



South Wigston High School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 120310
Local Authority Leicestershire
Inspection number 291699
Inspection dates 31 January –1 February 2007
Reporting inspector Ruth Westbrook

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

Type of school	Middle deemed secondary	School address	St Thomas Road
School category	Foundation		South Wigston
Age range of pupils	10–14		Wigston LE18 4TA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0116 2782388
Number on roll (school)	819	Fax number	0116 2477627
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Roy Hughes
		Headteacher	Gary Toward
Date of previous school inspection	11 June 2001		

Age group 10–14	Inspection dates 31 January –1 February 2007	Inspection number 291699
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average middle school south of Leicester, serving South Wigston and Glen Parva. The school is oversubscribed with over a third of pupils from outside the catchment area mainly from the City of Leicester. The percentage of pupils receiving free school meals is in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is lower than average and very small numbers are at an early stage of learning English. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average. The number of pupils with a statement of special educational need is above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The overall effectiveness of the school is good. The good leadership of the headteacher and senior staff has resulted in good improvement in standards and provision since the time of the last inspection. It is supported by very effective management systems. An effective team approach involves all staff in the school's drive to raise standards within a community which treats its members with care and respect. Success is celebrated and that means 'success for all'.

Pupils respond well to the high expectations of staff. They know what is expected of them, and respond by behaving well and trying hard with their work. As a result, achievement is good. Pupils make good progress during their time at the school and reach average standards by the end of Year 9. The school's leadership has effectively established a programme to improve the quality of the good teaching and learning and this has resulted in improvement. However, whilst most teaching is good, and some outstanding, there is still some which is satisfactory. In these lessons, tasks and objectives are not matched as well as they might be to the range of needs in the class. Whilst marking and feedback to pupils are good in most subjects, there is some inconsistency and in some subjects pupils do not always receive the feedback they need to make good progress. The good curriculum contributes to the good progress of pupils by providing a varied programme which pupils find interesting and stimulating. The enrichment and extra-curricular opportunities within the curriculum are outstanding, and underpin pupils' enjoyment and enthusiasm. At the moment, some subjects have too little time to deliver their full programme, but planning is taking place to address this.

Good personal development is promoted very effectively through a well planned programme of related study. This means, for example, pupils having outstanding attitudes in their approach to a healthy lifestyle. They also build successful relationships with each other and with the adults in the school. They are welcoming to visitors and are able to share pride in their school and its achievements. Pupils have huge enthusiasm for learning and all that the school has to offer. Their enjoyment of school is outstanding and reflected by the large numbers who arrive early and leave late. These positive outcomes in personal development are a result of the good pastoral support, care and guidance which is in place. Staff meet the varying needs of the school community well and there is good additional support when needed.

Leadership and management are good. Senior staff and governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and this is reflected in the improvements that have been made and in the good quality of their planning for further development. These factors, and the maintenance of a very positive ethos within the school community, indicate that the capacity for further improvement is good. Parents have a very positive view of the school's work as shown in their response to the inspection's questionnaire. The great majority value the opportunities which their children are experiencing and the progress they are making within a caring environment.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards by improving the quality of marking and feedback given to pupils in all subjects.
- Ensure all subjects have enough time to deliver the curriculum.
- Improve teaching and learning by ensuring that learning objectives and tasks meet the needs of the different abilities of pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Pupils reach average standards by the end of Year 9 from a starting point which is below average when they arrive in Year 6. The school is very much aware of the short time period between pupils' arrival in school and the Year 6 tests. Strategies are in place that help pupils settle quickly into the school. During Year 6, pupils make good progress in English and science and satisfactory progress in mathematics. From Years 7 to 9, pupils make good progress in the three core subjects. Achievement is good in art, design and technology, modern foreign languages, music and physical education and satisfactory in other subjects. Where it is satisfactory, pupils do not receive sufficient advice on how to improve. Challenging targets are set for all pupils in Key Stage 3.

The school uses information well to identify where pupils are underachieving and support is put in place. A good example is the recent identification of some underachieving boys. A range of strategies and activities has been introduced to address this and the evidence seen confirms that they are successfully raising the achievement of those identified. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress. They are well supported in class and make good progress, for example, in reading and spelling through group work.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils engage enthusiastically with all that the school has to offer, and their personal development and well-being are good. Their commitment to healthy lifestyles is exceptional and reflected in their choices at lunchtime and their interest in active extra-curricular activities. The strong incentives to behave based on a reward system work well, and behaviour is good. However, this gives some pupils less opportunity to take responsibility for their own behaviour. Attendance has been consistently good over a number of years and reflects pupils' interest in school life.

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good, and as a result, relationships are very effective. Pupils show respect towards each other and their teachers. Pupils from different backgrounds get on well with each other, and this creates an ethos in which pupils feel relaxed and safe. Pupils enjoy contributing to the school community. For example, older pupils as peer mentors behave very responsibly, and help those pupils in Year 6 who have found the transition to high school more difficult. Pupils

show their concern for issues beyond the school through work with the environment club and by arranging charity collections. Pupils are developing good skills and knowledge to prepare them for the next stage of learning and the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers are held in high esteem. Lessons are well planned and engage pupils well through presentations, focused discussion and varied activities. Consequently, pupils make good progress and attitudes to learning are good.

Pupils receive good feedback in class about how to improve and mostly their work is marked well with comments on how to make better progress, but inconsistent practice limits progress in some subjects. Good and some outstanding teaching challenges pupils of all abilities. Where teaching is satisfactory, there is inconsistency in tailoring tasks and lesson objectives to meet the pupils' different levels of ability. Good systems, including a rigorous programme of staff development, are in place and have been effective in improving quality.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The programmes and activities of the school meet the needs and interests of the pupils well. The curriculum provides the full range of subjects required. It offers a wide range of opportunities including dance and drama and being able to study two languages. The amount of time for teaching music, art and religious education is below that recommended. An excellent range of additional activities extend and consolidate pupils' learning and, through musical events and trips in particular, bind the school community together very well.

There is a good range of activities to foster pupils' awareness of the world of work in advance of opting for Year 10 courses at their upper school. Good links are established with the upper schools to ensure continuity in pupils' learning, as are links with the main feeder schools, although those with out of catchment primary schools are not as strong.

There has been considerable development to the school building to enhance the learning environment and up date the resources available for learning. The new indoor sports facility, for example, is having a strong impact on pupils' enjoyment and participation in sports.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good, and promote a friendly environment where pupils are comfortable talking to adults and know they will get help should they need it. Pupils are well supported in their learning. They know the level which they are aiming for in tests. There is a good range of support in place to support those pupils who are not on track, although in a minority of subjects they do not receive enough advice on how to improve. The school provides good support to pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and vulnerable pupils are well cared for in this supportive environment. The school has good links with upper schools and pupils receive good guidance to help them make the right choice on their future school. The effectiveness of links with primary schools is not as consistently strong, but the school is working hard to improve the effectiveness of communication with all its primary partners. The school has effective procedures to ensure pupils' health and safety. Risk assessments are conducted on classroom activities and visits. Staff are given regular training on the school's child protection guidance and procedures for safeguarding pupils meet requirements.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Pupils' good progress in both their academic and personal development owes much to the good leadership and management of the school. The headteacher sets a clear direction for the school. He has established a very good sense of teamwork amongst the staff who are hard-working and committed to providing a broad and stimulating educational experience for the pupils. As a result, standards have improved and pupils make good progress. The school has thorough procedures for evaluating the quality of its work. There are annual improvement plans for major areas of the school's work and each department contributes to a strong whole-school development plan. All staff have a good understanding of the school's main priorities for development. Senior staff promote the school's vision well and ensure that there is effective developmental support for other staff. For example, the teaching and learning coordinators use the findings from lesson observations to provide focused support for individual teachers which is helping to improve the quality of teaching. Some middle managers do not always keep a close enough check on the feedback provided by staff when marking pupils' work. As a result, pupils do not always receive sufficient guidance on how to improve the quality of their work. Governors are well informed, provide helpful support for the school and fulfil their responsibilities well.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

We enjoyed our visit to your school and would like to thank you for your welcome and for talking to us. We feel that South Wigston High School is a good school. These are our main findings:

- Although standards are below average when you enter the school, you all make good progress in your work and reach average standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 9.
- You are polite and well behaved, which makes your school a friendly and safe place.
- You clearly enjoy school a great deal, especially the many opportunities for you to participate in extra-curricular activities and special events such as Super Schools Day.
- You receive good quality teaching which helps you to achieve well.
- The staff care for you well, pay good attention to your safety and ensure that you have a very good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle.
- The school is led and managed well by the headteacher, governors and senior staff, who have a good understanding of what they need to do to make the school even better.

In order to help you make even better progress, we have asked the school to:

- Provide you with clearer feedback when marking your work so that you know what you have done well and what you need to improve.
- Provide more time to teach music, art and religious education so that you can learn even more in these subjects.
- Set work which is more carefully matched to your ability in a subject.

You can help your school to improve as well, by continuing to cooperate with your teachers and trying your hardest so that you develop into really independent learners.