

Wightwick Hall School

Tinacre Hill, Compton, Wolverhampton, WV6 8DA

Inspection dates 12–13 December 2012

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		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The majority of students make good progress from low starting points and learn well in a wide range of subjects. Some students make excellent progress.
- Teaching and learning are consistently at least good and occasionally outstanding. Teachers question students effectively to check their understanding.
- Teachers make lessons interesting, relevant and practical so that students are motivated to learn and try hard.
- The sixth form is good and the wide range of courses prepares students thoroughly for later learning.
- Students behave well in lessons, responding positively to high staff expectations. Sometimes behaviour is outstanding. Students feel safe and understand different things they can do to stay safe.
- The headteacher and senior leaders convey their ambitious vision to the rest of the staff. Governors challenge the school effectively and contribute well to improvements in teaching and achievement.
- Excellent links with schools and other partners enrich students' opportunities in work-related subjects.
- Federation arrangements between the school and a primary special school provide benefits such as shared staff training.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always make sure teaching assistants help students' with their learning when the teacher is talking to the whole class, and this slows students' progress.
- Students do not always know their targets for learning including in English and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed nine lessons taught by nine teachers, one of which was observed jointly with a senior member of staff. In addition, inspectors observed a morning break, and lunchtime arrangements and looked at a wide range of students' work.
- Inspectors had meetings with two groups of students, staff, three governors, and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents including records of attendance and behaviour, safeguarding documents, data on students' progress, and minutes of governing body meetings.
- Individual students read aloud to the inspectors.
- The inspectors look account of 17 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).

Inspection team

Michael Farrell, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Jennifer Taylor	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Wightwick Hall School has specialist status as a business and enterprise college.
- All students have a statement of special educational needs: most have moderate learning difficulties and many of these have autistic spectrum disorders. A small number have more severe learning difficulties and complex needs.
- Almost all students are White British and all speak English as their first language.
- A small number of students are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of students entitled to the pupil premium (extra money from central government) is above average.
- Only about one in four students are girls.
- In January 2010, the school joined in a federation with Cheery Trees School, a small primary special school which many Wightwick Hall students have previously attended. The two schools have a common governing body. The headteacher of Wightwick Hall is the executive headteacher of the federation.
- Construction courses taught in a specialist centre on the school site by lecturers from the local college are attended by Wightwick Hall students and students from mainstream secondary schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure teachers always see that teaching assistants contribute fully to students' learning including when the teacher is talking to the whole class.
- Make sure that all students are clear about their learning targets including for English and mathematics.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students enter the school with low attainment and some have complex needs. Students in all key stages make good progress from their different starting points. Where teaching is especially strong, some students make exceptional progress.
- Different groups of students achieve well including those who are entitled to pupil premium funding, boys and girls, and students with different special educational needs. This is because the school keeps a careful check on the progress of individuals and groups and takes quick action if a student is slipping behind.
- An impressive range of courses enables students at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form to gain qualifications including GCSE and entry level. Students with the most complex needs develop their basic skills well and sometimes also gain recognised qualifications. Qualifications are closely matched to students' skills and understanding so that they challenge them well.
- Students read widely and regularly, including to each other in pairs, which improves their reading skills and understanding. They achieve well in literacy and numeracy, and in developing their communication skills. Symbols such as outlines of a smiling or a sad face are effectively used as necessary to help understanding and develop students' thinking skills.
- Achievement in practical and vocational subjects, such as bricklaying, hairdressing, and food technology, is very strong because students see the relevance of what they are learning and the clear outcomes. Students develop skills well in a wide range of subjects, including science, art, design and technology and music. They are well prepared for the next stage of their lives, including courses at the local college.
- In a sixth form lesson, students achieved well and experienced different dance techniques because the lesson was carefully structured with several short activities. In a Key Stage 4 science lesson, students thoroughly analysed information from a weighing experiment because the teacher explained things clearly and posed challenging questions. In an English lesson, students in Key Stage 3 understood characters in a story because of the teacher's thoughtful questioning and because they concentrated hard, reading to each other in pairs.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is consistently good, including in English and mathematics, and there is some outstanding teaching.
- A wide range of effective ways of teaching is used. Teachers demonstrate tasks clearly, give students opportunities to read in pairs, and ask searching questioning. They convey high expectations and set challenging work so students have to try hard.
- The needs of students with autistic spectrum disorders are met well, for example, by using symbols to help them understand what is going to happen next. For students with severe and complex needs, these are also met well, for example, by lessons comprising short activities that hold their attention. Students entitled to pupil premium funding achieve well because teaching and support are matched closely to their needs.

- Clear planning leads to well-structured lessons where students learn new skills step by step. Sometimes, planning links different subjects, as in an English lesson that made interesting connections with history and science. In an art lesson in Key Stage 3, well-structured explanations and practice in how to draw a mouth kept students' attention and enabled them to make good progress. In another Key Stage 3 lesson, students identified three-dimensional shapes accurately because these were related to real-life examples such as a 'drainpipe'.
- In the positive climate for learning, relationships between students and staff are warm and respectful. In a sixth form lesson, students developed a good understanding of the skills needed for jobs because relationships were strong and the carefully planned activities captured their interest.
- In a sixth form food technology lesson guided by the teacher, students read a recipe for Swiss roll from a projector then discussed a paper version of the illustrated recipe before starting the practical work so they understood clearly what to do. Good relationships and humour were evident when the teacher asked why they should remove a sheet of paper once the food was rolled and a student replied, 'Well I certainly don't want paper in *my* Swiss roll.'
- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution when teaching individual students and small groups. Nevertheless, teachers do not always make sure that teaching assistants have enough to do to help students' learning when the teacher speaks to the whole class. Students do not always know their learning targets including those for English and mathematics. These factors slow students' progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students' behaviour is good in lessons, and around the school at break and lunch times. Sometimes behaviour is excellent. Behaviour is well managed and encouraged by lessons that are interesting and relevant. The balance of hard work and good relationships was captured by a student who said of the school, 'It's friendly but everybody knows what they are doing.'
- The school successfully encourages student leadership including through a student council that involves everyone passing their views to representatives. Students work well with each other in teams when required. Those doing work in construction, such as carpentry, bricklaying and plastering, respond very well to the adult expectations and are highly motivated.
- Students are polite and hardworking and their attitudes to learning are positive. No disruptions to lessons were seen; quite the opposite. Students recognise and can give examples of subjects in which they are doing well, one saying proudly, 'I am ahead in my work'.
- Students say they feel safe and parents and carers who responded to Parent View express confidence about their child's safety. Students know about safety in different circumstances such as road safety and internet safety and can give examples of how to keep safe. Several students remembered a school assembly where there was advice on what to do if you receive a 'bad message' on your computer.
- Students act safely in lessons. Lesson planning and teachers' expectations drive home the message that safety is important, as in a food technology lesson where aspects of safety and risks were thoroughly discussed before cooking started.

- Students are aware of different types of bullying and say this is dealt with effectively if it arises. They recognise that teachers will take time to listen and get a clear picture before taking action. They say, 'Teachers investigate it further so they know what happened – then they act on it.'
- Attendance is above average and students are punctual to lessons because they want to learn.

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders, managers and governors convey high expectations to the staff. They successfully work to improve students' achievement, for instance, by introducing two different ways of assessing progress so that these can be compared and acted upon. The school is also involved in innovations with other schools such as recently developing a well-equipped 'Starfish' coffee bar.
 - Close links with the other school in the federation provide benefits such as shared staff training. Staff are well supported and leaders take into account teachers' own views of which skills they need to develop as well as the school's requirements. Outside courses and coaching within the school are used effectively.
 - Leaders are accurate in their judgements about teaching, they regularly check teachers' work and take steps to ensure teaching is improving. Carefully followed arrangements ensure that staff salaries are linked to their performance.
 - The school's view of itself is accurate and leaders identify clearly what needs to be done. Plans for school development are to the point and thorough so that they lead to improvements. For example, providing more opportunities for reading is increasing students' confidence and skills.
 - The range of courses and opportunities for students to gain qualifications is outstanding. Links with outside agencies, businesses and other schools provide excellent opportunities. For example, they enable Wightwick Hall students to do vocational work with students from mainstream secondary schools.
 - The range of subjects contributes strongly to students' positive views of themselves and to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It encourages better understanding of different cultures through links with school children in Uganda, visits to places of worship, and visitors to the school.
 - Parents and carers responding to the Parent View questionnaire were very positive about the school. This is partly because the school communicates with them effectively.
 - The local authority's 'light touch' monitoring effectively keeps it informed of the school's progress and enables it to monitor improvements such as the school's use of information on how well students are progressing.
- **The governance of the school:**
- The governing body knows that this is a good school, and challenges and supports senior leaders well. Governors are fully aware of how pupil premium funding is spent, for example, on individual meetings with staff to discuss any concerns, and sessions to improve the way students feel about themselves. They are becoming more aware of the effect this spending is having as the school is able to show them increasingly clear evidence. Governors know how well students are progressing and have a good understanding of data in order to compare

Wightwick Hall with other schools. The governing body has an accurate knowledge of the quality of teaching and of how teachers' performance is managed. Its members have a clear overview of safety and ensure safeguarding procedures meet government requirements. Governors manage finances with care. They ensure their own training is up to date by attending relevant courses.

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	124523
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	402264

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	81
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	32
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David James
Headteacher	Paul Elliott
Date of previous school inspection	27 January 2010
Telephone number	01902 761889
Fax number	01902 765080
Email address	office@wightwickhall.staffs.sch.uk

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