leaders in 10 of them. Inspectors made short visits to classrooms accompanied by the literacy coordinator. Inspectors visited the Achievement Centre, the school's own provision for special needs students who need extra support.
- The inspectors observed the school's work, met separately with groups of students from Key Stages 3, 4 and 5, and looked at students' work in their books.
- A range of documents was scrutinised, including the school's own data about students' progress, records relating to behaviour and attendance, safeguarding records, the school's own analysis of how well it is doing and how it plans to improve, the school's records of its monitoring of teaching, teachers' plans and information regarding the classes they teach.
- Inspectors took account of the views of 175 parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors interviewed a group of parents and carers.
- Inspectors analysed 50 questionnaires from staff, including support staff.
- Evidence from Ofsted's previous monitoring visits was also taken into consideration.

Inspection team

Sarah Hubbard, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Matthew Newberry

Her Majesty's Inspector

Helen Bailey

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- The school is a larger than the average-sized secondary school with a sixth form.
- The headteacher joined the school in April 2013. A new Chair and Vice-Chair of Governors were appointed in January 2014.
- The proportion of students who are from minority ethnic backgrounds and the proportion who speak English as an additional language are both below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students eligible for the pupil premium is below the national average. This is additional government funding which in this school supports students known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is below the national average.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for students with special educational needs, known as the Achievement Centre. It is run on behalf of the local authority for 12 students with moderate learning difficulties.
- At Key Stage 4, five students follow part-time courses at Abingdon and Witney College.
- The school is part of the Challenge Partners collaboration of schools.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure all students, including those in the sixth form and the more able, make the rapid progress of which they are capable by always setting work which is sufficiently challenging and builds more effectively on previous learning.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has created a culture in which all teachers and leaders share responsibility for improving the school. They value the additional opportunities brought by their increased responsibilities and support the headteacher in the improvements he has made. The commitment of the staff to implementing change has led to improved teaching and better achievement.
- Senior leaders know teachers' individual strengths and areas for further development very well because they monitor the quality of teaching closely. Local authority advisers and partners from other schools have verified the accuracy of their judgements. Senior leaders use their evaluations well to identify teachers who need further training and guidance and swiftly provide bespoke support and guidance. This has led to rapid improvements in teaching.
- Senior leaders rigorously challenge subject leaders to account for the quality of teaching and its impact on students' achievement in the subject areas they manage. Where their analysis of students' progress indicates that students are failing to meet their targets, they liaise with subject leaders to identify where further improvements need to be made. Consequently, in most subjects, students are now on track to meet their demanding end-of-year targets.
- Subject leaders closely monitor the targets they set to manage teachers' performance by observing lessons, checking students' work in books, and scrutinising information about how well students are progressing. In review meetings, they evaluate teachers' progress towards meeting these targets and offer subject-related support and guidance where appropriate. As a result, teaching has improved and is now typically good.
- Leaders ensure that disadvantaged students in receipt of additional pupil premium benefit from extra revision classes, one-to-one tuition and the services of a school counsellor. Leaders analyse the impact of additional funding on students' achievement and base their future spending plans on their evaluations.
- Regular and well-planned enrichment days, on themes such as the Holocaust, ecology and human rights, are successfully used to reinforce values of tolerance and teach students the differences between right and wrong. Social, spiritual, moral and cultural education is further promoted through assemblies, visits from religious leaders representing a range of faiths and a programme of activities in tutor time. Consequently, the school is largely free from discrimination and the vast majority of students actively promote tolerance. All students have an equal opportunity to succeed.
- The school curriculum includes a programme of well-planned opportunities for students to learn about British values through special topics studied in humanities, and discussions in tutor time. This programme is flexible enough to respond to current events. A notable example is the recent mock election. Students invented their own political parties, wrote manifestos and conducted hustings prior to a properly run polling day. In so doing, students gained a deeper insight into the process of democracy, and the different values upon which British political parties are founded.
- Leaders have tailored the number of teaching groups and their composition in English and mathematics to suit the academic needs of each year group. For example, following the head of mathematics' analysis of previous years' results, an additional group has been created in Year 8 solely for students who enter the school with Levels 4B and 4C. Students in this dedicated group have made good progress.
- The curriculum is broad and varied, so that the needs of those in the Achievement Centre are well met through horticulture courses and life skills lessons. The most able students participate in competitions and challenges, such as the national mathematics challenge and mock trial competitions. The range and type of additional activities cater well for students' varied intellectual passions. Key Stage 3 students' learning in the arts is enhanced through participation in weekly extra-curricular clubs, choirs, orchestras and school drama productions. The school was recently selected as a centre for musical excellence in the county.
- The leadership of the Achievement Centre is effective and the students who attend there make good progress. The support offered in the centre is tailor made to meet the students' needs. This has given the students greater self-confidence, which in turn has enabled them to be fully integrated into the main school and benefit from being part of the wider, but nevertheless, caring school community.
- The school ensures that students make a smooth transition from Year 11 to Year 12, by offering taster days for students to experience what learning is like in the sixth form. Links with feeder schools focus on ensuring students settle in well to their new school.
- An independent adviser meets individually with every Year 11 student and runs a careers clinic on GCSE results day to provide effective careers guidance. As a result, all students left Year 11 last year with a place in further training, education or employment. The availability of careers information has been strengthened by weekly bulletins, which advertise careers and open days, as well as additional resources

in the school library. The Enterprise Day and a recent talk by the local university for Year 9 students have contributed to widening students' horizons.

- Parents value the feedback they receive from the school and the individual support their children are given by the staff, which they say has greatly improved over the last two years.
- External support from the local authority and partner schools has contributed to improving the school. The local authority has trained subject leaders in monitoring teaching. Partner schools have provided support to senior leaders, including the headteacher. They have also helped the school to gauge whether teachers' marking is accurate.
- Leaders' close liaison with staff at Witney and Abingdon College means that those attending the alternative provision behave and attend well, are safe, and make good progress in their chosen courses.
- Leaders and governors ensure the school meets its statutory safeguarding requirements and have checked that recommendations from the recent local authority safeguarding review are being implemented fully.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have made a very effective contribution to improving the school. Governors now make good use of the data on students' progress to challenge leaders to do better and identify where strengths and weaknesses in teaching lie. Governors have employed their knowledge from recent training to compare the school's performance with all schools nationally. This has ensured that their expectations of what students should achieve are sufficiently high.
 - The learning and achievement committee is particularly effective because its members have relevant expertise, which they bring to bear on its work. The finance and safety committee robustly oversees that the targets set for teachers' performance are sufficiently challenging. It makes sure that pay is firmly linked to performance and, consequently, this year some staff did not receive pay awards.
 - Governors require leaders to report to them on the progress of the whole-school improvements they are leading. They have used this as an opportunity to request leaders to make further changes. For example, governors requested that leaders analyse the impact of additional pupil premium funding on students' achievement more rigorously. As a result, leaders made changes that led to improved achievement for this group of students.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students in school is good. Students listen well in class and most are eager to learn. They are courteous to each other and to their teachers.
- Students follow the instructions given by their teachers and respond well when asked to improve their conduct.
- Students make a positive contribution to extra-curricular activities and value the additional opportunities the school provides. Sixth form students lead clubs for younger students that are well attended and contribute to the caring nature of the school community.
- Students attending alternative provision behave well and are kept safe because of the close relationship that exists between the college, the school and the students' parents. College coordinators meet the parents and carers of the students who attend the provision to facilitate communication between home and college.
- Incidents of bullying are rare. Students say that, on the few occasions that bullying occurs, teachers deal with it well and follow it up in line with the new policy. Older students say they would take appropriate action if they witnessed younger students being bullied.
- Students have a say in the way behaviour is managed in the school and consequently respond better when agreed policies are enforced. The school council was presented with the first draft of the school's new anti-bullying policy. It subsequently suggested many improvements that the school included in the final version of the policy.
- The school's leaders respond robustly to the very small number of racial bullying incidents and make good use of external agencies and the police to ensure the perpetrators are given the appropriate balance of sanctions and guidance.
- The school has introduced a new system for managing students' behaviour. This has led to improvements in students' behaviour in lessons and around the school. As part of this, a 'zero tolerance' approach to disruptive behaviour has been introduced which has led to a small increase in short-term exclusions.
- Leaders monitor attendance closely and it is rising. It remains below national average because some individuals have significant barriers to attending school. However, leaders are taking the right action to

address this.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Support staff, who have expertise in social care, work therapeutically with students who have significant needs. Students who have received this additional help went out of their way to let inspectors know the difference it has made to their well-being.
- The school has very good relationships with local authority social care managers and works well with the authority to support students who have multiple needs. The safeguarding leaders, nevertheless, hold authority service managers to account for the speed and diligence with which referrals are followed up.
- The school works effectively with parents, police and external partners to ensure students at risk of being groomed are well supported. They monitor their attendance closely. Assemblies and tutor time are used to educate students about the dangers of being groomed online.
- The school constantly strives to improve its safeguarding policies and procedures, which have recently been reviewed by the local authority designated officer. This review praised many aspects of the school's work. Leaders have already implemented some of the recommendations from the report.
- The school has systems in place to prevent radicalisation. Following Home Office approved training, leaders have a better understanding of how to prevent students being radicalised when online.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching has improved and is now typically good. Most teachers have very good relationships with the students they teach because they know their individual strengths and weaknesses well, and provide them with additional help within and outside of lessons. This contributes to better learning and improved outcomes.
- Teachers make good use of tracking information, which identifies those students who are not in line to meet challenging end-of-year targets. They highlight these students in their detailed plans so they can more easily direct questions towards them and check throughout lessons whether they have understood the tasks set. Consequently, many more students are now on track to meet their end-of-year targets than earlier on in the year.
- Teachers' questioning has improved. Teachers use questioning effectively to probe students' knowledge and understanding and to get students to think more deeply. In a French lesson, the teacher targeted a more-able student with a probing question and, to support the student in answering it, she provided clues in the target language. This helped the student's fluency as well as enabling her to answer the question.
- Teachers' detailed and effective feedback on students' work helps students to improve. Teachers often include additional questions and follow-up tasks as part of their feedback. For example, in English, teachers identify a section of work for students to re-write, with some well-thought out pointers about how best to do this. Teachers mark the revised section so students can clearly see the impact of the improvements they have made. Students often use these improved paragraphs as blueprints for subsequent pieces of writing.
- Teaching in English is consistently strong because the head of department is very clear about the approaches that are needed to ensure students achieve well, and carefully checks to see whether teachers in the department are using them consistently.
- Teaching in mathematics is mostly good. In some lessons, teachers set work that requires students to use their mathematical reasoning skills. For example, in a Year 7 lesson, the teacher asked students to calculate the cost of a square metre of glass from the information they were given about the total price of glass and window frames combined. Students in the class responded enthusiastically to the challenge and the teacher successfully added complexities to this problem to ensure that those in the class who were gifted in mathematics were also challenged.
- In mathematics lessons in Key Stage 4, teachers provide helpful advice to students about the resources available, outside of lessons, for them to practise key skills. Teachers set personal goals for them to achieve when using these resources. These approaches, combined with the regular use of practice examination questions, have led to improved achievement.
- In some subjects, including in a small number of mathematics and science lessons, teachers set work that is not challenging enough for all students. For example, teachers occasionally set tasks that require a number of students in the class to use skills they have already fully mastered. This slows their progress down.
- The school's work to develop students' literacy is good, and improving. The literacy coordinator has successfully promoted reading. A pilot project, which involves Year 8 students reading for 20 minutes each day, has effectively encouraged students to enjoy reading more. Students' writing has improved in some

subjects because teachers explicitly tell them how they should express their ideas to demonstrate subject expertise. This approach is most successful in Key Stages 3 and 4 humanities and sixth form lessons. The school has robust plans to develop this approach further next year.

- Teaching in drama is particularly strong. For example, in one lesson, the teacher effectively trained students to critique each other's performances, using their understanding of key practitioners such as Stanislavski. This helps students to improve the quality of their practical work.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Over their time at Wood Green School, students gain a broad range of skills and are consequently well prepared for the next stage in their education, employment or training.
- Students enter the school in Year 7 with levels of attainment in line with the national average. In 2014, the proportion of students in Year 11 attaining five or more C grade GCSEs, including English and mathematics, rose from 2013 figures when they were below average to slightly above average. The school reliably predicts that, in 2015, students' attainment will rise much further.
- Students' progress in English and mathematics improved in 2014. It has continued to improve and is now good. The progress students make in English continues to be strong, due to effective teaching and careful monitoring. In mathematics, students' progress has improved significantly, due to additional support for targeted students.
- In 2013, the gap in attainment and progress between disadvantaged students and others, both nationally and within school, was too wide. In terms of attainment, the gap was approximately two whole GCSE grades for both English and mathematics. In 2014, disadvantaged students made better progress and attained more highly; but, although the attainment gap narrowed to one and a half grades in English, it remained at two grades for mathematics. Disadvantaged students' progress has continued to accelerate, however. They now make the same good progress as other students in the school and nationally. As a result, attainment gaps are closing rapidly and they are now half a grade below other students in both English and mathematics.
- The more-able students achieve well. The proportion of students attaining A* and A grades is well above average in a range of subjects, including English language, English literature, history and separate science subjects. More-able students made better than average progress in science and humanities GCSE examinations in 2014.
- Students' achievement in the range of subjects that constitutes the English Baccalaureate is above average. Students make good progress in these subjects.
- Careful monitoring and close liaison with college staff mean that all students attending part-time alternative provision have successfully completed their level 1 courses and the GCSE courses they study in school. The majority will consequently remain at the college post 16 to complete level 2 courses. One student commented, 'Going to college has enabled me to do better at school.'
- Last year the school entered some lower-ability students for GCSE mathematics early, in November of Year 11. Although a small number gained GCSE grade C in mathematics at that point, many went on to improve their grades when they re-took the examination in summer 2014. This approach served their needs well. The school no longer enters students early for any GCSE examinations.
- Students who have disabilities or special educational needs are making better progress this year than last. Closer monitoring by subject leaders and class teachers, as well as being taught additional lessons in smaller groups, has led to improvements in their progress.
- The students who attend the Achievement Centre make good progress and achieve well, especially in English. They access a range of courses and their individual needs are catered for effectively. One student has completed a GCSE art course and is on track to achieve a grade C.
- Successful 10-week programmes of targeted literacy and numeracy catch-up for Year 7 students, who entered the school below Level 4, have enabled the majority to make substantial strides in their learning.
- Students achieve very well in drama at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. Their achievement is boosted by high quality extra-curricular opportunities. Students who take additional drama qualifications achieve highly in them.
- Students make good progress during Key Stage 3. The majority of students are on track to meet their end-of-year targets. Improvements in the quality of teaching have rapidly narrowed the gap between the achievement of disadvantaged students and that of other students.
- Developments in students' literacy have focused on improving students' presentation and accuracy of their writing. This aspect of most students' work has improved as a result. Robust plans are in place to improve how articulately students express their ideas in writing.

- Achievement in the sixth form last year dipped. However, it has now improved and is good. Predictions show that in 2015, due to improved teaching, a greater proportion of students will attain A* to B grades at A level than last year and there will be a reduction in the variations between students' achievement in different subjects.

The sixth form provision is good

- Working in partnership with a local school, the sixth form offers a wide range of subjects for study to A level. Leaders make sure the combination of courses is well matched to the needs of the students and regularly review the subjects on offer.
- Leaders ensure provision is well planned and provides clear routes for further study or employment. All students progress to further education or employment in their chosen fields, with increasing numbers progressing to top universities.
- Highly effective leadership promotes students' progress in learning and the development of their personal skills. Leaders regularly check students' progress towards demanding targets. They provide an effective raft of support measures that are delivered by subject teachers and form tutors for students who start to fall behind in their learning. Sixth formers make good use of regular academic mentoring that the school offers and commented to inspectors that they find it beneficial. Consequently, students' achievement in Year 13 is set to rise according to the school's predictions.
- Leaders also ensure that all sixth form students receive thorough careers education and guidance, including talks from local businesses and courses in applying to top universities, so that all are well prepared for the future.
- Sixth form attainment is improving. Although many students last year achieved the A-level grades they needed to take their places at university, some students' progress was below average in a small number of subjects. To improve the quality of teaching in these subjects, leaders provided opportunities for teachers to share good practice about what constitutes effective sixth form teaching.
- This year, the progress that students are making in a small number of subjects is outstanding, but in most subjects it is good. Senior leaders are fully aware of these variations and are reducing them by closer monitoring and working more effectively with the leaders of subjects where students' progress is weaker.
- Students enter the sixth form with appropriate qualifications to allow them to follow their chosen courses. Where required, appropriate support is given to help them to gain at least a grade C in GCSE mathematics and success rates are above average.
- Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge and plan stimulating lessons. In the strongest lessons, teachers challenge students to debate, speculate and evaluate their learning. This leads to improved self-confidence as students succeed in meeting challenges. Teachers share examples of good work with their students and ask them to identify why they have chosen it as a model. Students value the chance to learn from their peers.
- The conduct of sixth formers in all parts of the school is exemplary and they provide excellent role models for younger students. The sixth form students develop a good understanding of the world in which they live and how they can best make a positive contribution to it. Students said that they particularly value the wide range of enrichment activities and the work experience that the school offers. They know how to keep themselves safe.
- The sixth form is not yet outstanding because there is some variability in the quality of teaching and some students do not make the rapid progress of which they are capable throughout their time in the sixth form.

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

Unique reference number	123238
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	461460

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community School
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	1032
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	201
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Hilary Pillin
Headteacher	Mr Robert Shadbolt
Date of previous school inspection	9–10 October 2013
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