



# Wightwick Hall School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 124523  
**Local Authority** Staffordshire  
**Inspection number** 293021  
**Inspection dates** 17–18 January 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Frank Price

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Special	<b>School address</b>	Tinacre Hill
<b>School category</b>	Community		Compton
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19		Wolverhampton WV6 8DA
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01902 761889
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	73	<b>Fax number</b>	01902 765080
<b>Number on roll (6th form)</b>	3		
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Julian Strutt
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Paul Elliott
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 December 2002		

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection dates</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
11–19	17–18 January 2007	293021

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

There are some significant changes from the last time the school was inspected. There have been staffing changes and it has been reorganised into a secondary aged generic special school, although there are currently six Year 6 pupils on roll. The school caters for pupils with a wide range of learning difficulties. Pupils who have moderate learning difficulties and those who are on the autistic spectrum form the largest groups. Girls are in a minority and there are no pupils who have English as an additional language. The headteacher was appointed to the school in spring 2005.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Wightwick Hall School is a satisfactory but steadily improving school. Although the last inspection judged the school to be good, the school is now significantly different. The successful establishment of the reorganised school is due to good leadership and management. The relatively new headteacher and senior management team are providing a clear direction for the future improvement of the school. Despite over optimistic self-evaluation of how good the school is, the headteacher has nevertheless identified the essential priorities and has set the school firmly on course for good improvement in the future.

Standards are exceptionally low because of pupils' learning difficulties although achievement is satisfactory. The changes that the school has undergone have slowed the rate of pupils' progress. However, the initiatives the headteacher has implemented are beginning to have a positive impact and there is evidence that progress is starting to improve more rapidly, with particular strengths in vocational studies. Assessment information is not used well enough to demonstrate how well pupils progress across a range of subjects. Pupils are not clear enough about their own targets and how they can improve their work. Planning in lessons is not rigorous enough to ensure that the needs of all pupils are fully addressed, and how their spiritual, cultural and multicultural opportunities can be better promoted.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory but have some good features. The curriculum, although satisfactory, has undergone a major review and it now has considerable strengths in preparing pupils for adult life. The care, guidance and support offered to pupils are good and the school works closely with parents. This in turn promotes the good personal development of pupils. The school has good links with a range of people such as visiting professionals and parents. Parents are very supportive and positive about the school. One parent commenting on the improvements of her son said, 'The biggest difference is his self-esteem and how he thinks for himself...getting a place at this excellent school is the best thing to have happened in my child's education.'

Pupils enjoy school and have good attitudes to their work and to each other. They eat healthily and participate in a good range of physical activities. Good levels of supervision ensure pupils remain safe. Pupils are well prepared for the future through the good vocational programmes on offer. They also make a good contribution to the school and wider community.

## Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

### Grade: 3

The recent introduction of a wider range of vocational courses has had a positive effect upon post-16 pupils' achievements. They are now starting to experience success, which in turn has developed their self-confidence. They achieve creditable results, which are externally accredited, in vocational courses such as bricklaying, decorating and carpentry. Less able pupils also gain equally creditable passes in creative, life skills and vocational studies.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Make better use of assessment information in order to demonstrate more clearly the progress pupils make and use this information to plan for further improvements.
- Improve the use of assessment and target setting so that pupils understand their targets and how to make improvements.
- Improve the planning of lessons so that the wide range of needs of pupils is met and that their spiritual, cultural and multicultural development is promoted more strongly.

## Achievement and standards

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

Standards are exceptionally low, when compared to national averages. However, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Attainment is very wide and ranges from those who are working well below Level 1 of the National Curriculum to pupils at Key Stage 4 and post-16 who achieve at entry level courses in mathematics, English and science. Pupils' progress has been adversely affected by the changes the school has gone through and the school's assessment information shows that pupils' progress slowed over this period. However, improvements in the curriculum have started to have a positive impact. The introduction of more suitable accredited courses has resulted in pupils' progress improving substantially over the last year. Boys in particular have made better progress in the last year with the introduction of more vocational courses.

The school uses a national database to record how well pupils perform according to their type of special educational need. This information confirms that all groups of pupils achieve equally well. Pupils make satisfactory progress against their individual targets, although the lack of precision in target setting hinders measuring progress accurately.

## Personal development and well-being

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Pupil's personal development is good. Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong. They have good relationships with each other and with staff. Their attitudes and behaviour around the school are good. Pupils display a good awareness and tolerance of each other as a result of the emphasis given to these by staff in the regular 'focus sessions' and in special assemblies. They enjoy school, with one pupil describing school as 'brilliant'. Pupils' spiritual, cultural and multicultural development is satisfactory. Pupils are adopting healthier lifestyles, for example through participating in sporting activities and making healthier choices when choosing their meals. Pupils are clear about what to do if they feel threatened or unsafe. In the few incidents of bullying, the school takes appropriate action quickly. Pupils' attendance has improved as a

result of monitoring by the school and the closer links with parents through the home-school worker. Older pupils develop maturity and independence skills as a result of the good range of vocational courses and work related experiences on offer. Pupils make a good contribution to their school community through the effective school council. They have suitable opportunities to participate in community activities. Some pupils visit a local care home where they befriend elderly people and all participate in raising money for charities.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. As a result pupils make satisfactory progress. Teaching has some good features. Teachers are skilled at using a variety of approaches, such as signing, symbols and photographs to aid pupils' understanding of concepts. Teachers know their pupils well and provide a secure environment where pupils thrive so that they develop their confidence and self-esteem well. Pupils' behaviour is skilfully and sensitively managed to avoid unnecessary conflict. Some teachers are adept at providing good challenge for the wide range of needs in their class. However, in some lessons, not all pupils are challenged sufficiently and some more able pupils reported that they do not receive enough support. Lessons where learning is made practical are the ones most enjoyed by pupils, such as bricklaying, information and communication technology and physical education.

Assessment of pupils learning is not well developed. Pupils do not know their targets well enough and how they can improve their work. Learning objectives are not always made clear at the beginning of lessons and opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own learning at the end of lessons are limited.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

The curriculum provided for pupils is satisfactory but improving. A wider range of courses to better meet the needs of pupils has been developed. This has resulted in pupils enjoying and achieving better in these areas. The school has been designated as a learning centre for vocational studies, such as construction, horticulture and beauty. Pupils have good opportunities for work based learning experiences, which are valuable in preparing them for adult life. Some aspects of the timetable lack balance; for example some classes have too much reading and literacy in a morning. Planning does not make clear how the wide range of needs is to be met and consequently some more able pupils are not challenged enough and some lower attaining pupils do not receive the help they need. Opportunities for pupils' spiritual, cultural and multicultural

development are not planned thoroughly enough. There is a good range of extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities and pupils enjoy these activities.

## **Care, guidance and support**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

The care guidance and support provided for pupils are good and enable pupils to be receptive to learning. The school is diligent in ensuring that its arrangements for safeguarding pupils, such as checks on the suitability of staff and child protection procedures, are robust. Any issues that may stand in the way of progress, such as incidents of bullying or harassment, are addressed swiftly. Teachers and support staff are committed to ensuring high levels of care for pupils at all times. Visiting professionals contribute well to the promotion of pupils' health and well-being. Counselling services are available for vulnerable pupils. The appointment of a home-school worker has strengthened the partnership between home and school. Academic guidance for pupils is satisfactory. Targets are set for individuals in core subjects and include a behaviour target. However, these are not always precise and assessment information is not used well enough to identify the next stage of learning.

## **Leadership and management**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

The leadership and management of the school are good. The new headteacher has very effectively managed the school through a period of considerable change, including reorganisation of the school to secondary age provision, the removal of residential provision, appointing new staff and implementing systems to improve pupils' progress. This has been a considerable achievement given the scope of these changes and the now improving picture in pupils' progress. This successful leadership and management of these changes has been effective at all levels in the school. The headteacher, along with other key staff and governors, share a clear vision for the future development of the school. The school development plan provides a secure basis for planning for the future. The governors have worked in close co-operation with the headteacher to provide good levels of support and they are increasingly providing greater challenge through improved monitoring.

The headteacher has implemented an effective programme of monitoring and this has resulted in improvements to the quality of teaching and learning. He has implemented a system known as '20/20' to review progress and developments in subject areas and to bring about better accountability by key staff. The school has good capacity to continue its improvements.

The use and analysis of assessment information is at the early stages of development. The school has information on how individual pupils achieve, but this is not yet used at whole school level to provide clear and succinct evidence demonstrating how well

pupils make progress or to identify strengths and weaknesses in provision. A good range of links has been forged and the establishment of the vocational learning centre on site has provided increased opportunities for inclusion.

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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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	2

<sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	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	3	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	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 visiting your school recently. Thank you for making us feel welcome and particular thanks to those pupils of the school council, with whom we met and talked.

We know that the school has had a lot of changes recently, but we think that the school is starting to improve quite quickly. Most of you are making steady progress and now that things have settled down at school, we think that you will start to make more rapid progress. We were particularly impressed with the better range of courses you can now follow and this is very helpful in preparing you for when you leave school. Many of you said how much you enjoyed school and that you feel much more confident and ready for the next stage in your life. Most of you like your lessons and you are taught soundly. The school looks after you very well and the new headteacher is doing a good job in improving the school.

To make your school better we have made three suggestions:

- The school should make better use of information on how well everyone does to plan for improvement.
- You should know your targets better and know how you can improve your work.
- Planning in lessons should be improved so that everyone gets the help they need and that you are made more aware of the wider world and different cultures.