



Wennington Hall School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119873
LEA Lancashire
Inspection number 280678
Inspection dates 27 September 2005 to 28 September 2005
Reporting inspector David Smith

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

Type of school	Special	School address	Lodge Lane
School category	Community special		Wennington
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		Lancaster, Lancashire
Gender of pupils	Boys	Telephone number	01524 221333
Number on roll	67	Fax number	01524 222140
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Peter Ridsdale
Date of previous inspection	19 June 2000	Headteacher	Mr J Prendergast

Age group 11 to 16	Inspection dates 27 September 2005 - 28 September 2005	Inspection number 280678
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by David Smith, an additional inspector.

Description of the school

Wennington Hall School is a maintained residential and day special school. It has sixty-eight boys aged 11-16 from Lancashire. Forty-six pupils are resident and all pupils have statements of special educational need for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. A small number of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and no pupils are in the early stages of English language acquisition. Four of the pupils are in public care. The school has recently received a Learning Excellence Award for good practice in raising achievement and enjoyment for learners. The accommodation has recently been improved by the provision of a leisure gym, conference area and additional classrooms.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Wennington Hall School provides its' pupils with a good education. The pupils are proud of their school and happy to attend. The curriculum is good, taught well and enriched by an exceptional range of extra activities. Parents are very positive about the school. The leadership of the head teacher is both skilled and inspirational. The very strong governing body, the staff and partners in the community make major contributions to the success of the school. These positive features help to promote the good progress pupils make and their outstanding personal development. The school provides good value for money.

Strengths and weaknesses are well-known and openly acknowledged. Continual improvement is at the heart of the school's ethos and the weaknesses identified in the last inspection have been dealt with fully. The head and staff have a clear and shared determination to raise attainment. There are, however, weaknesses in the use of assessment, the teaching of information and communication technology (ICT) in other subjects, and the monitoring carried out by subject co-ordinators. Staff morale is high and there is no doubting their determination to provide the very best opportunities for the pupils. The school has the capacity to make the necessary improvements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use assessment more effectively in lesson planning and set challenging targets to raise achievement.
- Increase pupils' access to ICT in all subjects by improving the skills and confidence of staff in the use ICT.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by making the monitoring work of the subject co-ordinators more effective.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

It is not appropriate to compare the standards of pupils' work with all schools nationally but pupils do achieve particularly well, when compared to similar schools. The progress they make between the national tests at the end of Year 9 and Year 11 is good. A wide range of well-chosen academic and vocational courses is provided in Years 10 and 11 and consequently, pupils achieve well, for example, in English and science. Achievement in mathematics was weak at the time of the last inspection; it is now good.

Pupils use their ICT skills very effectively to draft and re-draft their extended writing. However, ICT work in other subjects, for example in mathematics, is of a lower standard because not enough of it is done. Pupils' achievement is promoted by their understanding of the importance of qualifications for their economic well-being in the future. Year 10 pupils are particularly interested in employment opportunities in

ICT. Pupils achieve particularly well in the practical aspects of physical education and the school is in a good position to gain specialist status in this subject.

The time that pupils spend boarding helps to promote marked improvements in their attitudes and this boosts their achievement. Other groups of pupils, such as those in public care, make similar progress to their peers. Careful monitoring of all pupils and adjustment of work to meet particular needs contribute to this, despite some weakness in target setting.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Pupils in Year 7 to 9 responded exceptionally well to an inspirational assembly where they were encouraged to think about "creation". Pupils have many opportunities to develop the respect they have for themselves and others and this has a major impact on their increasing maturity and levels of confidence.

Pupils are given high levels of trust and, consequently, make giant strides in the management of their own behaviour. The need for physical intervention by staff has decreased and the extremely low level of exclusions are a credit to the staff and pupils. Pupils enjoy each others company. Their relations with one another are good. The social ethos of the school is outstanding and pupils respond exceptionally well to the wealth of social activities. Pupils are courteous, helpful and thoroughly enjoy chatting with each other and the staff. Pupils feel safe. They said that bullying is not a major issue and that if there is a problem; staff are always available to help. Child protection procedures are sound.

Behaviour management is consistent and effective. Pupils have helped to develop the clear rules and therefore fully understand the consequences of their actions. New pupils quickly settle in and are clearly flourishing in the stimulating, yet structured, environment. Every opportunity is provided to involve pupils in the local community by, for example, using local leisure facilities and belonging to the air cadets.

Those pupils who board gain much in personal development through the residential experience with which they are provided. Day boys are effectively integrated with the boarders and they have the opportunity to stay, for example, to join in with the exceptional range of activities. Attendance is good.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The good progress that pupils make in their learning is boosted by the exceptional ethos in the school and range of activities provided. Teaching and learning is good, overall. In some areas it is outstanding and this shows that there is room for further improvement. The school is aware of the issue and major improvements have already

been made. The staff now place more emphasis in development work on learning, rather than on behaviour alone. Nevertheless, where teaching is weaker, individual pupils are provided with insufficient challenge. The quantity and quality of pupils' work accepted by the teacher is less than they are capable of, and this limits their progress. The staff understand that this requires better use of assessment to improve the level of challenge for individual pupils.

Most teachers use their subject knowledge well. Year 10 pupils make good progress in their computer assisted designs due to enthusiastic and skilled teaching. The physical education activities for pupils in Years 7 to 9 are very well- planned, teaching is challenging and, therefore, motivates pupils effectively.

Lessons start promptly and no time is wasted. Pupils understand the expectation to complete their work and most are busy for most of the time. Relationships are very good and the teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning and personal development. Teaching and learning are benefiting from the high standard of behaviour management.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum and courses are kept under constant review. The specialist teaching facilities are good and well resourced. The curriculum for pupils in Years 7 to 9 is carefully planned and meets pupils' needs and aspirations. The curriculum for pupils in Years 10 and 11 is varied and stimulating and, as result, pupils continue to show interest rather than becoming disaffected. Good vocational opportunities are provided, including work experience and attendance at a local college. Pupils are fully aware of the need to prepare well for life when they leave school and often discuss their aspirations for the future.

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The enrichment of the curriculum is exceptional and makes an outstanding contribution to the school's ethos. The pupils buzz with excitement when they discuss their activities. They clearly do not want any poor behaviour or non-attendance to restrict their access, for example, to quad biking, canoeing or fishing. Pupils also enjoy the opportunities provided to go away with the school on residential visits and this helps to promote their exceptional personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are very well cared for. They are provided with exceptional care when they board at the school. Support and guidance are effective. This is helped by the very good relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils are confident that they can talk with staff if they have any concerns. They are provided with good careers support and guidance.

Child protection procedures are very well-established and clearly understood by staff and pupils. The governors play a prominent role in checking that all the procedures, for example, records of physical intervention are carefully monitored. The school continues to provide an exciting range of activities but ensures that appropriate risk assessments are carried out. Also, the staff works hard to provide a generally safe environment for the pupils to thrive in.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are good. The head teacher is inspirational and has promoted an extremely positive ethos that firmly focuses on the pupils' needs and aspirations. The senior management team works very well together and, as a result, self-evaluation is open and reflective. The school knows where it needs to go in order to improve. Financial planning is particularly well-managed. The governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities. For example, they have the knowledge and experience to carry out the performance management of the head teacher very effectively. They spend considerable time in the school and their rigorous level of challenge makes a major contribution to the effectiveness of the school. The monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning by subject co-ordinators is under-developed. It has yet to secure the improvements necessary to make teaching consistently good.

Partnerships with other schools are very productive and have raised the profile and impact of the school in the community. The relationship with a local high school with specialist technology status has benefited pupils from both of the schools. It has raised the aspirations of the pupils in Wennington Hall and provided a wealth of curriculum enrichment opportunities for mainstream pupils. Also, a very good working partnership has been established with three local primary schools as they work together to enrich the pupils' curriculum.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	1	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

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29th September 2005

Dear Pupils

I thoroughly enjoyed my visit to your school. You looked very smart in your uniform and I understand why you are so proud of your school. You made me feel very welcome. The tea and toast were particularly welcome on the Wednesday morning. Thank you for talking to me about your work and activities.

This is what I found out about your school.

You have a particularly good head teacher who has lots of very exciting ideas and, along with the staff and governors, makes sure that things are improving for you all of the time.

I am sure that you appreciate the exceptional care and opportunities that are provided for you when you stay at the school.

The "atmosphere" in the school, the way you are treated and the tremendous range of activities helps to encourage the good progress in your learning. I am particularly pleased with your regular attendance, the way that you get on with each other and the respect you show for the school equipment and buildings. You do make a valuable contribution to improvements in the school.

Even though I thought your school was good, I asked your head teacher to continue to improve the following areas.

You are rightly proud of your work in class. However, I am asking that teachers make sure that all of your tasks are challenging and help you to make even more progress.

I think that you should have more opportunities to use your ICT skills in other subjects.

I understand the teachers are very busy, but they need to spend more time helping each other to make the lessons even better.

I hope that you will continue working hard, enjoy your learning and help the head teacher and staff to make your school exceptional in every way.

David Smith (Lead Inspector)

Annex B