

Woodlands School

Picklecombe Drive, Off Tamerton Foliot Road, Plymouth, PL6 5ES

Inspection dates

3–4 December 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
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.

- Being ready and enabled to learn is highly evident at this school as the pupils arrive and eagerly move to their classrooms.
- There is an excellent ethos of mutual respect and inclusivity that characterise the relationships throughout the school at every level. This, combined with the enthusiasm of the pupils, contributes strongly to the outstanding behaviour.
- Pupils achieve well and make good progress, especially in all aspects of communication, throughout the school.
- Equality of opportunity is a fundamental aspect of this school, making things possible for all, as pupils report.
- The sixth form is good and all pupils move onto further education or training.
- Teaching is creative and imaginative. The strong class teaching teams, ably led by the teachers, make sure that the small steps of progress are checked carefully in almost all lessons.
- The senior leadership team has made sure that teaching has improved since the previous inspection. The leadership has been successfully reorganised to ensure that good progress is maintained in all parts of the school.
- Pupils participate in a wide range of sporting and cultural activities giving them good opportunities to use their developing physical, communication and social skills well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Not all teaching checks the steps of progress carefully enough across a wide range of skills.
- The governing body's management committee for the school does not yet regularly check the school's performance at first hand so that it can fully hold it to account.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 17 lessons taught by 11 teachers of which 15 were jointly observed with the headteacher, deputy headteacher or one of the assistant headteachers. In addition, short visits were made to other lessons and inspectors listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy and assistant headteachers, the Chair of the Governing Body and vice chair, the Chair of the Management Committee, the senior nurse, family support worker, a group of pupils and a representative from the local authority.
- There were four responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. A recent questionnaire to parents and carers undertaken by the school was considered. The team received and analysed 41 staff questionnaires.
- The team looked at school documents including school data relating to assessment and pupils' progress, planning for school improvement, monitoring of teaching and learning, records relating to behaviour and attendance, minutes of the governing body and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Janet Dinsmore, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Andrew Penman	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Woodlands School is part of the federation, Wood View Learning Community. There is a secondary school, primary school and children's centre on the same site. The Wood View short break service, within the school building, provides residential and flexible respite care for some of the pupils and is subject to a separate inspection.
- The governing body is of the whole federation, but was reorganised in December 2012 and devolved some of its decision-making powers to management committees for the individual schools.
- Almost all pupils have a statement of special educational needs for physical, sensory and/or complex medical needs. Those without a statement are undergoing statutory assessment.
- The proportion of pupils known to eligible for the pupil premium is average. A very small proportion are eligible for Year 7 catch up premium.
- The proportion of pupils entering and leaving the school at times other than would normally be expected is well above average.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that a greater proportion is outstanding by making sure that pupils' progress is monitored against the skills being taught in the lesson.
- Improve leadership and management, including governance, by making sure the management committee checks the school's performance regularly and accurately for itself to fully hold the school to account.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make excellent progress in their physical and communication development. They understand and work on specific targets in focused activity and therapy times, celebrating their achievements well.
- Pupils across the school and of a wide range of ability make good progress in reading. Pupils in Key Stage 1 learn letters and the sounds they make. Some pupils are confident in their reading to use it well to research on the internet. Some pupils have used reading and speaking skills well in performance of a Shakespeare play.
- Pupils make good progress with a wide range of writing skills to record their thinking. Some make good use of technological aids to type responses if they are unable to speak and others write sensitive poetry.
- Pupils make good progress with mathematical skills. Counting and quantities are integrated into many aspects of school life. They apply these particularly well to money and calculating costs for the enterprise scheme in the sixth form.
- Pupils who are severely disabled, hearing and/or visually impaired make good progress especially with communication skills. They respond well to all forms of well-targeted stimuli. Signing is used throughout the school and those with mobility begin to use it for themselves. They also learn to use a wide range of technological aids to this, for example eye pointing and switches. This minimises any frustration and prepares them well for life beyond school.
- Pupils achieve very well in their physical development throughout the school. They enjoy and excel in a range of sporting and dance activities. They are the regional champion team for Boccia and the school is recognised regionally for making sport accessible for disabled pupils. These sporting and team activities also enable pupils to demonstrate their social skills.
- Pupils in the sixth form have individually designed work experience programmes so that they can realise their ambitions and experience situations beyond school so preparing them well for the next stage of education or training.
- Pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up premium achieve as well as or exceed their peers at this school. There is no gap in achievement. Pupils new to the school settle quickly and frequently make rapid progress because the learning activities are very well adapted to their needs.
- Achievement is not yet outstanding because progress slows a little for a significant minority of pupils in Key Stages 4 and 5.

The quality of teaching

is good

- All staff are trained well and fully understand a wide range of medical conditions and disabilities so that they can plan activities that will maximise learning for the pupils. They know the pupils very well. This makes sure that activities can be continually adjusted to provide sufficient challenge for each individual pupil's stage of development and learning.
- They use a wide range of sensory activities creatively so that pupils learn well from repeated activities, but in different forms, as well as from the well-paced routines of the day and changes of learning activity. Teachers and medical staff work exceptionally well together so that medical needs do not interrupt learning.
- Teachers use questioning well to check pupils' understanding. This is adapted successfully for a wide range of pupils' abilities, for example, some pupils indicated a choice of bubbles for reward and older pupils explained why they think adverts are bad for you. Pupils report that they know how well they are doing with their work because teachers tell them and reward systems are used.
- Teaching assistants are an integral part of each class teaching team. They contribute very well

to the assessment of pupils' progress through notes and discussion with the teachers. They are trained well for medical procedures that they can do in the classroom and understand pupils' communication well.

- Planned activities are interesting and challenging, for example the construction of a large polar bear in the Nursery class to develop pupils' sensory awareness and the use of word problems for more-able pupils in Key Stage 3 to develop their reading and mathematical skills.
- Teaching is not yet outstanding because it is not precise enough over a wide enough range of skills in some lessons to fully accelerate pupils' progress. Teaching in Early Years Foundation Stage is sometimes restricted because there is insufficient access to well-resourced high-quality outdoor play space so that children can make choices across the whole range of learning and development outdoors.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils have outstanding attitudes to learning. Those with the most complex sensory difficulties respond exceptionally well to the stimulating learning programmes. Those with less disability demonstrate their positive enthusiasm for school continually in lessons and report how much they enjoy it and how great the staff are.
- Pupils feel very safe. They say that the staff at the school make them 'feel free' and are always encouraging them to achieve their best and encounter new challenges which the pupils relish. They understand how to evacuate from the two-story building when they are in wheelchairs and how to stay safe on the internet.
- Pupils, staff, parents and carers report that behaviour is excellent at the school. There is no bullying because of the high levels of mutual respect and excellent relationships modelled at all times.
- The behaviour of pupils who can become frustrated and find it more difficult to communicate is exceptionally well managed. Staff have great expertise in changing the circumstances sensitively and quickly so that any poor behaviour will not occur and the pupils can express their needs more appropriately.
- Attendance is average for schools of this type. Pupils are keen to be at school and there is effective liaison between school and hospital staff when pupils have extended periods out of school for medical reasons.
- There are notable examples of significant improvements in behaviour and pupils' well-being because of actions by the school to work successfully with a range of agencies to ensure that pupils remain safe and protected.

The leadership and management are good

- The leadership team has made sure that all staff are trained well for their roles. Staff report that their performance is well and supportively managed and this has brought about improvements in teaching and pupils' progress since the previous inspection. The pay progression for teachers is securely linked to pupils' progress and performance management is effective.
- The roles and responsibilities of the deputy and assistant headteachers are well defined and there have been significant improvements in the teaching of reading and pupils' progress as a result. A good range of activities is used to check the quality of teaching and learning; self-evaluation is accurate resulting in well-focused plans for further development.
- Pupils' progress is checked carefully by senior leaders across the school and in partnership with other special schools in Plymouth to make sure that assessments are accurate.
- Pupil premium is spent directly to benefit those to whom it applies; on technological aids for individual pupils, access to activities and staff training to meet the physical and communication needs of specific pupils. Sports premium similarly will provide for additional staff training to improve pupils' skills to enable more of them to participate in the wide range of sports that are

offered.

- The organisation of medical appointments, school nurses and physiotherapists on the school site means that there is good communication between all the professions having responsibility for the pupils. There are weekly meetings of the multi-agency family team to make sure that pupils are very well cared for, that everyone involved knows exactly what is happening and that action can be taken to support parents, carers and families. There are excellent links with the short-break service providing residential and respite care flexibly for families as the need arises.
- Parents and carers highly value the support that the school provides for their families and the progress that their children make. Their views are taken into consideration when continuing to make improvements to the school.
- There are strong partnerships between the schools of the federation both in the sharing of facilities and expertise. The school runs an effective and valued outreach service, commissioned by the local authority, supporting pupils in 70 neighbouring schools. The local authority provides light-touch support for this good school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The full governing body reorganisation has resulted in management committees being relatively new to their role. Members have been suitably trained for this. The management committee ensures that the performance management of the headteacher is undertaken effectively and has set challenging targets. Members know how well pupils make progress at the school and that there is no difference between the progress of those known to be eligible for the pupil premium and their peers. They know about the quality of teaching, because they are accurately informed by the headteacher's reports. They have not yet made sure that they have a systematic way of checking the school's performance for themselves and fully holding the school to account. They carry out the statutory requirements to make sure pupils are safe. They are beginning to be able to use data to compare the school with others of its type.

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	113644
Local authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	426722

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

Type of school	All-through
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	2–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	78
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	10
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bill Wraight
Headteacher	Andrea Hemmens
Date of previous school inspection	1–2 December 2010
Telephone number	01752 300101
Email address	woodlands.school@plymouth.gov.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2013

