

The Westgate School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116407
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	312296
Inspection date	18 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Anne Wellham HMI

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Boarding provision	
Social care URN	
Social care inspector	Brian McQuoid

The inspection of social care was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Type of school	Modern (non-selective)
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	1135
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	46
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Jeremy Brecknell
Headteacher	Mrs Julie Turvey
Date of previous school inspection	7 February 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	14 February 2007

Age group	11–16
Inspection date	18 March 2009
Inspection number	312296

Date of previous childcare inspection

Not previously inspected

School address

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Age group 11-16

Inspection date 18 March 2009

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors, an Additional Inspector and a Social Care Inspector. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the effectiveness of boarding provision and Nursery provision, the quality of teaching and learning, the match of the curriculum to students' needs, the quality of care guidance and support and aspects of the school's self-evaluation. The inspectors gathered evidence from an analysis of data about students' achievements provided by the school, observation of parts of lessons, from parents' and pupils' questionnaires, and from discussions with senior staff, subject leaders, the chair of governors, and students. The inspectors did not investigate other aspects of the school's work in detail, but found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments were not justified. These judgements have been included, where appropriate, in this report.

Description of the school

The Westgate School is a larger than average mixed comprehensive school. The school is attended mostly by students living in Winchester and the immediate area with a significant proportion coming from other areas in Hampshire. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. There are very small numbers of pupils from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is low. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements of special educational needs, is below the national average. Most of these students have specific or moderate learning difficulties and behavioural, emotional and social needs. The school has had specialist status in science since 2003. In 2006 the school achieved the Healthy Schools Award (Enhanced) and the Physical Education Sportsmark was reaccredited in 2009. There is boarding provision for 25 students, a number of whom are from overseas. Provision also includes Rotherly Nursery which provides day care for 45 children from 0 to 5 years. A maximum of 49 children may attend the setting at any one time. The Nursery is open each weekday from 08:00 to 17:30 for 50 weeks of the year. The Nursery currently supports four children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and also supports eight bilingual children.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Westgate is a good school. It has a strong ethos of achievement. Students achieve high academic standards. Combined with the excellent pastoral support they receive, this enables them to become confident, well-motivated and articulate young people, and prepares them well for the world of further education, training or employment. The views of the majority of parents who completed questionnaires were summed up in the comment, 'Westgate is a well-run school that has high expectations of its pupils. Pastoral care and support is excellent'.

Students begin school with levels of attainment that are above average. They make good progress because they achieve standards that are well above the national average by the time they leave school. Higher-attaining students do particularly well, with a high proportion gaining A* or A grades at GCSE in nearly all subjects. Students with statements of educational needs make outstanding progress as a result of the well-focused support and guidance they receive. However, there is some variation in achievement. In 2008 progress made by students in English and mathematics at Key Stage 4 was broadly satisfactory and lower-ability boys did not achieve as well as they could. The school has improved systems to monitor and track students' progress, and subject and faculty leaders are now reviewing performance across their departments more rigorously than in the past. This is leading to a better awareness of achievement across the school and is allowing teachers to plan more effective intervention and support. For example, the intervention put in place for the Year 11 targeted students who sat their GCSEs in the summer of 2008 resulted in an improvement in the proportion of pupils achieving an A* to C grade in mathematics and the number of students making two levels of progress.

Students' personal development and well-being are good because there are excellent opportunities to extend their learning through an extensive programme of visits, enrichment activities and extra-curricular clubs, combined with high-quality pastoral care. Students reported enthusiastically how much they value and enjoy the wide-ranging clubs and activities on offer and appreciate the time that staff give to support these. Students receive a thorough grounding in how to achieve a healthy diet through the curriculum and they adopt healthy lifestyles by making sensible choices in what they eat and by taking part in the extensive range of sports clubs. Students reported that they enjoy school and that they feel secure and comfortable with each other. They know that there is always someone to turn to for help. They are highly appreciative of the Student Assistance Programme coordinated by the Pupil Support Worker which has a positive affect on both their physical and mental well-being. Excellent attention is given to students joining from primary school. A large proportion of parents of students in Year 7 who responded to the parental questionnaire praised the 'brilliant' summer club attended by 180 of the 240 students last year. This helped students settle in quickly and feel part of the school. Attendance and behaviour are good. Students are aware of the need to appreciate and tolerate the views of different groups in the school community and the wider society. Bullying or racist incidents are rare and if any occur they are dealt with quickly and effectively. The school has excellent links with outside agencies and community partners to promote learners' well-being.

The school has correctly identified the need to match the curriculum more closely to individual students' needs. Good academic provision exists to support the higher-attaining students and those who are gifted and talented, which leads to some outstanding examination results in national tests at Year 9 and GCSE. The school has introduced an innovative Key Stage 4 curriculum which now offers a wide range of courses, catering to different learning styles and

abilities. This is helping to address the relative underperformance of lower-ability boys at GCSE and provides an alternative personalised curriculum for students who are less suited to traditional academic pathways. Specialist status has had a good impact and has allowed the school to develop a range of courses for science and mathematics and develop cross-curricular links. Strong primary and secondary cluster partnerships have been strengthened through the school's specialism, and community links have been extended.

Teaching and learning are good. The vast majority of students are well motivated and eager to participate in learning. They especially enjoy lessons when teachers use a range of learning styles, provide the right level of challenge and encourage students to achieve their best by providing meaningful feedback on their work. However, in a small minority of lessons the slow pace of teaching, or inconsistent classroom management, can lead to a few students losing interest and disrupting others. Teachers set a variety of assessments, homework and coursework. However, the quality, quantity and frequency of marking across and within subjects vary. Consequently students do not always know how well they are progressing towards their targets and what to do to improve further.

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher provides strong and effective leadership. The leadership team has been strengthened by the appointment of two deputy headteachers in September 2008 and some redefining of the responsibilities of other members. Senior leaders have a very accurate view of the school's strengths and areas that need development. There have been significant improvements to the systems that monitor and evaluate performance across the school. More focused data analysis and a framework for the annual review and target-setting process are helping faculty and subject leaders to reflect whole-school priorities in their departmental improvement planning, to increase their awareness of learners' progress and to improve their self-evaluation skills. However, these systems are not yet used consistently or effectively enough across all levels of leadership and management. The governing body is well informed and supportive. Strong links between governors and the senior leadership team, and with individual subjects, ensure that governors provide a good level of challenge. The school has good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Rotherly Nursery provision is outstanding and has maintained this high standard of care and guidance since the last full inspection in 2007. There is a welcoming, inclusive ethos and the Nursery is well resourced. It was recently highly commended in a national award scheme. There is a very good staff to children ratio with 17 staff caring for the 45 children. Leadership and management of the Nursery are outstanding because the team of very effective staff plan collaboratively to provide a very high level of care for the children. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive excellent support from all staff. The children respond to this care in a positive manner and cooperate extremely with each other and share excellent relationships with the adults. The children are given an exemplary start to their learning and development, which they obviously enjoy in this safe and caring environment.

Effectiveness of boarding provision

Grade: 2

The quality of boarding provision at The Westgate School is good, and meets the requirements of the National Minimum Standards. There have been significant improvements made in several areas since the previous inspection, and all of the recommendations of the school's previous

inspection report have been satisfactorily addressed. Organisation is judged as good. There is clear and effective leadership of the boarding house staff, good overall monitoring of boarders' welfare, and very good oversight and support provided by the school's headteacher, who has overall responsibility for boarding at the school.

Boarders at the school benefit from an environment within which they feel safe, where they are suitably protected from harm, and where there is good provision for enabling them to have a say in how the boarding house operates. All staff receive appropriate training in child protection and there is a very good level of awareness of the relevant policy and procedures. Established and effective systems are in place across the school for the management of risks associated with the premises and for activities undertaken by boarders. The boarding house provides a suitably safe and secure environment for boarders, with good provision for fire safety.

There is good provision for promoting the health and well-being of boarders at the school, who are taught the dangers of drugs, alcohol and smoking, with effective input and support provided by external agencies. Boarding house staff are well aware of the individual health and welfare needs of all boarders, there are clear procedures for the management and administration of medication, and good provision for supporting boarders who are unwell. There is a very good working relationship with the local surgery where boarders are registered, and a GP visits the boarding house on a weekly basis. A healthy diet is provided for boarders and there are good opportunities for them to participate in physical activities, including during the evenings and at weekends.

The promotion of equality and diversity at the school is good. There is an inclusive atmosphere within the boarding house, where pupils of different nationalities and ethnic backgrounds integrate well. The overall standard of behaviour in the boarding house is good and bullying incidents are very rare. There is very good individual support provided for pupils across the school, including a welfare officer onsite, and a counselling service which visits weekly, and to which pupils can self-refer. Individual dietary needs are well met and some boarders attend a local church when they stay at weekends. The school's practice demonstrates a clear commitment to promoting equal opportunities and to tackling discrimination.

Boarders at the school benefit from good provision for enabling them to have a voice in how the boarding house operates, and on matters affecting their daily lives. There are meetings held every half term, which are chaired by the school's headteacher, and which provide a forum for boarders to voice their views and to make suggestions. The meetings are effective and valued by boarders. Good provision is made within the boarding house to enable boarders to maintain contact with their families. This includes internet access in order to email, the availability of telephones, and allowing them to have their own mobile phones.

The overall standard of boarding accommodation is satisfactory. While some areas remain unsatisfactory, there has been a significant improvement in the overall provision. Redecoration has taken place in several areas. A large number of new beds and mattresses have been installed, new curtains have been fitted, and three new showers have also been installed. An improvement plan specifically for the boarding house has been drawn up and includes provision for a continuing rolling programme of redecoration.

Staffing levels within the boarding house are good, and sufficient to protect and promote the welfare of boarders. There is effective communication between the school and boarding staff, and good provision for the overall monitoring of individual boarders' specific welfare needs. Boarding house staff meetings are held regularly and there are established and effective systems for communication between staff on different shift patterns. Staff are subject to appraisal every

term, and are provided with appropriate training in order to meet the needs of boarders. The school has comprehensive policies and procedures in place which support and promote good practice and which are regularly reviewed and updated. All staff are provided suitable access to policy and procedures documents. Boarders and their parents receive good written information about the boarding provision at the school via a well-produced brochure specific to the boarding house, and a child-friendly handbook for boarders.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency of teaching and learning so that all students are fully engaged in lessons and are able to reach their full potential.
- Ensure leaders and managers at all levels use the systems to monitor the quality of teaching and learning and marking consistently and effectively.

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Annex A

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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The effectiveness of boarding provision	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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 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

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

31 March 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of The Westgate School, Winchester, SO22 5AZ

Thank you all for the very friendly welcome you gave us when we inspected your school recently. We really enjoyed visiting the boarding house and the Nursery, talking to staff, students and boarders, looking at work and visiting some lessons.

We think Westgate is a good school where you work hard and enjoy learning. Boarding provision is good and the nursery provision is outstanding. You told us that you all get on well together and that bullying and racism are rare and if it does happen it is dealt with quickly. The Student Assistance Programme and the Pupil Support Worker are always there for help and advice if you are having problems or need to talk things over. We were impressed by your enthusiasm and support for the wide range of clubs and activities that are on offer, and by all the things that you do in school and the community. All these things contribute to your good personal development and well-being.

You achieve excellent results in examinations and make good progress because you have high expectations and are encouraged to achieve your best. The school has introduced some new courses and subjects to the curriculum to make sure that it meets the interests and needs of all the students and allows everyone to achieve well. You like lessons where teachers use a range of learning styles, move the lesson on quickly and discuss your learning. The best teachers mark work regularly with comments on how to improve and keep the few students that lose interest and disrupt others on task.

The headteacher and leadership team, helped by the governors, lead your school well. Even good schools can get better so we have asked the school to make teaching and learning more consistent so that all students are interested in lessons and everyone can be helped to achieve their potential. We have also asked the school to make sure that all staff use the systems in place to check that you make the progress you are capable of in all your subjects. You can help by getting to lessons on time, keeping your exercise books in a good condition and continuing to work hard.

We wish you all at Westgate a happy and successful future.

Yours faithfully

Anne Wellham

Her Majesty's Inspector