

# Wolverley CofE Secondary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	135061
<b>Local Authority</b>	Worcestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	381796
<b>Inspection dates</b>	5–6 October 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Deborah James

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>	Voluntary controlled
<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>	826
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	99
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Chris Withers
<b>Headteacher</b>	Richard North
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29 March 2008
<b>School address</b>	Blakeshall Lane Kidderminster DY11 5XQ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01562 859800
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<b>Email address</b>	office@wolverley.worcs.sch.uk

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<b>Age group</b>	11–18
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	5–6 October 2011
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 57 lessons, observed 45 teachers and held meetings with staff, groups of students and a small group of governors. They observed the school's work and studied a range of documentation, including the school's improvement plan, minutes of governing body meetings, department monitoring evidence and records of students' progress. Inspectors also reviewed responses to questionnaires returned from students, staff and 67 parents and carers.

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

- What is the current attainment of boys and students known to be eligible for free school meals?
- What is the current level of progress of year 11 students in English and mathematics?
- How effective have the actions taken since the last inspection been to improve the quality of teaching and learning?
- How rapid is the pace of improvements to raise levels of students' achievement?

## Information about the school

Wolverley CofE School is an average-sized 11-19 school, formed in September 2007 following a reorganisation of provision in the Wyre Forest. The majority of students are of White British heritage. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The school is a specialist school for music. The school has gained the Artsmark Gold award, the Eco-schools Silver award, the Sportsmark 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?**

**3**

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

**3**

## Main findings

Wolverley is a satisfactory school. It has an inclusive caring culture with rich, thought-provoking displays throughout the building, underpinned by its strong values. Individual students are supported well in developing good moral values, self-confidence and consideration for others. As a result, students are able to make a valuable contribution to the school and wider community. Students participate enthusiastically in the life of the school through the school council, in charity fundraising events and older students act as reading mentors for younger peers.

The proportion of students gaining five or more GCSEs at grade A\* to C has risen considerably since the last inspection and the rate of progress has been satisfactory. However, attainment in English and mathematics dipped in the 2011 examination results. Senior leaders have put in place a number of actions to improve attainment and progress in these core subjects. Improvements have been particularly evident in mathematics, where a recently-appointed subject leader has adapted the curriculum and put in place a thorough intervention programme to support students at risk of underachievement. In English, additional support has been provided by the local authority. As a result, inspectors found that current attainment in English and mathematics has improved and the progress of current Year 11 students is more closely in line with national expectations. The previous underperformance of boys, and the gap in attainment between students known to be eligible for free school meals and other groups, has been tackled through improved teaching and better tracking and intervention. This is beginning to have a positive impact.

School leaders have put in place a number of strategies to improve the quality of teaching and learning so that the majority of teaching is now good or better and no inadequate teaching was observed by inspectors. However, a minority of teaching remains satisfactory and, as a result, students are not consistently supported to make good progress. In most lessons expectations are clear and students engage with varied and challenging tasks that interest and motivate them. However, some of the activities are not tailored well enough to individual needs to enable all students to make good progress. The quality of marking and feedback is inconsistent. While much marking gives students an awareness of their current level and indicates the next steps required to improve, this is not always the case.

Since the last inspection, the school has made tangible progress in several key areas. Parents and carers, students and staff have commented on improved behaviour and better teaching. Attendance has improved and is now above average as a result of

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the consistent application of a robust set of procedures. Changes to the curriculum have made a marked contribution to improved attainment. In particular, effective partnerships with other providers and the development of 'The Lodge' learning centre have increased the range of vocational courses significantly, enabling Key Stage 4 students to have greater success and find relevance in their learning. Senior leaders have an accurate view of the school's current strengths and what needs to be done to bring about improvement. For example, the school has identified that there is considerable variation in the skills and approaches of some subject leaders and in the extent to which they have had a positive impact on improving students' achievement. The changes for the better demonstrate the school's satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

- Accelerate the rate of student progress by ensuring that at least 80% of teaching is good or better by July 2012 through:
  - ensuring that all students receive regular feedback on their work through good-quality marking so that they know how well they are doing and how to improve on their current performance
  - ensuring that learning activities are matched to students' different abilities.
  
- Support middle leaders in taking responsibility for driving improvement and ensuring the quality of teaching and learning by:
  - increasing the rigour of departmental systems for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and students' progress and ensuring any necessary intervention takes place quickly
  - developing the school's existing coaching models to share the good practice of the most effective middle leaders so that all department leadership is of a consistently high standard.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

The majority of students enjoy school. They have good relationships with their teachers and other support staff. Students' attainment on entry to the school is broadly average. In lessons they show interest in their work and participate enthusiastically in suitably challenging activities, cooperating together in paired and group activities. For example, in a Year 10 dance lesson all students were able to give effective feedback to each other on their performance and progress was clearly visible. However, tasks are not always matched to the needs of individual students. As a result, students are not consistently supported in making good progress.

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Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive additional support in many lessons from a team of support staff. This support, along with appropriate learning activities, ensure that students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are engaged in their learning and make the expected progress.

Students are valued and well cared for. The vast majority of students say they feel safe and know that there is always an adult who will help and deal quickly with any problem. During the inspection the vast majority of students behaved well in lessons and around the school. However, parent and carer and student surveys together with discussions with students indicated that, on occasions, the behaviour of a few students can be disruptive. The school has strong evidence that behaviour is improving, including a considerable year-on-year fall in the number of fixed-term exclusions required to address unacceptable behaviour.

Students know how to stay healthy and are enthusiastic about the variety and quality of sporting activities they are offered. Students are particularly appreciative of the range of healthy eating options available in the new school dining room. There are many opportunities for spirituality including in assemblies led by other students. The vast majority of students know the difference between right and wrong and are tolerant of each other and respect differences.

*These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes*

<b>Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils’ behaviour</b>	<b>3</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>3</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>

**How effective is the provision?**

The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection with lesson

<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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objectives and success criteria now consistently shared with students in lessons. Teachers effectively use a broad range of questioning techniques to ensure that the majority of students are required to respond and to extend students’ understanding. Some elements of teaching and learning relating to assessment strategies are less well developed and slows the rate of student progress in some lessons. Practice is inconsistent between and within departments in relation to marking and target setting.

The curriculum has undergone significant change over the last few years to better meet the needs of all learners. Students’ literacy skills are enhanced by an innovative, well-organised programme in Years 7 and 8 delivered in history, geography and religious studies. At Key Stage 4, the focus has been on increasing the range of academic and vocational courses to motivate and engage all students. The programme of extra-curricular, enrichment activities is a strong feature of the curriculum, adding to students’ enjoyment and contributing to other aspects of their personal development and well-being.

The school aims for every child at Wolverley to be welcomed and valued. This begins with a well-planned transition from primary school to ensure that students settle into their new school quickly and smoothly. Parents and carers are particularly appreciative of this support. For example one parent commented that her son ‘was very anxious when he started but now feels much more confident through the support he has been given’. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported effectively with a range of personalised courses and intervention activities. The Year 10 and 11 students who attend ‘The Lodge’ speak articulately and confidently about how this specialised provision has helped to improve their behaviour and self-esteem and prepare them for the future.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets students’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## **How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher and senior leaders provide the school with clear and effective strategic leadership and direction. Whole-school self-evaluation has identified appropriate areas for development and suitable plans have been put in place. However, some targets in the improvement plan are too general for leaders, including the governing body, to evaluate rigorously the success of the school’s actions. There has been a sustained focus on the need to raise the quality of teaching and learning in order to raise attainment and improve progress. Senior

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leaders have set high expectations and motivated others to improve by: providing training for all staff on a variety of teaching and learning strategies; offering good practice workshops throughout the academic year; careful monitoring of teaching standards and coaching support for staff who are not consistently teaching good lessons. As a result, the school’s monitoring records show a significant improvement in the quality of teaching; this was confirmed by the lesson observations carried out by inspectors. Governance is satisfactory. The governing body knows the school very well and now challenges senior leaders to ensure the school meets the needs of all its students. Equality policies meet requirements and senior leaders carefully review the academic performance of different groups of students and share the outcomes with governors. All requirements for the safeguarding of students were in place at the time of the inspection. The school has thorough and robust systems for assessing risk and ensuring the health and safety of students and staff.

Senior leaders ensure that parents and carers are well informed about their children’s achievement and well-being through frequent newsletters and regular evenings for parents and carers to discuss their children’s progress with staff. The school is committed to further improving its communication with parents and carers through a new portal that gives them the opportunity to read past reports, monitor attendance and punctuality and check on homework, house-points, and detentions.

The school has a good understanding of its religious, ethnic, and socio-economic context, and offers opportunities for students to experience greater diversity through multi-faith weeks and local and international partnership working. The school has strong links with its local community through the church, Wolverley Carnival, and other local partners, especially local primary schools. It also has a developing international link with a Tanzanian school where a collaborative project exists on sustainable gardens. The music specialism enhances the cultural development of students with extensive opportunities to experience music from different countries.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<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>3</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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>



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**The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money**

**3**

## Sixth form

Students' attainment is below average and progress is satisfactory. Students' progress improved in 2011 but there are considerable variations in the progress made in different subjects and this was also the case in 2010. All teaching observed in the sixth form was satisfactory or better and much was good. Good questioning techniques probe students' understanding and in some lessons, for example in law, revision techniques are well taught. The curriculum offers a broad range of courses at all levels, catering for the individual needs of all students. Some courses are offered by other providers and students take full advantage of them.

Students have a positive attitude towards learning. They benefit from a range of opportunities to take responsibility and to contribute to the school and wider-community through the 'Elective Programme'. Impartial advice and guidance are strengths of the provision. Students speak very highly of the help and support they are given by teachers in the school and this year all students went onto higher education or employment. Outcomes are satisfactory but improving and systems for securing improvement are becoming more rigorous and better-established. Senior leaders have an appropriate understanding of students' progress and are beginning to investigate any inconsistencies in student attainment across different subjects.

*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

A low proportion of parents and carers returned the inspection questionnaire. Of these, the overwhelming majority are happy with their children's experiences in the school. They agree that their children enjoy school and feel safe. They are happy with their children's progress and believe the school keeps them well informed. A few specific concerns were raised about bullying. Inspectors found the school had appropriate policies in place and dealt effectively with such incidents.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Wolverley CofE Secondary 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 67 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 826 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	19	28	43	64	3	4	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	24	36	41	61	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	21	31	41	61	5	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	20	30	43	64	4	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	18	27	45	67	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	16	24	39	58	9	13	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	10	15	47	70	7	10	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)	19	28	35	52	4	6	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	20	30	44	66	2	3	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	22	34	51	10	15	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	21	39	58	9	13	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	14	21	41	61	6	9	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	19	28	44	66	3	4	1	1

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 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 2010/11 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.**



7 October 2011

Dear Students

**Inspection of Wolverley CofE Secondary School, Kidderminster DY11 5XQ**

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave the inspection team when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed being in your lessons and talking to you and were impressed with the maturity with which you answered our questions. Yours is a satisfactory school that is showing clear signs of improvement and you are rightly proud of it. This is what we found out about your school.

- The school supports you well in developing good social and moral skills and you use these skills to make a good contribution to your school and community.
- Your attendance is good and the school values you and looks after you well.
- Teaching is improving and much of it is good but some lessons do not provide activities that match your individual ability.
- Marking does not always give you clear information on what you have achieved and how you can improve.
- Senior leaders have made significant progress in improving your school since the last inspection and the school is keen to support you to make better progress, particularly in English and mathematics.

We have asked the school to make following improvements.

- Make sure that more of your lessons are good or outstanding, with better marking and learning activities that are matched to your ability so you make better progress.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management so that all departments are as well run as the best, underperformance is picked up quickly, and appropriate interventions are introduced promptly.

You all can help by continuing to work hard and behave well. Thank you again for helping us with the inspection of your school. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Deborah James  
Lead inspector

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