

Wishmore Cross School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125462
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	359893
Inspection dates	30–31 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Kay (Kathleen) Charlton

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

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	53
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bernard Bartlett
Headteacher	Jed Donnelly
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2008
School address	Alpha Road Chobham Surrey GU24 8NE
Telephone number	01276857555
Fax number	01276 855420
Email address	info@wishmorecross.surrey.sch.uk

Age group	11–16
Inspection dates	30–31 March 2011
Inspection number	359893

Boarding provision

Social care Unique Reference Number

Social care inspector

Age group	11–16
Inspection dates	30–31 March 2011
Inspection number	359893

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 4234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors and one social care inspector. Thirteen lessons were observed and ten teachers seen. Meetings were held with students, staff and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the strategic development plan, curriculum planning, assessment information, school policies, minutes of the governing body meetings, annual review procedures, and one questionnaire from parents and/or carers, 24 from staff and 30 from students were scrutinised.

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

- The effectiveness of teaching in challenging all students, with a focus on Key Stage 4.
- The success of the school in improving students' behaviour and attendance.
- The rigour of the school's systems for tracking progress and monitoring the quality of the provision to ensure improvement in students' achievements.
- The effectiveness of the boarding provision.

Information about the school

Wishmore Cross School caters for boys who have a statement of special educational needs related to severe behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. A minority have significant mental health needs. The school provides for 24 boarders on a flexible basis for up to four nights each week. The overwhelming majority of students are from White British heritages and none speak English as an additional language. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is very high. Students come mainly from Surrey local authority, although a few come from further afield. Most have experienced significant disruption to their education before joining Wishmore Cross. The current headteacher was appointed from an acting position to the substantive post in January 2009. The school has Healthy Schools status and the Sportsmark.

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

Wishmore Cross is a good school. It is much improved since its previous inspection. The care, guidance and support that students receive are outstanding and ensure that they make excellent progress in developing their confidence and self-esteem from a very low base. There has been year-on-year improvement in students' academic achievements and these are now good. As a result, students gain qualifications that enable them to move successfully into further education, training or the world of work. The school uses very effective strategies to re-engage students in education and help them address their anxieties about school, and attendance is average. Behaviour is good. The very consistent approach from all staff ensures that students show great improvement in their behaviour from when they first start at the school. The high-quality boarding provision plays an important part in supporting students' development.

Significant improvements in the curriculum and in teaching and learning have resulted in these being good for all age groups. The clear focus on the development of students' basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology supports very effectively their learning in all subjects. The extension of vocational work and college courses for older students has increased their motivation so that they are keen to achieve their best. In lessons, teachers make good use of support staff and of resources, such as interactive whiteboard technology, to enhance students' learning. Assessment is good. Staff match work well to each student's level of understanding and they involve them in assessing both their own learning and that of their peers. As a result, the large majority of students, including those in Key Stage 4, make good progress because teaching in most lessons is demanding. The school has rightly identified that in a few lessons, staff do not always make best use of a wide range of teaching and learning approaches to maximise students' progress. Professional development focused on this area is paying off, with clear improvements in classroom practice.

The headteacher has a very clear vision about how the school should develop. He is very well supported by his senior leaders and, along with the enthusiastic team of staff, has ensured that the issues from the previous inspection have been addressed. Based on an in-depth understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, with challenging input from the governing body, leaders have mapped out a clear path for future improvement. They have developed rigorous systems to track students' progress, and monitor and evaluate the quality of the provision, ensuring that any student in need of extra support is quickly identified. These systems underpin the pattern of improvement in students' achievements. Good links with parents and carers and excellent links with other professionals support the students' development very effectively. The school promotes community cohesion well at local and national levels. It is aware that it does not do all that it might to help students learn about others in a global context. The improvements it has affected on students' achievements, their attendance, behaviour and attitudes to

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

learning, coupled with the effectiveness of its self-evaluation, show that the capacity for further sustained improvement is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that in every lesson, staff make use of a wide range of teaching and learning approaches to maximise students' progress.
- Extend its work on community cohesion so that students learn more about others in a global context.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Since the previous inspection, the number of students gaining GCSE passes and accreditation for vocational subjects has risen so that attainment is broadly average. Given students' below, and sometimes well below, average starting points on entry, this represents good progress and achievement. There are no differences in the progress made by those with mental health needs or those in different ability groups. Students' achievements in English, which were demonstrated very well in an end-of-unit assessment in Year 10, and in physical education, are particularly good. In all the lessons, the very strong relationships between staff and students are used extremely well to motivate students so that they enjoy their lessons, as seen when they were making a large model of Bart Simpson in art. In most lessons, staff are skilful in using a wide range of approaches so that students apply themselves diligently and work at a good pace. This quality of practice, however, is not consistent in all lessons.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. This is based on the high expectations established by all staff and the role models they present. Students learn to reflect on their own feelings and increasingly learn how best to respond to those of others. This plays an important part in helping students make significant changes in their attitudes and behaviour, which are acknowledged in the 'Golden Moments' awards given in assembly. Students develop a good awareness of the need for a healthy lifestyle and this is recognised through the school's Healthy School status and Sportsmark. They are very enthusiastic about physical education lessons and inter-school games competitions, where they have been especially successful playing rugby. In discussions, students acknowledged how they have used information about sexual health, tobacco and drug abuse to help change their lifestyle. Students say that they feel safe and that if any issues arise they are quickly dealt with by staff.

The first-day absence procedures are operated with rigour and most students improve their attendance considerably. They make a positive contribution to their school community in a range of ways, for example older ones help mentor younger ones and through the work of the active school council. When helping to improve the local environment and by putting forward ideas to make the Olympic stadium eco-friendly, students have contributed well to the wider community. The literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology qualifications they gain, together with the gains in their personal skills, prepare them well for their future economic well-being.

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

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	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
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?

Teachers have good subject knowledge and, in their planning, they identify the needs of individual students and how these will be met, so that the level of work is matched carefully to students' needs. Support staff receive a high level of training and they make an important contribution to developing students' understanding, especially in the one-to-one English and mathematics sessions. Teachers and support staff often inject a sense of fun into lessons, resulting in a positive impact on students' motivation. Students' increased involvement in assessing their learning has a very positive impact on the progress they make. This was very noticeable in an excellent physical education with Year 10 students. Staff generally use a good range of teaching approaches to extend students' learning, as seen for example in mathematics, science and food technology lessons, but this is not fully consistent across the school.

The curriculum provides a good balance between academic and vocational subjects and meets the needs and aspirations of students. A carefully planned programme of relevant work experience and college placements effectively supports the provision. Visits out of school, including a week-long camping trip, and visitors to the school, for example by local police and the vicar, enhance the curriculum. There is a strong focus on personal and social education which forms a cornerstone of the provision. The school recognises that the opportunities for the creative and performing arts are not as good as they might be and is rightly improving these with a well-planned programme of developments.

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

Staff make sure that all students, including those who arrive at different times, settle quickly and happily into the school, with a home visit organised for all new students. The boarding provision is used very effectively to help younger ones settle into school life and develop their independence. Transition arrangements for those moving on, for example to college, are very carefully planned and contribute extremely well to reducing students' anxieties. The care, guidance and support provided by all staff for students' personal development are of very high quality, with exceptional support given to those whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Staff spend a great deal of time listening to students, giving them advice on an individual basis and promoting their well-being to help them to overcome difficulties in their lives. They work extremely well with others, including the in-school therapy team, mental health professionals and other schools, to provide tailor-made advice and support. Students are given excellent guidance about careers and opportunities available when they leave the school.

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 inspires both students and staff to want to do their best. There is a constant focus on improving students' life chances and all show a sense of enthusiasm about key developments. The school's strong commitment to the professional development of its staff effectively underpins school improvement. The governing body is systematic in monitoring the work of the school. Its members have a good awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses and they target resources well to meet students' needs, for example by providing one-to-one support and specialist therapies. The school promotes equality of opportunity well by ensuring good achievement for all groups of students, including those who arrive into school after the usual point of entry. The difference it makes to the lives of its students is a testament to its commitment to tackling discrimination.

All staff work well with parents and carers to help them to support their children's needs. Links are established through half-termly meetings, regular contact by phone and visits home that, if needed, include time to set up work schedules for students using e-learning packages. Safeguarding and child protection fully meet national requirements and guidelines. There are robust policies, with good staff training on child protection. All staff are vetted and checked before working in the school and risk assessments are thorough. The school's extremely strong links with other agencies, schools and colleges underpin the significant progress students make in their attitudes, behaviour and attendance.

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

The backgrounds of both students and staff, and work undertaken with others in the community are used well to support students' understanding of community cohesion. Links with schools outside the area help to broaden students' understanding of those from a wider range of backgrounds. The school is aware that there are too few opportunities for its students to learn about lives of others in an international context and it is rightly developing this area of its work.

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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
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

Boarding provision

The quality of the boarding provision is good. The school meets the key national minimum standards for residential special schools, and in some areas exceeds them. Two previous recommendations regarding recruitment procedures and the prompt recording of any incident have been addressed.

Boarders' health needs are managed very well with an effective system to manage medicines safely. Staff are confident in administering medication; they are supported through training and clear policies. The health and well-being of boarders is actively promoted through physical exercise, a balanced diet and support with personal hygiene and health education. Boarders enjoy the food provided and feel that they are able to contribute to the menus.

Very good safeguarding policies and procedures exist that cover the whole school. All staff receive training and clear guidance on safe working practices. The head of care is the designated person for safeguarding. She has a good working relationship with the local authority and attends external training events with them. Senior staff have attended training on safer recruitment practices and this is reflected in the robust recruitment procedures adopted by the school.

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

Boarders report that they feel safe and they are clear about boundaries regarding their personal behaviour within boarding. They receive clear and consistent responses from residential staff. There are low levels of bullying and boarders feel confident that staff will 'sort it out' when reported. Incentive schemes are well received by boarders where they can earn points daily for a range of matters, from keeping a tidy bedroom to showing respect and kindness. Staff are trained to manage and respond to challenging behaviour. Appropriate consequences are in place to respond to any misbehaviour in boarding. Records confirm that incidents of disruptive behaviour are low and this is indicative of the strength of relationships between boarders and the residential staff. There are systems in place to record significant incidents but they do not include the effectiveness and consequences of any sanctions and physical interventions. Health and safety issues are taken very seriously with robust policies and procedures. Safety matters are reinforced with boarders through activities, fire drills, use of school transport and their code of conduct.

A strength of the provision is the enjoyment and achievement of boarders. School facilities are used for sports activities, computing, media projects and music making, with additional activities off-site at local leisure venues. The residential provision supports the educational progress of boarders by having strong communication links with teaching staff, promoting homework, setting residential targets aligned with educational ones, learning through activities and developing life skills and independence. The residential staff engage boarders in creating fantastic displays about issues related to inspirational people, current news events, equality and diversity, and personal and social health education.

Boarders receive outstanding individual support from the residential staff and benefit from the link worker system, where a designated member of staff takes responsibility to co-ordinate the boarder's placement. Wider support comes from the school staff, the senior leadership team, an independent listener, visiting members of the governing body and other pupils. The therapy team is located in the school and this ensures that boarders and their families can have direct access to therapeutic services to support them with any emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The provision to help boarders make a positive contribution to boarding is outstanding. Effective consultation occurs with day-to-day plans and more formally in boarders' house meetings. Through regular contact, there are good relationships with parents and carers, working together to support the boarders. A planned and sensitive admission process ensures that new boarders are able to visit and build up the length of their stay. A welcome file provides key information and current boarders have made a short film promoting boarding at this school.

Each boarder has a placement plan identifying his needs and how they will be met; these are very good documents. The targets, as agreed by each boarder, are regularly reviewed to record progress and achievement. The monitoring of the placement plans and target setting is rigorous and not only identifies boarders' progress but highlights indicators of staff performance and professional development.

The purpose-built boarding accommodation is of a good standard and offers single or double rooms. Boarders generally show respect for the boarding house; damage to the property is rare. The lounge and kitchen areas are homely and well furnished. The commitment and enthusiasm of the residential staff are strong features of the boarding provision. Staff benefit from training opportunities, which is evident in their work. They

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

feel supported through their team work, regular supervision and strong leadership from the head of care. Representatives of the governing body regularly visit in addition to the local authority that complete a monitoring visit every half term.

National Minimum Standards (NMS) to be met to improve social care

ensure records include the effectiveness and any consequences of all sanctions and physical intervention (breach of national minimum standard 10.9 & 10.14)

These are the grades for the boarding provision

The effectiveness of the boarding provision	2
--	----------

Views of parents and carers

One questionnaire was returned which represents an extremely low response. Therefore the school's own surveys, plus feedback from parents and carers in the 'Whiz Bang' book and in e-mails were taken into consideration. These show that overall parents and carers are very satisfied with the school and the provision it makes for their children. Comments such as, 'I am happy, my son is doing well and loves school. It is better than we had hoped,' sum this up. Their largely positive views are fully supported by the inspection findings. The inspection shows that there are very thorough procedures to ensure students' safety and that staff follow them carefully.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Wishmore Cross 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 1 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 53 pupils registered at the school.

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

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).

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">■ 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.



1 April 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Wishmore Cross School, Woking GU24 8NE

Thank you for all the help you gave us when we inspected your school. We judged that Wishmore Cross gives you a good education providing many of you with a 'second chance' to do well in learning. We could see that staff are extremely good in guiding you to make the right choices and that you make good progress, especially in English, physical education, as well as in improving your behaviour. It was good to hear how much you enjoy activities, such as camping and making meals in the new food technology area. The ways in which some of you help others in the community are good, for example by putting forward ideas about how to make the Olympic stadium eco-friendly. The opportunities you get to go to college, do work experience and gain qualifications prepare you well for life after school.

The staff are keen to make your school even better. We have asked them to make sure they use a range of different approaches in every lesson to challenge you so that you always do your very best. We have also asked them to set up some international links so that you learn more about others further afield. You can help by always trying hard.

Yours sincerely

Kay Charlton

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.