



# Woodhouse College



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE

## Inspection report

|                     |                         |                              |
|---------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| Audience<br>Post-16 | Published<br>March 2007 | Provider reference<br>130427 |
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## Basic information about the college

Name of college: Woodhouse College

Type of college: Sixth Form College

Principal: Ann Robinson OBE

Address of college: Woodhouse Road, Finchley, London N12 9EY

Telephone number: 0208 445 1210

Fax number: 0208 445 5210

Chair of governors: Mr Ian Phillips

Unique reference number: 130427

Name of inspector: Vivien Bailey HMI

Date of inspection: 24 January 2007

## Background of the organisation

1. Woodhouse College is a sixth form college operating from a single site on the eastern side of the London Borough of Barnet. The college enrolled 979 learners aged 16 to 18 (975 FTE) and 1 learner aged 19+ (1 FTE) in 2004/05. Nearly all 16 to 18 enrolments were on GCE AS/A level courses. A significant proportion of learners travel from other boroughs, particularly Haringey and Enfield. The catchment area is economically mixed and diverse in terms of social and ethnic backgrounds. In 2005, about half of the learners were from minority ethnic groups, and 56% were female. At age 16, educational achievement is above average in Barnet, but well below average in Haringey and Enfield.
2. Woodhouse College was last inspected in January 2003. At that inspection most aspects of its provision were judged to be outstanding.

## Scope of assessment

3. In deciding the scope of this inspection, inspectors took account of: the college's previous inspection report ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)); the college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans; comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC); reports from the inspectorate annual assessment visits; and data on enrolments and learners' achievements over the period since the last inspection. This inspection, conducted during one day, focused on the following aspects:

- overall effectiveness of the college and its capacity to improve further
- achievements and standards
- quality of provision
- leadership and management

## Summary of grades awarded

|                            |                      |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| Effectiveness of provision | Outstanding: grade 1 |
| Capacity to improve        | Outstanding: grade 1 |
| Achievements and standards | Outstanding: grade 1 |
| Quality of provision       | Outstanding: grade 1 |
| Leadership and management  | Outstanding: grade 1 |

*Note: Where contributory grades have been awarded, they are shown in the relevant sections of the report. Contributory grades represent the judgement of the team that the quality of the aspect of provision indicated by the grade differs from the grade overall.*

## Overall judgement

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding: grade 1

4. The college is outstanding in all aspects of its provision. It maintains high standards of achievement, with learners consistently achieving beyond predicted levels and leading to excellent progression. Teaching and learning are rigorously monitored, and there is a strong emphasis on the development of students' independent learning skills. Students endorse the high quality of their learning experience and recognise and value the expertise of staff. The extensive range of GCE AS/A level subjects is supplemented by a strong enrichment programme. Guidance and support for students are very good, with strong and effective target-setting and progress monitoring. There is wide promotion of equality of opportunity. The college has a self critical culture which enables it to identify and address issues and develop good provision further. Its financial position is strong and it provides excellent value for money.

Capacity to improve

Outstanding: grade 1

5. The college demonstrates outstanding capacity to improve. It continually strives to improve the already excellent standards through a rigorous process of performance review and development. There is a clear focus, through its internal lesson observation programme, on assuring the highest quality of learning outcomes for all its students. New initiatives, such as the virtual learning environment and extension of the 'learner voice' are further improving performance. It has improved still further the already high levels of achievement since the last inspection and consistently ensured that learners' progress exceeds expectations.

Achievements and standards

Outstanding: grade 1

6. Achievements and standards are outstanding. Overall success rates are consistently high and well above sixth form college averages. Nearly all of the college's provision is for 16-18 students at level 3, where success rates for GCE A level were 97% and for GCE AS level, 91% in 2006. In 2005, the college was the best performing in the sector, on the measure of long course success rates. The progress of learners is also outstanding. Over the last five years, students have achieved significantly better GCE A level grades than might be predicted from their GCSE results; the proportion of A and B grades at GCE A level is high. Progression to higher education is excellent with nearly 90% of students gaining a university place. Attendance at lessons is better than 90% and improving year on year. The college has taken steps to address the relatively low pass rates in applied GCE AS courses in business and ICT.

## Quality of provision

Outstanding: grade 1

7. Teaching and learning are consistently good and much is outstanding. The college sets high standards through its rigorous lesson observation scheme. There is effective sharing of outstanding practice and support for teachers to improve their practice further. There is a strong and successful focus on developing the independent learning skills of students, who demonstrate a good understanding of these skills and how to improve. Teaching and learning are supported well by the expertise and commitment of staff, which are recognised and appreciated by students. These qualities help students to develop a strong motivation to succeed. There has been good progress in the development of the college's virtual learning environment. Work is in hand to embed its use more consistently across subject areas.

8. The college offers an extensive range of GCE AS/A level subjects which effectively meet the needs of its students, who progress predominantly to higher education. There is a strong programme of enrichment activities which encourages good participation amongst students and diversifies their interests. In addition, the 'Woodhouse Challenge' provides a stimulating programme of talks by expert speakers, including politicians, writers and scientists, which is much valued by students. Current developments in accommodation will improve on-site access to sports facilities from September 2007. Social and educational inclusion is good within the specialised nature of its provision. The college has increased its recruitment of Black and minority ethnic students steadily over the last five years, to a level much higher than that in the area, and has close partnership arrangements with local 11-16 schools. The college is taking steps to address the declining take-up of its small intermediate GNVQ provision.

9. Guidance and support for students are very good. There are particularly effective arrangements to track and monitor the progress of all students, by subject tutors and by pastoral tutors who work closely together. Target-setting is effective and contributes effectively to students' understanding of their own progress. Effective arrangements are in place to identify and meet students' additional and specific learning needs, and there has been good progress in meeting the needs of advanced bilingual learners. There is very good support for students on careers and university entrance. There are many opportunities for students to give their views and influence decision-making. They are frequently consulted through focus groups and surveys, and their views used to amend policy and the curriculum. The college has identified aspects of the 'student voice' which it intends to develop further.

## Leadership and management

Outstanding: grade 1

10. Leadership and management are outstanding. The college has developed a self-critical culture that ensures it is continually striving to improve its already excellent performance. Quality assurance mechanisms are robust and understood by all staff. There is a thorough analysis of activities to support the *Every Child Matters* themes with a wide range of initiatives already in place. The strategic plan

appropriately aims to consolidate the 'niche market' position of the college. It is heavily oversubscribed and, with the agreement of the Learning and Skills Council, will continue to focus on the provision of advanced courses for 16-18 students. It recognises that in the future, provision will need to be configured in the context of a wider area 14-19 curriculum plan. The college is effectively promoting equality of opportunity, including race equality, and has made particularly good progress on its disability action plan. It assesses learners' achievements by ethnic group, and celebrates the cultural diversity of the students. Governors carefully scrutinise all aspects of college operations and ensure it is financially sound. Value for money is achieved through the effective deployment of highly skilled staff and the maintenance of high average class sizes. A significant investment is made in the professional development of staff to support their subject needs and those of the college as a whole.



## Learners' achievements

Table 1

Success rates\* on mainstream level 1 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2004 to 2006, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

| Notional Level       | Exp End Year | 16-18              |              |               |      | 19+                |              |               |      |
|----------------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------|---------------|------|--------------------|--------------|---------------|------|
|                      |              | Starts – Transfers | College Rate | National Rate | Diff | Starts – Transfers | College Rate | National Rate | Diff |
| 1 Long               | 03/04        | 67                 | 64.2         | 67.6          | -3.5 | 0                  |              |               |      |
|                      | 04/05        | 42                 | 66.7         | 67.9          | -1.2 | 0                  |              |               |      |
|                      | 05/06        | 48                 | 69           |               |      | 0                  |              |               |      |
| GNVQs and precursors | 03/04        | 0                  |              |               |      | 0                  |              |               |      |
|                      | 04/05        | 0                  |              |               |      | 0                  |              |               |      |
|                      | 05/06        | 0                  |              |               |      | 0                  |              |               |      |
| NVQs                 | 03/04        | 0                  |              |               |      | 0                  |              |               |      |
|                      | 04/05        | 0                  |              |               |      | 0                  |              |               |      |
|                      | 05/06        | 0                  |              |               |      | 0                  |              |               |      |
| Other                | 03/04        | 67                 | 64.2         | 67.6          | -3.5 | 0                  |              |               |      |
|                      | 04/05        | 42                 | 66.7         | 67.9          | -1.2 | 0                  |              |               |      |
|                      | 05/06        | 48                 | 69           |               |      | 0                  |              |               |      |

Table 2

Success rates\* on mainstream level 2 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2004 to 2006, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

| Notional Level       | Exp End Year | 16-18              |              |               |      | 19+                |              |               |      |
|----------------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------|---------------|------|--------------------|--------------|---------------|------|
|                      |              | Starts – Transfers | College Rate | National Rate | Diff | Starts – Transfers | College Rate | National Rate | Diff |
| 2 Long               | 03/04        | 85                 | 84.7         | 74.2          | 10.5 | 0                  |              |               |      |
|                      | 04/05        | 95                 | 94.7         | 71.8          | 23.0 | 0                  |              |               |      |
|                      | 05/06        | 80                 | 89           |               |      | 0                  |              |               |      |
| GCSEs                | 03/04        | 67                 | 82.1         | 77.0          | 5.1  | 0                  |              |               |      |
|                      | 04/05        | 71                 | 94.4         | 77.8          | 16.5 | 0                  |              |               |      |
|                      | 05/06        | 63                 | 90           |               |      | 0                  |              |               |      |
| GNVQs and precursors | 03/04        | 18                 | 94.4         | 72.5          | 21.9 | 0                  |              |               |      |
|                      | 04/05        | 24                 | 95.8         | 74.3          | 21.5 | 0                  |              |               |      |
|                      | 05/06        | 17                 | 82           |               |      | 0                  |              |               |      |
| NVQs                 | 03/04        | 0                  |              |               |      | 0                  |              |               |      |
|                      | 04/05        | 0                  |              |               |      | 0                  |              |               |      |
|                      | 05/06        | 0                  |              |               |      | 0                  |              |               |      |
| Other                | 03/04        | 0                  |              |               |      | 0                  |              |               |      |
|                      | 04/05        | 0                  |              |               |      | 0                  |              |               |      |
|                      | 05/06        | 0                  |              |               |      | 0                  |              |               |      |

Table 3

Success rates\* on mainstream level 3 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2004 to 2006, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

| Notional Level       | Exp End Year | 16-18              |              |               |       | 19+                |              |               |      |
|----------------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------|---------------|-------|--------------------|--------------|---------------|------|
|                      |              | Starts – Transfers | College Rate | National Rate | Diff  | Starts – Transfers | College Rate | National Rate | Diff |
| 3 Long               | 03/04        | 3,121              | 89.5         | 80.3          | 9.2   | 0                  |              |               |      |
|                      | 04/05        | 3,160              | 93.4         | 82.1          | 11.3  | 0                  |              |               |      |
|                      | 05/06        | 3,328              | 93           |               |       | 0                  |              |               |      |
| A/A2 Levels          | 03/04        | 1,162              | 97.7         | 91.3          | 6.4   | 0                  |              |               |      |
|                      | 04/05        | 1,202              | 96.5         | 91.9          | 4.6   | 0                  |              |               |      |
|                      | 05/06        | 1,170              | 97           |               |       | 0                  |              |               |      |
| AS Levels            | 03/04        | 1,759              | 89.8         | 75.9          | 14.0  | 0                  |              |               |      |
|                      | 04/05        | 1,887              | 92.1         | 77.7          | 14.4  | 0                  |              |               |      |
|                      | 05/06        | 2,090              | 91           |               |       | 0                  |              |               |      |
| GNVQs and precursors | 03/04        | 64                 | 75           | 68.1          | 6.9   | 0                  |              |               |      |
|                      | 04/05        | 61                 | 68.9         | 74.5          | -5.7  | 0                  |              |               |      |
|                      | 05/06        | 60                 | 82           |               |       | 0                  |              |               |      |
| NVQs                 | 03/04        | 0                  |              |               |       | 0                  |              |               |      |
|                      | 04/05        | 0                  |              |               |       | 0                  |              |               |      |
|                      | 05/06        | 0                  |              |               |       | 0                  |              |               |      |
| Other                | 03/04        | 84                 | 36.9         | 64.1          | -27.1 | 0                  |              |               |      |
|                      | 04/05        | 10                 | 100          | 71.6          | 28.4  | 0                  |              |               |      |
|                      | 05/06        | 12                 | 92           |               |       | 0                  |              |               |      |

Note:

\*Figures for 2003/04 and 2004/05 from CPR; 2005/06 from data supplied by the college