

Report on National Benchmarking for Woodlands Secondary School 2024 - 2025

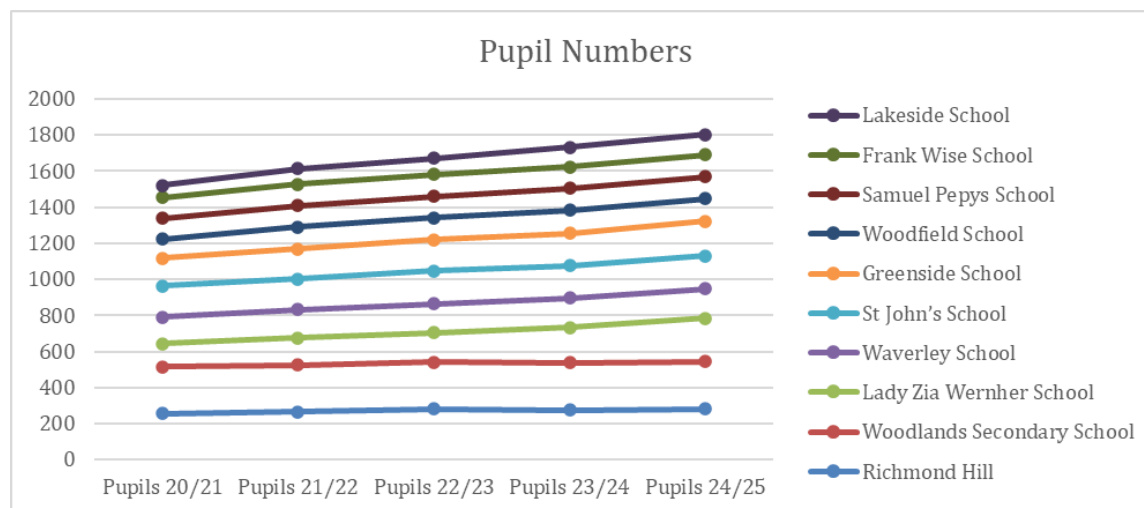
INTRODUCTION

This report details the findings on National Benchmarking for 2024/25. The schools within the Special School Monitoring and Assessment Group (SSMAG) within which Woodlands Secondary School (WSS) stands have been selected to benchmark against. SSMAG consists of several Special Schools within the neighbouring counties that have either Good or Outstanding Ofsted ratings. Ten of these schools were selected based on the SEN need type of the pupils being relative to use as a comparator. All analysis is against the CFR data submitted at the 2024/25 year end.

School Size (pupil numbers)

Name	Local Authority	Pupils 20/21	Pupils 21/22	Pupils 22/23	Pupils 23/24	Pupils 24/25
Richmond Hill	Luton	255.0	265.0	280.0	275.0	282
Woodlands Secondary School	Luton	259.0	261.0	262.0	262.0	263
Lady Zia Wernher School	Luton	128.5	148.0	163.0	196.5	240
Waverley School	Enfield	149.5	158.0	160.0	162.5	163
St John's School	Bedford	170.0	170.0	181.5	179.0	183
Greenside School	Hertfordshire	154.5	165.0	172.0	179.0	190
Woodfield School	Hertfordshire	105.0	121.5	123.5	128.0	125
Samuel Pepys School	Cambridgeshire	117.0	119.0	119.0	123.0	124
Frank Wise School	Oxfordshire	115.5	119.0	119.5	118.5	121
Lakeside School	Hertfordshire	67.0	87.0	92.0	107.0	112
Average		152.1	164.4	167.3	173.1	180.2

For all data within this report, data favourable to the average will be coloured blue and data adverse to the average coloured red. To enable a like for like comparison, where possible all data has been calculated on a per pupil measure.



In the 24/25 academic year, the majority of schools are continuing the trend of pupil numbers increasing. Lady Zia Wernher school has significantly increased following the expansion to a second site. Woodlands Secondary School is still the second largest school within the SSMA.

Staff Structure

The below graph details the staff structure as full-time equivalent members of staff on a **per pupil measure**. For example, WSS had 8.56 pupils per 1 FTE Teacher. This was 8.73 in 23/24 which is explained by flexible working and reduced hours becoming more common within the teaching workforce.

School	Pupils	School Workforce (FTE)	Teachers (FTE)	Senior Leadership Team (FTE)	Teaching Assistants (FTE)	Non Classroom Support Staff (FTE)	Auxiliary Staff (FTE)
Richmond Hill	282	1.79	8.23	58.75	2.65	22.15	66.20
Woodlands Secondary School	263	1.87	8.56	65.75	2.98	21.77	28.25
Lady Zia Wernher School	240	1.83	8.76	48.00	3.05	23.58	16.05
Waverley School	163	1.58	7.78	54.17	2.27	23.08	50.31
St John's School	183	1.69	6.38	33.89	2.99	18.52	21.73
Greenside School	190	1.61	7.45	54.60	2.36	30.84	31.83
Woodfield School	125	1.69	7.19	31.25	2.53	19.72	145.35*
Samuel Pepys School	124	1.64	7.02	25.83	2.50	48.82	21.09
Frank Wise School	121	1.63	6.21	28.69	2.62	25.10	32.05
Lakeside School	112	1.62	8.24	56.00	2.29	31.37	35.78
Average	180.2	1.69	7.58	45.69	2.62	26.50	44.86 (34 excl. *)
<i>23/24 Average</i>		1.71	7.35	44.53	2.71	25.77	53.24 (24 excl *)

Woodlands total workforce headcount is lower than its comparison schools on a per pupil measure i.e. there are more pupils per member of staff. Whilst this brings a financial benefit, there are challenges dependent on the needs and cohort of the students. An appropriate staff structures needs to be established to adequately support the school.

For most of the staff headcount data, Woodlands is not too far away from the average values. Woodlands SLT is the smallest covering 65.75 pupils per member of SLT. This impacts upon workload of senior leaders and resilience. It is difficult to interpret the Auxiliary Staff data as three schools have a significantly different headcount. Auxiliary staff, includes Midday Supervisors, catering and premises staff. It is understood that Richmond Hill does not employ Midday Supervisors, and this would explain their variance under this section. Non-Classroom support staff is down as over staffed, although it is difficult to interpret as I have not been able to fully reconcile the roles included. My assumption is it includes office staff, ICT staff, Family Workers, Specialist TA roles and Behaviour Support roles. Each of these categories have a recommended per pupil ratio which varies significantly between roles.

As part of the regular staffing reviews conducted with the Headteacher, the recommended staff ratios by department were reviewed against last year's benchmarking report and the current Woodlands Structure. This determines that whilst the office team are understaffed there is capacity within the ICT and site teams. It also flags class sizes being larger than recommended with Woodlands having 1 teacher to 9.23 pupils with the recommendation being nearer 7. It is well documented by the headteacher the ongoing challenges with violence at work directed towards staff. There appears to be a strong link between larger class sizes in smaller classrooms and an increase in the number of incidents. The school has an increasing population of students who are less tolerant of sharing spaces with others.

Staff Ratio	Recommended	SSMAG	Woodlands actual	Under/ Over staffed
SLT	40	44.5	66.25	Under
Teacher	7	7.35	9.23	Under
Support Staff	3	2.71	2.14	Over
Admin	27.5	25.77	53	Under
ICT	150		101.92	Over
Site	112.50		66.25	Over
Cleaner	5.5		18.93	Over
Family Worker	112.50		79.10	Over
MDSA	18.93			Over

- The above recommended ratios were determined based on online research
- Support staff being over is based on the average pupil and does not take into account specific difficulties/ challenges of particular students. The current support staff structure at woodlands reflects the current needs of the students.

Staffing Costs

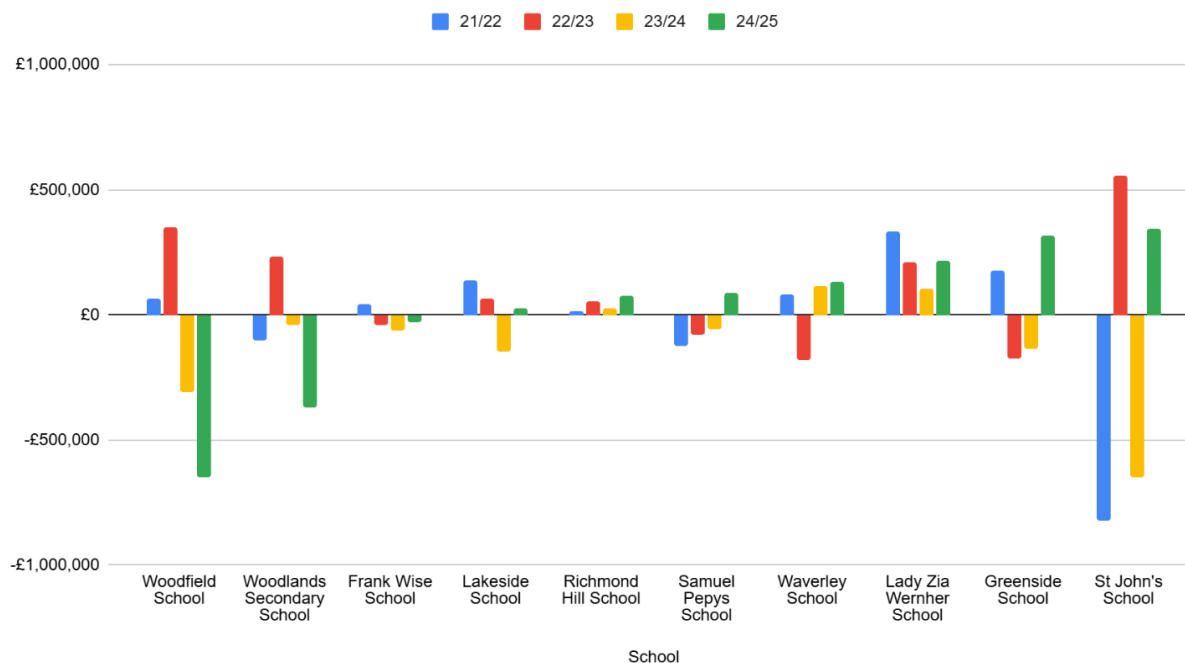
The below table details the annual cost per staff category within the 24/25 financial year on a per pupil measure.

School	Pupils	Teaching Staff	Educational Support Staff	Admin & Clerical Staff	Non-Educational Support Staff	Prof. Services (non curriculum)	Other Staff
Richmond Hill	282	£8k	£12k	£0.9k	£1.1k	£0.2k	£0
Woodlands Secondary School	263	£9.1k	£12k	£0.8k	£1.3k	£0.2k	£0.4k
Lady Zia Wernher School	240	£8.1k	£10k	£1.1k	£2.2k	£0.2k	£1k
Waverley School	163	£11k	£16k	£1.2k	£1.8k	£0.3k	£0.4k
St John's School	183	£9.9k	£11k	£2.3k	£3.3k	£0.05k	£0.9k
Greenside School	190	£8.5	£12k	£0.6k	£1.2k	£0.2k	£0.4k
Woodfield School	125	£9.7k	£9.9k	£2k	£2.7k	£0.4k	£0.2k
Samuel Pepys School	124	£10k	£10k	£1.1k	£2.6k	£0.6k	£0.9k
Frank Wise School	121	£12	£12k	£1.1k	£2.1k	£0.3k	£0.7k
Lakeside School	112	£8.6k	£13k	£1.2k	£1.6k	£0.2k	£0.2k
Average	180.2	£9.5k	£12k	£1.2k	£2k	£0.3k	£0.5k

Based on a cost per pupil, most staff categories are in line with the average cost per pupil. Admin and Clerical staff and Non-Educational Support staff are showing as low in comparison to the other schools suggesting Woodlands has lower grade staff.

In Year Balance & Revenue Reserve (absolute balance not per pupil)

In Year Balance

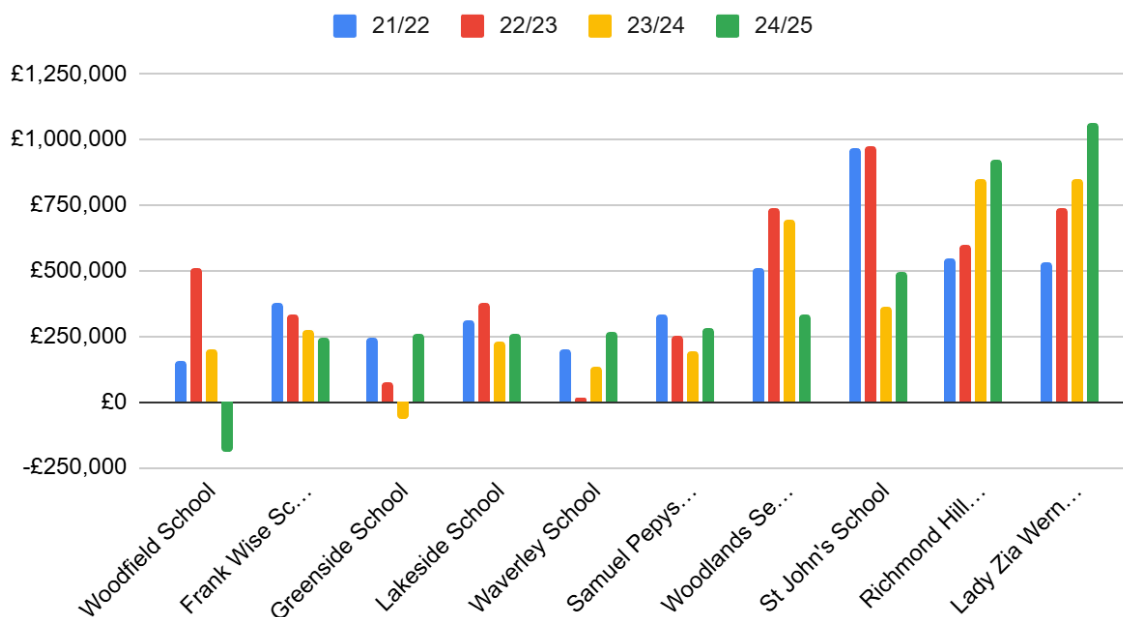


In Year Balance					
School	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	
Woodfield School	£64,100	£349,600	£-307,408	£-650,129	
Woodlands Secondary School	£-103,600	£232,600	£-41,936	£-367,223	
Frank Wise School	£44,000	£-39,500	£-61,682	£-29,872	
Lakeside School	£138,300	£63,400	£-146,099	£26,660	
Richmond Hill School	£17,100	£55,000	£24,069	£78,931	
Samuel Pepys School	£-126,800	£-80,800	£-57,976	£88,774	
Waverley School	£84,200	£-181,000	£114,167	£133,557	
Lady Zia Wernher School	£335,500	£212,100	£105,160	£215,259	
Greenside School	£174,500	£-171,900	£-137,681	£318,136	
St John's School	£-823,400	£556,900	£-648,131	£346,136	
% of school s with In Year Deficits	30%	40%	70%	30%%	

Whilst 7 out of the 10 schools, including Woodlands, had an in-year deficit in 23/24, only 3 remained with an in year deficit in 24/25. The 4 schools that transferred to a surplus balance were Lakeside, Samuel Pepys, Greenside and St Johns. From 23/24, Lakeside reported a per pupil income increase of £4.6k, Samuel Pepys £3.5k, Greenside £2k plus a 6% increase in pupil numbers. St Johns income was not available on the benchmarking website. Woodland's pupil numbers remained steady, and income only rose by an average of £500 per pupil.

Revenue Reserve

Revenue reserve



Revenue Reserve					
School	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	
Woodfield School	£158,100	£507,900	£200,515	£-193,993	
Frank Wise School	£376,200	£336,700	£275,019	£245,147	
Greenside School	£247,100	£75,200	£-62,463	£255,673	
Lakeside School	£313,300	£376,700	£230,605	£257,264	
Waverley School	£199,600	£18,600	£132,725	£266,283	
Samuel Pepys School	£334,300	£253,600	£195,621	£284,395	
Woodlands Secondary School	£506,600	£739,200	£697,241	£330,019	
St John's School	£969,100	£973,300	£362,590	£492,153	
Richmond Hill School	£544,700	£599,700	£847,786	£926,718	
Lady Zia Wernher School	£529,900	£742,000	£847,193	£1,062,452	

Income

The below table details total income per school with an income per pupil calculation.

24/25

School	Local Authority	Pupils	Total Income	Income per pupil
Richmond Hill	Luton	282	£6m	£25k
Woodlands Secondary School	Luton	263	£6.9m	£26k
Lady Zia Wernher School	Luton	240	£5.1m	£29k
Waverley School	Enfield	163	£5.9m	£36.7k
St John's School	Bedford	183	-	-
Greenside School	Hertfordshire	190	£5.6m	£29.7k
Woodfield School	Hertfordshire	125	£3.9m	£31.2k
Samuel Pepys School	Cambridgeshire	124	£3.4k	£27.5k
Frank Wise School	Oxfordshire	121	£3.6,	£30.2k
Lakeside School	Hertfordshire	112	£3.4m	£30.4k
Average		180.2	£5.1k	£29k

23/24

School	Local Authority	Pupils	Total Income	Income per pupil
Richmond Hill	Luton	275	£6.49m	£23.6k
Woodlands Secondary School	Luton	262	£6.68m	£25.5k
Lady Zia Wernher School	Luton	196.5	£4.63m	£24.6k
Waverley School	Enfield	162.5	£5.57m	£34.3k
St John's School	Bedford	179	£4.69m	£26.2k
Greenside School	Hertfordshire	179	£4.96m	£27.7k
Woodfield School	Hertfordshire	128	£3.84m	£30k
Samuel Pepys School	Cambridgeshire	123	£2.95m	£24k
Frank Wise School	Oxfordshire	118.5	£3.28m	£27.6k
Lakeside School	Hertfordshire	107	£2.76m	£25.8k
Average		173.2	£4.58m	£27.5k

Woodlands Secondary is the 2nd largest school but has the forth lowest income per pupil out of the 10 comparative schools. The per pupil income is lower than average and this is the same for all 3 Luton schools. This table suggests difference in income/ funding at local authority level.

Expenditure

Other Staff Costs (on a per pupil measure)

School	Pupils	Indirect Employee Expenses	Staff Development and Training	Staff Related Insurance
Richmond Hill	282	£209	£22	£113
Woodlands Secondary School	263	£158	£46	£0
Lady Zia Wernher School	240	£115	£80	£0
Waverley School	163	£95	£160	£0
St John's School	183	£0	£451	£69
Greenside School	190	£148	£196	£4
Woodfield School	125	£97	£248	£105
Samuel Pepys School	124	£66	£53	£0
Frank Wise School	121	£138	£138	£9
Lakeside School	112	£159	£248	£77
Average	180.2	£118	£164	£38

Woodlands Secondary School is showing as lower than average for staff development and training and staff related insurance but above against indirect employee expenses. Indirect employee expenses are high again due to a £11.5k staff settlement being paid in 24/25. Four of the 10 schools do not take out Staff Related Absence Insurance. Buy In has previously been explored but the cost of insurance is greater than the costs of absence/ cover and therefore it is not considered to be financially viable. Woodlands has previously highlighted lower staff development and training costs and this is due to CPD being performed in house where possible.

Other Costs (on a per pupil measure)

School	Pupils	Grounds Maint	Admin supplies (Non-educational)	Educational ICT	Learning resources (not ICT)	Special facilities	Other Insurance	Catering Supplies Costs
Richmond Hill	282	£28	£147	£133	£397	£0	£33	£329
Woodlands Secondary School	263	£27	£112	£123	£542	£68	£50	£388
Lady Zia Wernher School	240	£14	£106	£115	£336	£40	£36	£372
Waverley School	163	£0	£236	£625	£822	£242	£171	£664
St John's School	183	£44	£477	£22	£852	£0	£22	£549
Greenside School	190	£21	£72	£137	£778	£10	£61	£186
Woodfield School	125	£115	£346	£132	£708	£0	£77	£295
Samuel Pepys School	124	£0	£131	£202	£360	£2	£71	£334
Frank Wise School	121	£60	£62	£267	£614	£35	£40	£353
Lakeside School	112	£258	£214	£243	£1438	£0	£45	£465
Average	180.2	£57	£190	£200	£685	£40	£61	£393

Woodlands is showing lower than average on all Other Costs on a per pupil measure with the exception of special facilities. This emphasises how all costs are streamlined as much as possible to manage current funding pressures. Special facility costs were high in 24/25 due remedial and energy efficiency works taking place for the hydrotherapy pool in 24/25.

Premises Related Costs and Utilities (as a % of income)

School	Pupils	Premises Staff Costs	Cleaning & Caretaking	Maintenance of Premises	Other Occupation Costs	Energy Costs	Water and Sewerage
Richmond Hill	275	2.8%	0.3%	1%	0.2%	1%	0.1%
Woodlands Secondary School	262	3.6%	0.3%	2.5%	0.2%	1.8%	0.1%
Lady Zia Wernher School	196.5	3.2%	0.3%	1%	0.1%	2.1%	0.2%
Waverley School	162.5	1.7%	2.4%	4.4%	0.2%	2.2%	1%
St John's School	179	3.2%	0.3%	2.9%	0.2%	2.7%	0.1%
Greenside School	179	1.6%	1.4%	1.4%	2.1%	1.6%	0.1%
Woodfield School	128	1.1%	1.4%	1.1%	1.1%	1.7%	0.1%
Samuel Pepys School	123	3.1%	0.3%	0.8%	0.5%	2.5%	0.3%
Frank Wise School	118.5	1.3%	1.5%	1.9%	0.4%	2.5%	0.1%
Lakeside School	107	0%	2.1%	1%	2.2%	1.2%	0.2%
Average		2.16%	1.03%	1.8%	0.72%	1.93%	0.23%

Premises related costs are not available as a per pupil measure, therefore cost as a % of income has been selected. Premises staff costs and maintenance of premises are above average. Woodlands completed a number of site works in 24/25 approved from the reserve such as the hall and dance studio refurbishment and contribution towards 2 new minibuses.

Conclusion

This benchmarking review generally supports that Woodlands effectively manages its cost and staffing. The staff structure is regularly reviewed by the Headteacher and SBM. Funding is an ongoing concern and regularly raised with the local authority. Until this is addressed, Woodlands is compromised regarding essential enhancements that are needed within the staff structure such as reviewing SLT and Admin and Clerical Staff.

The Headteacher and SBM will continue to regularly monitor income, expenditure and the staff structure.

Completed by Vikki Hayward
January 2026

Signature of Chair of Governors (*Delegated to Vice Chair at Spring FPP*)

...Nadeem Butt..... Date9/2/26.....

Signature of Headteacher

.....Sandra Clarke.....Date9/2/26.....