

Wyvern College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134199
Local Authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	294118
Inspection dates	21–22 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Tom Winskill HMI

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 on roll	
School	630
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Henry Head
Headteacher	Richard Butler
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Church Road Laverstock Salisbury SP1 1RE
Telephone number	01722 500700
Fax number	01722 500900

Age group	11–16
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This small specialist technology school serves the eastern area of Salisbury and the nearby rural areas. It shares a site with two other secondary schools. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) 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: 4

In accordance with section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to achievement and standards, teaching and learning, curriculum and leadership and management.

Achievement and standards are inadequate because pupils in Key Stage 4 in the last two years have made insufficient progress and have not achieved high enough standards. As a result they are not prepared well enough for life after Wyvern. This situation is beginning to improve as a result of rapid, positive changes in the quality of provision brought about by the recently appointed headteacher. Improvements in teaching and learning are beginning to bring about improvements in achievement. However, some weak teaching remains which means that teaching and learning are inadequate overall. Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Their behaviour is satisfactory although this remains a concern for many parents. Behaviour has improved a great deal in the last six months as the headteacher, supported by his senior team, is setting clear expectations of behaviour which are being increasingly and consistently implemented.

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Pupils are well cared for and the introduction of more rigorous target-setting and monitoring of pupils' performance is helping to improve their progress. The curriculum is inadequate as it does not meet the needs of all groups of pupils. The school is beginning to improve the quality of the curriculum by extending the choice of courses available in Key Stage 4. This is helping to improve pupils' motivation. In addition, provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is improving in Key Stage 3. The programme of after-school activities is good which contributes to pupils' satisfactory enjoyment of school.

Leadership and management are inadequate because there are weaknesses in the leadership of some subjects and in governance. Steps are being taken to tackle these weaknesses but there has been insufficient time to resolve them effectively. The headteacher has achieved a great deal in a short time since taking up his appointment in September 2006. He has re-invigorated senior leadership in the school and, as a result, improvements are taking place in almost all aspects of the school's work. He is gaining the confidence of parents, staff and pupils and, although there is much still to do, the school is moving in the right direction. One parent accurately commented, 'The overall standard of education and teaching seems to have improved since the headteacher was appointed last year'.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement and standards in Key Stage 4 and sustain them at acceptable levels.
- Eradicate weak teaching and increase the amount of good teaching.
- Ensure that the curriculum meets the wide range of pupils' different aptitudes and abilities.
- Ensure that the leadership of subjects is of consistently high quality so that underachievement is tackled effectively.
- Ensure that governors are better able to hold the school to account.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Pupils' achievement is inadequate because, for the last two years, they have left with standards which are too low. Overall standards, as shown by the 2006 GCSE results, were exceptionally low. Results were below average in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, art, French and leisure and tourism. Standards were good in business studies and physical education and satisfactory in history and religious education. In 2005 and 2006, the results of the national tests for Year 9 were broadly average in English and mathematics and above average in science. The school's specialist status for technology is having little effect as it does not contribute towards the raising of achievement or standards. The widespread underachievement in Key Stage 4 was a result of weak teaching and an inadequate curriculum. A significant minority of pupils also underachieved because the school was unable to provide courses in Key Stage 4 which captured their interest or matched their needs. As a result, pupils' motivation was poor, leading to misbehaviour and truancy. Teaching was not always strong enough to overcome these problems.

Pupils in the current Year 11 are making satisfactory progress towards their targets as a result of improvements in teaching and learning and leadership and management. Their progress is being tracked against their targets and action is now being taken to tackle underachievement. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 3. Their progress is satisfactory in English and mathematics and good in science. Those pupils who join the school with broadly average attainment make good progress in Key Stage 3. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make satisfactory progress as a result of the satisfactory support provided.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. A particular strength lies in the way pupils' spirituality flourishes. They think deeply about topics such as life and death and express their feelings without embarrassment. In a good religious education lesson about marriage, for example, pupils thought carefully about why people get married. One pupil answered in a very mature way, 'Because they love each other so much that they want to spend the rest of their lives together'. Pupils generally behave and concentrate well in lessons but behaviour is sometimes poor where teaching is weak. Nevertheless, pupils are adamant that behaviour has improved a great deal over the last year. This is a consequence of effective action taken to tackle poor behaviour and improvements in teaching and learning and the curriculum.

Pupils are keen to take responsibility. The school council has helped make some good improvements to aspects of school life, such as the food served in the canteen. Pupils feel safe at school and free from bullying. They have an adequate awareness of the need to live healthy lives and most take the healthy options available at lunchtime. Pupils enjoy physical exercise and many play games on the field at lunchtime with great enthusiasm. Most enjoy school and, while attendance rates are below average, they are improving steadily. Pupils are inadequately prepared for the future. This is because they learn too little about the world of work and many older pupils struggle with basic skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology. They make a sound contribution to their community by raising funds for local projects and inviting the public to school events.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Much of the teaching and learning seen was satisfactory or better but the school is acutely aware that too much teaching remains weak. The quality of teaching and learning is improving as a result of action taken by the senior leadership team, with the support of the local authority. In most lessons, pupils' behaviour is compliant but their indifferent attitudes hamper their learning. As a result, progress is sometimes barely satisfactory or, at worst, inadequate. Many pupils do not follow instructions properly or act on advice given. Pupils say that they find some lessons boring with uninteresting activities. In many lessons, pupils of different abilities and aptitudes all do the same tasks. This means that more able pupils are not always encouraged to push their thinking into new areas and so rarely make good progress. Some teachers still accept work which is not of a sufficiently high standard which inhibits the progress pupils make.

In good lessons, pupils enjoy being asked to think in depth and to explain their own ideas. Effective teaching makes good use of demonstrations, artefacts, presentations on the interactive whiteboards and challenging questioning to give pupils a full and exciting idea of the subject matter. As a result, pupils are interested and well motivated and make good progress. The feedback pupils receive on their work is inconsistent. Well marked work shows what they could improve and what standard they have reached. However, in other cases, work is not marked at all and so pupils do not know how to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 4

The curriculum at Key Stage 3 covers all the required subjects except for a modern foreign language where provision is inadequate. Improvements to the curriculum for younger pupils include the introduction of food technology which pupils in Year 7 enjoy. Pupils with specific learning difficulties in Years 8 and 9 now have their English lessons in small groups, with extra staffing, and their progress is improving as a result. Personal, social and health education remains weak but is beginning to improve.

Despite some recent improvements, the range of courses in Key Stage 4 still does not fully cater for pupils of different abilities and interests. Although planning is not yet complete, the curriculum for Year 10 from September 2007 promises a greater variety than is offered at present. Better provision is being made for pupils of all abilities who are able to choose courses which interest them, such as more vocationally based courses. Provision is also being extended through reviving links with a local further education college. There is a good range of activities on offer every day after school, including revision classes, opportunities to take up new hobbies and a range of sports. Attendance varies greatly between different activities and arrangements for monitoring and evaluating this provision are inadequate.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school is a safe place for its pupils, who feel secure and valued. Those who are anxious or who need advice benefit from good support from their form tutors and the pastoral staff. The school has effective provision for integrating excluded pupils back into the school, using a skilled team of staff to give them a good chance of success. Procedures for health and safety

and child protection are adequate and ensure pupils' well-being. The monitoring and evaluation of individual pupils' progress and the setting of challenging targets are satisfactory and improving as the new computerised systems become established. As a result, pupils know their targets and are aware of what they need to do to improve. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are supported effectively by teachers and teaching assistants in class who ensure they have every opportunity to succeed. Recently introduced systems to improve attendance are working well, leading to falling absence rates. Some aspects of guidance for older pupils preparing for the world of work is inadequate at present because the provision for careers education is weak. The school is beginning to improve this provision.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

Although leadership and management are inadequate, the capacity for improvement is satisfactory. The capacity for improvement stems from the headteacher's good leadership. He provides clear direction by ensuring that all staff know what is expected of them. Senior leaders share the headteacher's vision, have clear responsibilities and are held accountable for their performance. As a result, they provide good support for the headteacher in his relentless approach to improving the quality of education in the school.

The senior leadership team is highly aware of the key strengths and weaknesses of the school. It has satisfactory and rapidly improving procedures for monitoring and evaluating all aspects of provision and takes account of pupils' and parents' views. As a result, the school's self-evaluation is now satisfactory, enabling it to set priorities and tackle key weaknesses. Over the last six months, senior leaders have succeeded in laying the groundwork for lasting improvement. Behaviour and attendance, the quality of teaching and the curriculum are all improving. Achievement and standards are beginning to rise although there has not been enough time to embed and sustain the positive changes made.

There are still weaknesses in the leadership of individual subjects, which is inadequate. In too many subjects, underachievement has not been identified and tackled effectively. Procedures to enable subject leaders to monitor performance more effectively are at an early stage of development. Rigorous and appropriate measures are being taken to tackle the weakest areas of subject leadership but the problems are such that they cannot be resolved speedily. Monitoring by the governing body is improving but governance is inadequate. This is because governors have not yet had sufficient time to develop the competences needed to hold the school to account effectively. Financial management and planning are good and well focused on raising standards of attainment. Value for money is unsatisfactory because the school has not yet succeeded in bringing about sustained improvement in the pupils' achievement.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	4
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	4
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
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	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
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?	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

23 March 2007

Dear Pupils

Wyvern College, Church Road, Laverstock, Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP1 1RE

We inspected your school recently and I am writing to inform you of our findings. Thank you for making us welcome, particularly those of you that helped us with the inspection.

Wyvern College is not doing as well as it should. Pupils in Key Stage 3 make reasonable progress and achieve broadly average standards. Many of you enjoy the sport and other activities provided after school. However, GCSE results in 2006 were poor because too many pupils did not make enough progress. This was because teaching was not good enough in many subjects and the courses available in Key Stage 4 were not suitable for many pupils. There are still lots of problems to sort out. Some teaching bores you and/or does not make you work hard enough. A few of you still spoil learning for others by behaving badly.

The headteacher and his senior staff have made a good start in improving the school. You tell us behaviour is much better and we know that teaching and the choice of subjects now being provided are improving. Pupils in Year 11, so far, are doing better than last year.

- To continue its improvement, we have told the school that it must:
- make sure pupils gain the results in examinations that they should this year and in following years
- make sure there is no weak teaching. You can help by concentrating and behaving properly in all lessons so everyone can learn well
- provide a good range of subjects so that everyone can achieve well
- make sure that all subjects are properly run so that you can learn and make good progress in all areas of your work. We also want the school governors to check carefully that the school is operating as effectively as it should.

Best wishes for the future. Tom Winskill Her Majesty's Inspector