

Wandle Valley School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 103026 |
| Local Authority | Sutton |
| Inspection number | 355301 |
| Inspection dates | 8–9 December 2010 |
| Reporting inspector | Stuart Charlton |

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

| | |
|--|---|
| Type of school | Special |
| School category | Community special |
| Age range of pupils | 5–16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 62 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Brenda Morley |
| Headteacher | Doug Bone |
| Date of previous school inspection | 4 February 2008 |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Thirteen lessons were observed and all teachers were visited. Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body, the School Improvement Partner, staff and students. The work of the school was observed and inspectors scrutinised the school improvement plan, the minutes of the leadership team and governing body meetings, a range of other documentation and three questionnaires from parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- The effectiveness of the management structures at all levels in ensuring quality provision for all students.
- The effectiveness of leaders and managers in communicating and promoting the school's vision and driving improvement.
- How the systems to judge attainment on entry, set challenging targets and track pupils' progress ensure that all make the progress of which they are capable.
- The quality of the outcomes for students in relation to their personal development, and how the school monitors these.
- The effectiveness of teaching and learning in ensuring that all students achieve as well as they can and how well the curriculum is matched to the needs of students.

Information about the school

Wandle Valley provides for students who have a statement of special educational needs related to social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD). An increasing number of students have more complex needs, particularly related to behaviour. The majority of students are of White British origin, with a small proportion from Black British or Mixed Race backgrounds. None speaks English as an additional language. The overwhelming majority of students are boys, particularly in the younger age groups. The number of admissions into the primary department has increased significantly since the last inspection. The school provides an extensive outreach service to other primary and secondary schools within the local authority area. It holds the Artsmark Silver award and Healthy Schools status.

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

Wandle Valley provides a good education for its students. The care, guidance and support which all staff provide are outstanding and ensure that students gain the personal and social skills which prepare them well for their future lives. Since the last inspection, there have been significant changes in staffing to address the increasing complexity of students' needs. These changes have ensured that teaching and learning are good and most students make good progress. However, in a small number of lessons, teachers do not identify the specific needs of individual students clearly enough and, in these lessons, students can still achieve more.

Safeguarding procedures are good and students say that they feel safe and secure. Relationships between staff and students are excellent and are a crucial factor in the school's success. Students thoroughly enjoy school and say that lessons are fun. Students adopt a healthy lifestyle and make significant contributions to the school and the local community, particularly through the weekly 'Bistro'. The school has significantly improved attendance and punctuality due to its robust procedures. However, attendance is still adversely affected by the large minority of students from neighbouring boroughs whose attendance is not as good as that of students from Sutton. Behaviour is good and the vast majority of parents and carers speak highly of the school and the positive effect it has on their children. Significant changes have been made to the curriculum to tailor it to meet their changing needs. Overall, it is now good and the school responds quickly as the complexity of need changes. The clear focus on developing students' literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills ensures that all students continue into further education.

Parents and carers are actively involved in their children's learning. The school's work with them to help them to understand and meet their children's needs is of very high quality and they are very positive about its effectiveness.

The headteacher provides a very clear vision about how he wants the school to develop. He is well supported by his senior leadership team and they have worked effectively with staff to ensure that there is a shared vision across the school. Staff development is given high priority and the input of staff is valued and acted upon so that all strive to improve the school even further. Since the last inspection, rigorous systems to set targets and track progress have been developed so that these give high quality information. The school has rightly identified that this information is not used well enough to compare its performance with the national picture to be certain it is doing as well as it can. The governing body has worked tirelessly to identify the skills and expertise it needs to fully hold the school to account and it now acts effectively as the school's critical friend. Partnerships with other schools and professionals are used well to promote the learning and well-being of students. The commitment of staff and governing body to wanting the

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best for students, the changes in teaching and learning and the curriculum to address the increasing complexity of need, and the shared clarity of the school's vision about how it should improve mean that the school is well placed to improve in the future.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that in all lessons teachers clearly identify the specific needs of individual students and how these will be met.
- Make the best use of monitoring information about students' progress to compare performance with the national picture so that it is certain it is doing as well as it can.
- Improve attendance by working with the relevant boroughs to align procedures to promote good attendance.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

In general, when students join the school they have a very negative attitude to education. The focus on developing students' self-esteem and confidence is the cornerstone for the excellent development of their personal and social skills. By the end of Year 11, all students achieve GCSE qualifications and a number attain grade C or above. Given their below average starting points on entry, this represents good progress for the overwhelming majority of students. This good achievement is confirmed by the inspection findings. Staff provide a wide range of interesting and purposeful activities which motivate students and engage them in learning. Excellent learning was seen in a Key Stage 3 mathematics lesson where the teacher clearly identified the needs of each individual student and how these would be met in the lesson. Consequently, all made excellent progress. There are very effective systems to determine the attainment of students when they enter the school and set challenging targets. Links with other schools to make comparisons related to students' progress and moderate work have been initiated but are not fully embedded.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They show sensitivity to each other's feelings and support each other well and use times of reflection in a mature way. All are closely involved in helping to contribute towards the school community. A good example of this is the way in which older students 'buddy' younger ones. Older students visit local homes for the elderly and the 'Bistro' makes an excellent important contribution to the local community by providing weekly 'restaurant' facilities in school. This service is highly valued by local businesses who often engage students to provide an on-site service. Students gain a clear appreciation of the wider world and all are very willing to express their views on a range of issues. In discussion, they showed an excellent understanding of the need for a healthy lifestyle, emphasising the importance of the very wide range of opportunities for physical development and the healthy lunches and break time snacks. This reflects the school's Healthy Schools status and Sportsmark award.

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

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

| | |
|---|----------|
| Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning | 2 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Pupils' attainment ¹ | 3 |
| 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 |
| The extent to which pupils feel safe | 2 |
| Pupils' behaviour | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles | 1 |
| The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community | 1 |
| The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 2 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Pupils' attendance ¹ | 3 |
| The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |

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

How effective is the provision?

Through its outreach work with local mainstream primary and secondary schools, the school has taken the initiative in sharing its expertise in working with students with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties very effectively. Teachers and support staff work together extremely well and have a seamless approach to behaviour management so that any inappropriate behaviour is not allowed to affect the learning of others. Staff have very good subject knowledge which they use well to engage and motivate students. Planning is mostly thorough but in a few lessons it is focused on content delivery rather than clearly identifying the needs of each individual and how these will be met.

The curriculum provides a good balance between academic, vocational and work-related opportunities. The school continues to respond quickly to further adapt the curriculum to meet the ever increasing complexity of need. Enrichment activities, such as the sports clubs, particularly football and cycling, the use of the recording studio, visits to the theatre, museums, and a farm, add to students' enjoyment of school and link their learning to real-life experiences. This is further supported by the skills older students develop to enable them to become independent travellers especially through the bikes the school loans out to students.

Staff make sure that all students, including those who join at different times, settle quickly and happily into school life. Parents and carers are partners in their children's education and the school works extremely well with them, and with a wide range of outside

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agencies, to support students' development. The school supports vulnerable students extremely well so that they are not disadvantaged by their personal circumstances.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher leads by example and gives a clear sense of direction across the school. He is ably supported by his senior leaders. Their enthusiasm, commitment and determination ensure that the vision for the school's development is very effectively translated into action. Monitoring is rigorous and has ensured a clear pattern of improvement in classroom practice so that there is effective teamwork between teachers and support staff, resulting in students' excellent personal development. Recent changes in the leadership and in the structures and systems of the governing body enable members to take a more active role in monitoring outcomes for students. The governing body now provides effective challenge to the school. The changes made to the curriculum and teaching and learning ensure that the school fully meets its commitments to the promotion of equality of opportunity and it campaigns tirelessly to eliminate discrimination. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and everyone is clear about what needs to be done for the school to improve further. Staff approach key developments very enthusiastically.

The school has developed its links with parents and carers so that these are now exemplary. Students' academic targets and their individual action plans are made available to parents and carers on a regular basis and these are extremely well used so that they can be partners in their children's learning at home. Safeguarding and child protection are high on everyone's agenda and fully meet national requirements and guidelines. There are excellent links at local and international level through which the school promotes community cohesion. The links with schools in Australia are particularly effective in helping pupils to understand what life is like in other countries. However, links with schools in other areas of the United Kingdom, whose population is different to that in Sutton, are less well developed.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Views of parents and carers

Only three questionnaires from parents and carers were returned and so the school's own data were used to provide a clearer picture of their opinions. An overwhelming majority are very supportive of Wandle Valley and how it helps both themselves and their children. As one said, 'The headteacher and staff do an outstanding job with the pupils.' The inspection team fully endorses such sentiments.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Wandle Valley 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 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 3 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 62 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|-----|-------|-----|----------|----|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 2 | 67 | 1 | 67 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 1 | 33 | 1 | 33 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| My school informs me about my child's progress | 3 | 100 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 1 | 33 | 2 | 33 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 3 | 100 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 33 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 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) | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 1 | 33 | 2 | 33 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 3 | 100 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 1 | 33 | 2 | 33 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 3 | 100 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 1 | 33 | 2 | 33 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

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

| | Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools) | | | |
|----------------------|---|------|--------------|------------|
| Type of school | Outstanding | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
| Nursery schools | 58 | 36 | 4 | 2 |
| Primary schools | 8 | 43 | 40 | 9 |
| Secondary schools | 10 | 35 | 42 | 13 |
| Sixth forms | 13 | 39 | 45 | 3 |
| Special schools | 33 | 42 | 20 | 4 |
| Pupil referral units | 18 | 40 | 29 | 12 |
| All schools | 11 | 42 | 38 | 9 |

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 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 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. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

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"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support. |
| 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.



10 December 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Wandle Valley School, Carshalton SM5 1LW

Thank you for all the help you gave us when we inspected Wandle Valley School. We particularly enjoyed our discussions with you. We found that it is a good school and that there is always someone to help you whether it is with your school work or life outside school; as one of you said, 'The school makes you feel like you are at home.' We could see how much you now enjoy coming to school and that lessons are fun. It is clear that the small group sizes are a real help and that you feel safe and secure in school. We agree with your very positive comments and consider that you get first-rate care and support and a good education.

To make the school even better we want staff to make sure that in all lessons they show clearly how they are going to meet your needs. In addition, we want them to make better use of information to show that the school is doing as well as other schools in the country. Many of you come from boroughs other than Sutton and we want the school to work with these other boroughs and agree how to ensure good attendance.

I know that you will try your very best at all times to help the staff to make your school even better.

Yours sincerely

Stuart Charlton

Lead inspector

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