

Wyvern College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134199
Local Authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	360608
Inspection dates	12–13 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Christopher Wood

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	361
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Henry Head
Headteacher	Chris Tomes (acting)
Date of previous school inspection	11 June 2008
School address	Chruch Road Laverstock, Salisbury Salisbury SP1 1RE
Telephone number	01722500700
Fax number	01722500900
Email address	admin@wyverncollege.wilts.sch.uk

Age group	11–16
Inspection dates	12–13 January 2011
Inspection number	360608

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 documentation 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'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 4234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. They observed 22 lessons taught by 21 teachers. This included a total of four joint observations with the acting principal and a member of the senior leadership team. In addition, they observed parts of lessons, tutor periods and a house assembly to investigate aspects of learning and well-being. Inspectors also scrutinised the college's self-evaluation, policies, action plans and documents relating to the tracking of students' progress.

During the inspection, meetings were held with college staff, three members of the governing body and groups of students who were representative of the college's diversity. Inspectors also analysed the responses to questionnaires returned by 60 parents and carers, 79 students and 23 members of the college staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the college's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The rate of progress made by students, particularly lower-attaining boys in Key Stage 4, to ascertain whether teaching is appropriately adapted and sufficiently challenging.
- The extent to which improvements made to the curriculum, including the college's specialism, have had a positive impact on improving outcomes for all students.
- The impact of the college's care, guidance and support on improving outcomes, particularly in terms of the students' attendance and well-being.
- The impact of the actions taken by leaders at all levels on raising attainment and improving outcomes for all students. ♦

Information about the school

Wyvern College is much smaller than the average sized secondary school. It is a Church of England Voluntary Aided school that shares a site with two other secondary schools. These schools work together to offer some joint provision in Key Stage 4. An acting principal has been in post since March 2009.

Most students are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of students who are known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. A small percentage of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds and/or speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to that seen nationally. The number of students on roll has fallen since the last inspection.

The college has held specialist status for technology since 2003.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Wyvern College is a satisfactory school that is improving in a number of areas. The rate of improvement, which has been steady since the last inspection, is now accelerating as a result of strengthened whole-college leadership, better teaching and a broader curriculum. Attainment, which is broadly average, is also improving and students are now making quicker progress towards the more ambitious targets that have been set. Notably, the proportion of students who attain five GCSEs at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, has increased since the last inspection. However, attainment in some other subjects, although improving, has been too variable. Consequently, the progress made by students overall is satisfactory.

The good care, guidance and support provided by staff at the college, and through the successful partnerships that are in place, is a real strength. As a result, students develop into personable, enquiring and well-rounded young men who frequently demonstrate the 'courage, commitment and compassion' that lie at the heart of the college's mission. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Parents and carers acknowledge strongly that their children are safe, well cared for and enjoy school. One parent spoke for others when saying: 'Since joining the school my son has become confident and grown up. He is learning academically and also learning life and social skills.' Inspectors agree. Positive relationships between all members of the college community are seen in the students' good behaviour around the college campus and in lessons. Attendance, although broadly average, has fallen since the last inspection. College leaders are rightly focused on improving this area but recognise that there is still some way to go.

Under the acting principal's determined leadership, supported well by other leaders, there have been discernible improvements to the quality of teaching. However, there remain inconsistencies, particularly in relation to the quality of written feedback and the extent to which activities are challenging, encourage independence and enable students to work towards their personal targets. The curriculum is now broader as a result of college leaders' commitment to working in collaboration with other schools. The impact of the specialist technology subjects is also developing well. However, leaders also recognise the need to extend the existing pathways further, particularly for those students who would benefit from foundation level courses. The track record of measured improvement and increasingly perceptive self-evaluation demonstrates that there is satisfactory capacity to sustain and build on these developments in the future.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the attendance of all students, through more rigorous evaluation of the support strategies that are in place, so that it is more securely in line with or above the national average.
- Increase the rate of progress that students make in lessons so that attainment rises in all subjects by:
 - planning activities that are more challenging and develop students' independence
 - ? ensuring that activities enable students to understand what skills they need to demonstrate in their responses so that they can achieve their personal targets
 - improving the quality of written feedback so that students receive clearer guidance on how to improve their work.
- Ensure that the well-devised plans to develop the curriculum further lead to improved outcomes for students of all abilities and interests.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Attainment, including that in most of the specialist subjects, is average and improving steadily. In 2010, the proportion of students who attained five GCSEs at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, represented the college's best ever results. These students had made good progress in English and mathematics. Attainment in vocational subjects was above the national average. Attainment in other subjects was more variable and the proportion of students who attained five GCSEs at grades A* to C was below average. Overall this represents satisfactory progress. In lessons students are making satisfactory progress but this is accelerating because teaching is improving and students apply themselves well. Inspectors looked closely at the progress made by lower attaining students and found that both they and students with special educational needs and/or disabilities were making progress at the same rate as their peers. Taken together, this means that students are satisfactorily prepared for their future education and careers.

Students are polite and get along with each other. They act responsibly around the college grounds and in lessons, where their good behaviour often contributes strongly to their own learning and that of others. They feel safe and trust teachers to deal quickly with their concerns. As one student told inspectors, 'teachers are here to help and they listen'. Attendance is broadly average but has declined since the last inspection.

Students contribute actively to their immediate community through the college council and would appreciate more opportunities to do so. They have organised sports fixtures for primary schools, delivered a computer course for local residents and helped to design a garden for local young people with physical disabilities. They also work to improve the local environment through participation in the Laverstock Campus Community Council. Work-related and interpersonal skills are developed successfully through enterprise and technology events and noteworthy contributions to the young chamber of commerce and the youth parliament. Students know how to adopt healthy lifestyles and their participation in sport is strong. Through regular acts of collective worship, curricular and extra-curricular opportunities, community work and fundraising, students develop a good moral framework and a sensitive understanding of other cultures. Consequently, their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory but improving as a result of successful recruitment and the commitment of all staff to developing their classroom practice. The proportion of good teaching across all subject areas has increased and some is outstanding. The positive features include:

- the teachers' secure subject knowledge that enables them to plan engaging lessons with clear objectives
- the constructive relationships between staff and students that engender a positive atmosphere in lessons
- the increasing use of collaborative activities that promote teamwork and independence
- the improving use of teachers' questioning to probe and extend the students' thinking and understanding. ♦

However, there remain some inconsistencies. In a few lessons, students are too passive. In these instances, the pace of learning drops, students become restless and they lose their focus on learning. Often, although the planned activities are engaging, teachers do not explicitly identify the level of response they require from students of differing abilities.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Consequently, while students usually complete the set tasks, they do not always meet their personal targets. Generally, oral feedback is good. However, the college astutely recognises the need to improve the quality of written feedback so that it provides students with better guidance on how to improve their work.

The college has a clear focus on providing a personalised curriculum, through the various pathways it offers, and evaluates its provision regularly. The curriculum at Key Stage 4 has broadened through well-established links with partner schools. This has extended the choice of both academic and vocational options. The Key Stage 3 curriculum has also been adapted so that it is more balanced and makes better use of cross-curricular approaches. Students appreciate the extra-curricular activities that are on offer but would like greater variety. Leaders also recognise that participation rates in existing activities could improve further. The suite of specialist technology subjects is now making a better contribution across the college. Take up of these subjects has improved, with food technology proving popular. Students also benefit from a wide range of science courses. However, leaders wisely acknowledge that the curriculum does not yet fully meet the needs of students of all abilities and interests, particularly those at a foundation level. The college is taking a leading role in driving further improvements through even greater collaboration with its partners. Well-devised plans are in place but it will take time for these to embed and have an impact on improving outcomes.

Good care, guidance and support are underpinned by the commitment of staff to meeting the needs of all students, including those who are vulnerable, through strong partnership working with a range of external agencies. Arrangements to support pupils as they move from primary school are good. As one parent of a Year 7 boy commented, 'He has settled in really well and is achieving. He is totally relaxed, enjoys his lessons and has built up a trusting and respectful relationship with his teachers.' The information and guidance given to students about their future careers and education are also well formulated. Although a relatively new initiative, academic mentoring is having a positive impact on students' motivation and progress. College leaders recognise that currently there are a few students whose attendance is too low. Good systems are in place to track and support these students but too little is done to evaluate the impact of these strategies.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership at all levels is good. Under the resolute direction of the acting principal, senior leaders have focused successfully on raising achievement through improvements to teaching, the curriculum and the creation of a more positive learning ethos. They have

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

been well supported in this by vibrant middle leaders. Consequently, staff are proud to work at the college and know what it is trying to achieve. Some middle leaders are new to the college and/or their roles. While their positive work can be seen already in improvements to provision, it will take time for their efforts to have a more discernible impact on outcomes.

The governing body offers the college a good balance of support and challenge. Since the last inspection it has taken a leading role in helping to secure the future direction of the college through good collaboration with other schools. Together with college leaders, it ensures that statutory training and procedures are in place to keep students safe. A clear focus on the achievement and well-being of all groups ensures that equality is promoted well. For example, the college rightly places students who speak English as an additional language into higher-ability sets as a means of exposing them to a rich language environment. This enables those individuals to develop their communication skills quickly so that they become fully integrated. Leaders understand the community they serve and successfully promote cohesion within the college and the local area. Students are outward looking but the college's own evaluation rightly acknowledges the need to develop the practical opportunities that students have to engage with young people from different backgrounds and to gain a deeper understanding of cultural diversity within the United Kingdom. The college's engagement with parents and carers is satisfactory.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire was similar to the average for secondary schools.

Most parents are happy with their children's experience and acknowledge clearly that their children enjoy college and are kept safe. Some parents expressed concerns in their written

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

comments about areas of the college's work. These were discussed with the acting principal during the inspection.

Although parents say that the college responds to their concerns and suggestions, some feel it does not do enough to help them support their children's learning. The college has recently developed a parents portal that provides online information and is in the process of setting up a parents' forum. Leaders are committed to involving parents more fully in the college's future development and hope that they will take advantage of these initiatives. Some parents also commented that the quality of teaching was variable. Inspectors agree that there is still some inconsistency but found that the overall quality of teaching was getting stronger. Some parents also expressed concerns about poor behaviour. Some comments, although valid, were historical. Inspectors found that behaviour around the college site and in lessons was good. Nevertheless, college leaders are committed to ensuring that behaviour continues to improve so that it benefits students and their teachers.

A few parents felt that uncertainty over the leadership of the college was a concern. Inspectors discussed this issue with the Chair of the Governing Body. He is committed to ensuring that the future direction of the college is confirmed at the earliest time possible.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Wyvern College to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 60 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 361 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	14	23	43	72	3	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	12	20	45	75	3	5	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	16	27	35	58	7	12	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	15	25	32	53	12	20	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	12	20	36	60	5	8	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	12	20	30	50	13	22	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	8	13	43	72	7	12	1	2
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	12	20	37	62	4	7	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	13	22	37	62	6	10	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	14	23	31	52	11	18	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	20	40	67	5	8	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	8	13	39	65	8	13	2	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	17	28	32	53	8	13	1	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



14 January 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Wyvern College, Salisbury SP1 1RE

Recently I visited your college with a team of inspectors to look at how well you were doing. Thank you very much for your help. We enjoyed talking to you in lessons, in meetings and around the college site. You go to a satisfactory school that is improving. Here are some of the main things that we found out.

More of you are now getting five GCSEs at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics. This means your attainment is broadly average and you are making satisfactory progress. You do particularly well in vocational subjects and some of you do well in specialist subjects such as catering. Attainment in some subjects has been weaker. This is changing because teaching at the college is improving in all areas. The curriculum also gives you more choices because of the collaboration with other schools.

Staff provide you with good care, guidance and support. You enjoy lessons, feel safe and say that the college prepares you effectively for your future education or careers. Your behaviour around the site and in lessons is good. You work well with your teachers and other adults. Your attendance is average but a few of you have too much time off school. You know how to keep yourselves healthy. Many of you enjoy taking part in sport. Inspectors were particularly impressed with the contribution you make to the local community through fund-raising events and groups such as the Laverstock Community Campus Council and the Young Chamber of Commerce. You have a good understanding of other faiths and cultures from your lessons. Leaders in the college are now keen to give you more first-hand experience of diversity.

The principal and I have agreed that there are some things that could be even better. These included ensuring that:

- your attendance improves
- teachers plan lessons with more challenge and give better written feedback so that you can further improve your work
- the curriculum is as broad as possible so that all of you achieve.

You can help too. Make sure you all attend school regularly and continue to work productively with your teachers when they plan challenging work for you to do.

Yours sincerely

Chris Wood

Her Majesty's Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', 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.