

# Wilnecote High School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124420
<b>Local Authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	359665
<b>Inspection dates</b>	17–18 January 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Michael Miller

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1128
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	158
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Terry Dix
<b>Headteacher</b>	Stuart Tonks
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 November 2007
<b>School address</b>	Tinkers Green Road Wilnecote, Tamworth B77 5LF
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. They visited 49 lessons, including mid-morning extended tutorial lessons, and 44 teachers were seen. Inspectors held meetings with representatives of the governing body, teaching and non-teaching staff, and groups of students. They attended an assembly and registration sessions at the end of the day. Inspectors looked at students' work, and talked with many students informally during the inspection. School documents were scrutinised including policies, development planning, self-evaluation reports, monitoring files, curriculum and safeguarding documents. Minutes of governing body meetings were examined, as well as the headteacher's reports to governors, local authority reports on the school and information provided for parents and carers. Inspectors received and analysed questionnaires from 171 parents and carers, 46 members of staff and 165 students from Key Stages 3 and 4.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- What has been the impact of the school's continued work to improve students' performance and progress in mathematics?
- To what extent have the school's strategies to improve the quality of assessment since the last inspection improved attainment and students' attitudes to learning?
- How effective has the emphasis of the school's leadership on the quality of learning been in improving achievement for the students?
- To what extent has the quality of care, guidance and support for students become an emerging strength of the school?

## Information about the school

This is a larger than average-sized school. It has held performing arts status for the last decade. Most students are of White British heritage. The percentage of students from minority ethnic groups is below average, as is the proportion speaking English as an additional language. Very few are at an early stage of English language acquisition. A below average proportion of students is known to be eligible for free school meals. The percentage of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average; most have either moderate or specific learning difficulties, or behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The school has a designated special educational needs resource base for students who are hearing impaired or who have physical disabilities; there are currently no hearing impaired students on roll. The school has gained national Healthy Schools status and achieved the Artsmark Silver award.

The school is subject to reorganisation and will become an 11-16 school, without a sixth form, from September 2012. Students undertaking vocational or Diploma courses do so mainly at the nearby Torc Vocational Campus. This is managed separately, but staffed by teachers from local secondary schools, including Wilnecote.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

This is a good school. It provides a good, varied curriculum, which is particularly rich for the arts. Attainment in the performing arts specialist subjects is above average overall; it is well above for dance, above for drama and average in music. Taking into account students' attainment in the wide range of GCSE, vocational and Diploma courses, attainment by the end of Year 11 is above average. Strong leadership and teamwork contribute well to open and accurate self-evaluation. This is leading to good improvement and development planning. The school is successful because it has a positive focus on improving learning. As a continuous reminder of this, subject leaders are all styled 'Leaders of Learning'. Discussions with staff show that their collective professional development is focused well on this aspect. Good learning is also enabled through students' good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning throughout the school. Students want to come to school and attendance rates are consistently above average. Consequently, learning and the teaching underpinning this are good. As one parent wrote, 'This is a good community school which is moving in the right direction and one which has offered my child many opportunities to flourish.'

There has been good improvement since the last inspection. The percentage of students gaining 5 or more A\* to C passes at GCSE has improved at over twice the national rate. The proportion of students gaining higher A\* to A grades is average overall; it is above average in English but below in mathematics. The school's upward trend of improvement reflects its good capacity for further, sustained improvement, including in areas of past weaknesses.

The key elements for further improvement relate mainly to ensuring the good and better practice within the school is applied consistently. Many teachers mark work very effectively, but not all provide sufficient guidance as to how students may improve. There is some outstanding practice in teachers' use of questioning to assess students' knowledge and understanding, but some teachers have still to embed this skill. Another inconsistency involves the use of the daily, tutor lesson time. Weekly guidance is provided for all tutors as to how to use this time for students' academic and personal development. However, tutors do not always make sufficiently productive use of this lesson.

Mathematics has been a subject where the school has had limited success in the past, and is a key focus of the school's improvement planning. Attainment improved to average by Year 11 in 2010. Focused support for the subject and a challenging approach, where students are entered early for mathematics, have resulted in just over half of the present Year 11 gaining already an A\* to C grade. However, not all mathematics teachers make sufficiently effective use of assessment data when planning their lessons to ensure sufficient challenge is maintained for all students. Arrangements are satisfactory in enabling students to move between sets. The school is in the process of refining its

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approach to allow for greater flexibility to more effectively meet the needs of all individuals and groups of students. Senior leaders are playing an active and practical role in this approach.

The pending closure of the sixth form, the current Year 12 being the final intake, has led to significant uncertainty and concern, both within the school and locally. This has, in the very recent past, affected the morale within the sixth form. However, attainment is currently average and the effectiveness of the sixth form is satisfactory. Staff and students are coming to terms with the situation and, in the words of the headteacher, the sixth form is 'determined to go out with a bang, not a whimper'. Key to ensuring this involves the formal monitoring of students' academic progress. When this takes place it is accurate, but it is currently too infrequent to ensure sharp enough interventions and support focused on raising standards. The school recognises that the good practice developed in the main school needs to be extended, with immediate effect, into the sixth form.

Provision for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities throughout the school, including those who are part of the resource base provision, is good. Consequently, these students make good progress. The care, guidance and support they receive are often exemplary, and reflect the outstanding quality of whole-school provision in this aspect. The extent of partnerships to secure this quality is excellent.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Raise further students' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11 in mathematics by:
  - ensuring increasing challenge for all individual students and groups
  - refining further the school's approach to setting for the subject
  - ensuring all mathematics teachers make more effective use of assessment data when planning lessons.
- Establish a more consistent approach to the school's use of assessment by:
  - ensuring teachers' marking of students' work provides more regular guidance as to how they may improve
  - establishing a more consistent use of questioning by teachers in lessons to reinforce more effectively students' awareness of and involvement in learning
  - increasing the frequency of the formal academic monitoring of sixth form students' progress to at least once a term, to enable sharper intervention support and to mirror the good practice established in the main school.
- Ensure more productive use is made of the 35 minutes of tutorial time each day to enhance and enrich the students' educational and personal development.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Attainment on entry to Year 7 is at the national average. Standards in work and lessons seen improve steadily to be above average by Year 11, and students make good progress. Examination results and school tracking show that students with special educational needs and/or disabilities gain higher standards overall than similar groups nationally. They make good progress on an individual basis. These students achieve well because they receive

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well-targeted support. Those with special gifts and/or talents make good progress in arts subjects because of the focus of the school's specialist, performing arts status. The contribution of the arts to students' spiritual and cultural development is particularly good. An outstanding assembly was seen where Year 10 dance students performed an extended, multi-media interpretation of the 1989 Hillsborough disaster. This proved a very moving homage to those who died. Students' awareness of their heritage and responsibility as citizens supports well their contribution to community cohesion. This is reflected in students' support for British troops in Afghanistan, and letters from the troops to the students. Students have a clear understanding of how to behave appropriately, are respectful towards each other and work cooperatively. Students understand this is the 'Wilnecote Way'. Their mature and sensible behaviour not only reflects their ability to remain safe in school but also has a positive impact on their learning.

Good learning was exemplified in a history lesson in Year 7, where students made good progress because of the way they were questioned and involved in exploring and explaining evidence concerning the Battle of Hastings. Similarly, in a German lesson in Year 11, group discussion when exploring complex phrases concerning a school survey challenged well students' use of the language. When preparing a science group assignment in Year 10, students showed a good understanding of healthy lifestyles while exploring the control mechanisms which enable the human body to remain fit and healthy.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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## How effective is the provision?

Teaching is characterised usually by very positive working relationships, good subject knowledge and a brisk pace to lessons. There are examples of effective teaching where lessons are prepared for the full ability range within the class. In such lessons, probing questions are used skilfully to assess students' understanding, enabling good progress to be made. However, there is less use of skilfully crafted questioning and differentiation in other lessons; consequently, the learning and progress of some students is more limited. Most students are aware of their current performance and their target grades, and discussions show they are keen and motivated to achieve these. In most lessons, targets are used effectively and students understand how they can improve their work. However, this approach is applied inconsistently across the school. Marking is mainly constructive, but its quality varies between teachers, and does not always give regular guidance on improvement. The school's ambition is to raise the level of its academic support to that of its pastoral support.

The curriculum is planned well, particularly at Key Stage 4. The wide range of traditional academic, vocational and Diploma courses provides significant breadth to the curriculum. It is also supported very well by a substantial range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities, with a very good uptake by the students. Active work is currently underway to develop further the Key Stage 3 curriculum to match even more effectively the individual needs and interests of younger learners. Cross-curricular planning, to share good practice across departments, is underway.

There is excellent attention to all aspects of the students' care, guidance and support. This is often exemplary for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and for those students whose circumstances make them more vulnerable. A strong team of staff is available at all times, and the full-time, non-teaching house tutors know their charges well. There is close and very effective work with outside agencies. The school's systems to ensure the well-being of the students are embedded firmly at all levels, and these clearly work excellently.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Good teamwork, at all levels, is the key to the school's effective leadership and management. Regular meetings of groups of teachers, both at departmental level and by the learning leaders, ensure effective consultation. This promotes the generation of ideas and initiatives which feed into the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning. The

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headteacher leads the school very well and is supported very effectively by other senior and middle leaders, and the governing body. There is an open approach which results in healthy, professional challenge at all levels. Each member of staff has a personal development plan; this is monitored by an assistant headteacher who ensures its implementation. Using this process, the next step is to develop further a programme to improve the use of assessment and tutorial lessons.

Leaders appraise the quality of teaching accurately. There is a common sense of purpose amongst staff in striving to improve teaching and learning. The management of this includes the pairing of teachers and departments, and the use of advanced skills teachers and local authority consultants to ensure standards continue to rise. This reflects good practice. Much informal evaluation of the impact of these strategies has taken place. However, formal evaluation is not commonly used to identify and exploit fully areas for further development, and to iron out any inconsistencies. The school's inclusive approach and focus on equality contributes well to its steady improvement in performance.

Good use is made of the individual strengths of the staff. This applies also to the governing body, which fulfils its role well and offers to the school a good range of professional and personal expertise. The governing body ensures students are kept safe; risk assessments and procedures for ensuring the suitability of staff are rigorous. From the questionnaires and discussions, most parents and students agree the school is a safe place. Governors have a good track record in ensuring community cohesion. They took over the management of the community leisure facilities within the school when they were due to be closed. They have helped the school develop links with schools in Europe. Community cohesion is monitored well through a community committee. Resources are enhanced by the joint school and public library provision on site. The school plays a very active role within the local family of schools; it has led joint initiatives which have resulted in improved attendance in the area. Performing arts students and teachers have used their expertise to help primary schools produce a 'play in a day' on the theme of anti-bullying. Excellent education partnerships are also enabling a breadth of curriculum which the school alone could not provide. Excellent partnerships with support agencies enable the school to engage with hard to reach families. Links with parents and carers are good and the school often makes extensive efforts to encourage families to be involved in their children's learning. Partnerships with the very large majority of parents and carers of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are excellent.



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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Sixth form

While standards in the sixth form are in line with the national average, outcomes in terms of their personal development are good. The quality of this enables them to become confident young adults with good social skills. They are prepared well as future citizens. In this, the school plays an important role in securing the students' future well-being. Most students complete their courses. The large majority go on to further or higher education, and almost all the rest to employment or work-related training. Those wishing to go on to university are nearly always successful.

Leadership and management, though good in some respects, are satisfactory overall because the twice-yearly academic monitoring of progress is too infrequent. Although the monitoring is thorough when it takes place, in the interim it does not always pick up sufficiently well any potential underachievement, or ensure additional challenge for potential higher attainers. Some of the lessons are dominated by the teacher talking too much and not giving students' sufficient opportunity to be actively involved in their learning. Nevertheless, such teaching often exhibits good subject knowledge. There is some outstanding practice, such as was seen in a dance lesson in Year 12 where questioning of high quality involved students in extensive self-criticism. This in turn led to rapid progress when developing choreography in the style of Martha Graham. Similar student involvement in the creative process was seen in an excellent art lesson in Year 13 where students were producing very effective individual pieces in the style of Robert Rauschenberg. Both lessons illustrate very well the influence of the school's specialist status. Students' ability to work independently was also seen in an outstanding information and communication technology lesson in Year 13. However, such teaching practices and strategies have not permeated sufficiently through the sixth form to improve progress above satisfactory and raise overall standards above average.

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Discussions with students confirm the excellent care for their well-being continues from their time in the main school. They are very pleased with the support provided for each individual; they say that transition into the sixth form, and preparation for life when they leave, is managed very effectively. Students clearly enjoy their time in the sixth form and benefit well, on a personal basis, from the experience.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

## Views of parents and carers

There were three areas where a small minority of those parents and carers who returned inspection questionnaires expressed some concern. Firstly, regarding the response of the school to their suggestions and concerns. Inspection evidence found that staff and the governing body do act on these, although the school's thorough approach means this may, on occasions, take slightly longer than parents and carers would wish. Where the care and welfare of students is concerned the school is conscientious in its approach. Secondly, a few parents and carers expressed concern about behaviour. Inspectors judged that the school deals well with the few students who find it difficult to manage their own behaviour. In their own questionnaire, the very large majority of students agree that behaviour is good. This was confirmed in both formal and informal discussions with students as well as from the good behaviour seen in lessons and around the school. Finally, there was some concern about the way the school helps families support their children's learning. The school offers a wide range of curriculum and learning-related guidance meetings for families throughout the year. Parents and carers are encouraged to attend, but uptake for these events is not always as high as the school would wish.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Wilnecote High School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 171 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1128 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	50	29	102	60	16	9	3	2
The school keeps my child safe	49	29	112	65	8	5	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	48	28	99	58	17	10	5	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	38	22	104	61	22	13	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	28	16	109	64	17	10	6	4
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	12	111	65	30	18	5	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	20	12	118	69	20	12	6	4
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	36	21	106	62	14	8	3	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	39	23	107	63	19	11	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	36	21	97	57	19	11	7	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	30	18	98	57	22	13	3	2
The school is led and managed effectively	42	25	100	58	12	7	4	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	48	28	98	57	15	9	5	3

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



19 January 2011

Dear Students

**Inspection of Wilnecote High School, Tamworth, B77 5LF**

On some of the school documents provided for us during its recent inspection is an acronym, 'L.E.A.R.N. Together'. You showed us how many of you play a Leading role in school life. You proved to us how much you Enjoy your learning. You Achieve well. You Respect each other. You Nurture not only a desire to learn, but positively encourage each other's ideas and creativity. We thank you for showing us all this, which goes a long way to explain why yours is a good school. These are some of the things we found are best about your school.

The adults at your school take excellent care for your safety and welfare.

Your school has established excellent partnerships to help them support you.

The performing arts make a major contribution to your school's success.

You make good progress during your time in the main school.

You develop well the personal skills to stand you in good stead later in life.

Your behaviour around school and your attitudes to learning are good.

You have good teachers who work hard and set you a good example.

Your headteacher, governors and other staff lead your school well.

We have asked your headteacher and the other teachers to do four main things to help all of you make even better progress. These are to:

- raise your attainment and progress in mathematics by providing you with greater challenge and making better use of assessment data
- establish a more consistent approach to the use of assessment by giving you more guidance on to how to improve through marking, and involving you more in lessons through questioning to challenge and check your understanding
- monitor more frequently the progress of those of you in the sixth form
- make better use of your daily tutorial lessons.

Your school motto is 'Be True'. You can help your teachers in their drive to ensure you make progress by being steadfast in your approach to 'L.E.A.R.N.ing'.

Yours sincerely

Michael Miller

Lead inspector

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