

Wendover Campus

Inspection report

Unique reference number	110590
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	378122
Inspection dates	2–3 May 2012
Lead inspector	Mike Kell

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection of residential provision was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	65
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Philip Wallis
Principal	Ian McCaul
Date of previous school inspection	18 June 2009
School address	Church Lane Wendover Aylesbury HP22 6NL
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Residential provision	Wendover Campus
Social care unique reference number	SC023101
Social care inspector	Gavin Thomas

Age group	11–16
Inspection date(s)	2–3 May 2012
Inspection number	378122



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Introduction

Inspection team

Mike Kell	Additional inspector
Jean Whalley	Additional inspector
Gavin Thomas	Social care inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. In excess of five hours was spent observing nine lessons, spending shorter periods of time in five others. All classes were observed, as were nine different teachers. Meetings were held with students, the Chair of the Governing Body of the federation, both federation and school leaders, and local authority school improvement officers. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation that included assessment, attendance and behaviour data, monitoring and evaluation records, improvement planning and local authority monitoring reports. The eight questionnaires returned by parents and carers were analysed, as were the 36 completed by staff and the 51 from students.

Information about the school

This average-sized day and residential school was called Wendover House School when it was inspected last. Its name changed to Wendover Campus in September 2010 when it federated with another special school to form the Chiltern Way Federation. The headteacher of the other school was appointed principal of the federation. However, the governing body took the decision that the new federation leadership team could have only limited involvement at Wendover Campus during the first year. Following a number of staff changes, the leadership team currently comprises the principal plus a head and assistant head of campus who are appointed on an interim basis. An assistant headteacher and director of behaviour were on the staff of the partner school but now have responsibilities across the federation.

All students have a statement of special educational needs, which in most cases is for behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. Approximately a quarter of students are residential Monday to Thursday. A similar proportion is known to be eligible for free school meals. There are very few looked after children. A very large majority of students have a White British heritage. A few students with the most challenging behaviour are taught in a separate specialist unit.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- Wendover Campus is a satisfactory but improving school with good residential provision. It is not yet good because of remaining weaknesses in teaching and learning and in leadership and management; plus a further weakness regarding the national minimum standards for residential special schools. During the first year of federation, the school's performance deteriorated as a result of significant shortcomings in leadership and management, including governance that were barriers to progress. Following staff changes the leadership team is now effectively securing improvements in provision and outcomes. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Following a dip in standards, achievement is currently satisfactory. Students make satisfactory progress in acquiring literacy and numeracy key skills, but their progress in science is inadequate. The opportunity for more accelerated progress overall is further impeded by a short planned taught week.
- Since the autumn of 2011, federation leaders have addressed robustly shortcomings in teachers' performance. Support, training and coaching have raised teaching to securely satisfactory, with pockets of good practice. Generally, though teachers do not consistently use assessment information to plan activities and so tasks do not always enable independent learning.
- Students generally have positive attitudes. Attendance is below average but improving. The school is orderly and behaviour in lessons and around the school is satisfactory and improving.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. Leaders have created a culture to nurture improvement and effective systems to manage performance. Consequently, there have been some rapid improvements in a relatively short time, raising significantly the quality of provision. However, assessment procedures and analysis are not refined enough and the curriculum offers few personalised learning programmes in Key Stage 4. The governing body does not meet its obligation to monitor the residential provision.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- The school must ensure that it meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools which have not been met.
- Increase the pace at which pupils learn and make progress by:
 - ensuring that science is taught consistently well
 - extending the length of the planned taught week
 - raising attendance through a renewed focus on persistent absentees.
- Improve the quality of teaching by developing consistent practice across the school, ensuring that:
 - teachers routinely make effective use of students' prior achievement when planning future learning activities
 - planning focuses more precisely on what teachers expect individuals or small groups of identified students to learn, and that all students have activities and resources that match their capabilities and encourage independent learning.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management on students' achievement and personal development by:
 - refining the analysis of assessment data to incorporate a moderation procedure and by evaluating better each student's progress compared with those of similar levels of attainment and starting points elsewhere
 - implementing more individualised curriculum programmes for Key Stage 4 students
 - ensuring that the governing body acquires more first-hand knowledge of all aspects of the school's work, including the residential provision, through a planned programme of visits.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Year 11 students performed less well in 2011 compared with 2010, especially in science and the gap between students' performance and that of similar students nationally widened. This was caused by turbulence following federation and the governing body's decision to limit federation leaders' involvement in the school.

This decline has been reversed. Students' attainment on entry is broadly average and remains so during their time at the school, although it spans a wide range with a very small number working at a level beyond national expectations. Parents and carers agree unanimously that their children make good progress from their starting points. The inspection team's judgement is not so positive and its evaluation aligns with the views of the students themselves. Students now achieve satisfactorily compared with others of similar age and starting points nationally. The inspection team agrees with parents and carers and their children that students are enabled to

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make progress in developing key communication and mathematical skills, but this is at a rate that is no quicker than satisfactory. Students make satisfactory progress overall, irrespective of their special educational needs or disability. There is little difference between the rates of progress made by most groups, such as those who are known to be eligible for free school meals, the very few looked after children and those taught in the specialist unit. However, the intervention groups for students with the least developed literacy skills enable them to improve their reading skills and spelling at a good rate. Students do not learn enough in science. Their progress has been hampered by staff changes that have disrupted their learning.

In lessons observed during the inspection, students typically learned at a satisfactory pace. More rapid progress was hindered by activities that did not consistently provide an appropriate level of challenge. Students made good progress on the few occasions that teachers planned more meticulously. Students were observed achieving well in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A focused discussion, role play and reading a story enabled students to develop good awareness of homelessness and an appreciation of racial stereotyping. These activities also made a strong contribution to students' literacy and communication skills, particularly speaking and listening.

Quality of teaching

Despite students, their parents and carers all indicating that teaching is good, the inspection team takes a different view. Teaching is typically satisfactory, although all lessons include some features of effective practice and some good teaching was observed during the inspection. For instance, students made good progress in their research of the economies of different French regions because the teacher had planned an investigative exercise with resources that matched each student's needs. Therefore, each one was challenged to work as independently as possible and their endeavour and good behaviour reflected their enjoyment of the exercise. Teachers generally have good subject knowledge and teaching assistants provide good support; they have a good understanding of individual special educational needs and disabilities and are effective in helping to maintain students' attention and encourage their learning. Lesson planning is consistent in terms of stating what students are expected to learn during each lesson, but there is variability in the precision with which these learning outcomes are written. When they are imprecise, it is difficult for teachers to evaluate accurately the learning that has taken place. Teachers assess students' progress over time regularly but the judgements are not moderated sufficiently to guarantee their accuracy, and there is limited analysis by leaders of the value that the school adds to students' progress.

Staff manage students well, with high expectations of behaviour. They have similarly high expectations of students' learning, but lesson planning does not always transfer these expectations into practical learning activities because staff do not consistently take enough notice of students' attainment and previous learning. As a result, individual students or groups are not consistently given different tasks and resources that encourage them to tackle activities independently. As there is not always a close

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enough match between the challenge presented by the activity and individual students' capabilities, more able students sometimes find the activity too easy while it is too difficult for others to attempt without support. In both cases, the pace of learning suffers as a result. Students learn at a good pace when teachers' planning is more focused and considered in terms of individuals' learning needs and styles.

Teachers have a good appreciation of promoting students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, such as consideration of the social consequences of coastal erosion in addition to the types of coastal defences available.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

A very large majority of parents and carers believe that behaviour in lessons and around the school is good, whereas the same proportion of students consider behaviour to be good only most of the time or sometimes. The inspection team's view is more in line with that of the students. Overall, behaviour is satisfactory but showing signs of rapid improvement since federation leaders became involved in the day-to-day running of the school. Records show that there has been a marked turnaround in the number of minor disturbances in classes as well as the frequency of serious incidents, which in turn has reduced significantly the number of fixed-term exclusions from what was a high level previously. Incidents of bullying are in decline too, and students and parents and carers have confidence in the school's ability to deal with these quickly. Any bullying that does occur is generally verbal, although there have been a very few racist incidents. The staff have no hesitation in agreeing unanimously that students are safe in school and a very large majority of students and their parents and carers confirm their view. Behaviour in the residential provision is excellent, with no instances of bullying or other threatening behaviour.

The improvement in students' behaviour was driven by federation leaders' unrelenting focus on changing the school's culture, based on clear expectations and the implementation of a whole-school approach to managing behaviour. Leaders now track students' behaviour very carefully and teachers have the tools to deal with misbehaviour in a consistent way. As a result, students demonstrate greater ability to self-manage their behaviour based on a growing awareness that actions have consequences. Therefore, the school is now typically orderly as students move around the site sensibly and calmly, arriving for lessons punctually and with positive attitudes to learning. Attendance is below average, but there are early signs of improvement. While the majority of students go to school regularly, there is a minority who are persistent absentees despite the school's best efforts to engage them.

Leadership and management

Federation leaders got to grips quickly with the situation that they unearthed in the autumn of 2011; deterioration in the quality of teaching, a decline in standards and a worsening of students' behaviour compared with previously. Powered by a combination of insightful leadership and the application of robust management

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procedures, leaders embarked upon a systematic programme of monitoring and evaluation, with the twin aims of raising the quality of teaching and improving students' behaviour. The outcomes of this monitoring were used very effectively to support staff development. As teachers' performance improved, learning became more interesting and students' behaviour became more positive. Performance management of all teachers takes place, but leaders recognise the need to improve the arrangement.

The curriculum is sufficiently broad and balanced to be satisfactory but the range of learning opportunities in Key Stage 4 lacks variety, with limited opportunity for students to pursue individual pathways that prepare them most effectively for leaving school. In addition, the planned taught week falls some way short of recommendations and this too restricts curriculum breadth as well as the opportunity for students to make accelerated progress. The curriculum promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development satisfactorily through, for example, subjects such as the personal, social and health education programme, drama, art and the humanities and informally at lunchtimes and in assemblies.

Federation leaders have been the major driving force of change, ably supported by the interim leadership team. They have effectively tackled discrimination and promoted equality of opportunity to enable all groups to make at least satisfactory progress. The governing body was too complacent at the time of federation and governors underestimated the amount of work needed. The governing body is now more effective and has worked satisfactorily with leaders to re-establish procedures that ensure students' health, welfare and safety, so that all safeguarding arrangements are in place and students work without fear of harassment. It is not yet fully effective in supporting the good leadership and management of the good residential facility, particularly in relation to governors' visits required under the national minimum standards. Furthermore, its relatively limited first-hand knowledge of the school reduces its overall effectiveness.

On the other hand, federation leaders have had tangible and substantial influence on the school. While the key development points from the previous report have not been addressed fully, leaders have a track record, albeit over a relatively short time, that shows a rigorous approach to self-evaluation and the implementation of policies and procedures that have driven forward improvement quickly. They have the full backing of a staff who are unanimous in confirming their support for what the school is trying to achieve. Therefore, the school has a solid foundation for further development and a secure capacity for maintaining the momentum of change.

Residential provision

The residential provision is a highly effective feature of the school. It is well led and managed and so students thrive, in some cases making very rapid gains in their personal development. They receive a high level of support from a very stable,

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skilled and experienced staff team that encourages and motivates them, helping them to succeed and achieve their potential. The residential provision is a happy environment, as confirmed by the survey returns from students and their families. These indicate very high levels of satisfaction.

The staff team is dynamic, responsive and forward-thinking in its approach to meeting students' needs. An enhanced key worker system, extensive links with students' families, and the implementation and monitoring of care plans all contribute to an outstanding quality of care. Great emphasis is placed on valuing and respecting all students; relationships are exemplary and equality is strongly embedded. Staff engage easily and naturally with students, encouraging conversations and social interactions. They are consistent and persistent in supporting students through difficult periods in their lives, helping them to deal with personal and sensitive matters. The students respond very well to such very high quality support and see care staff as central to their needs and well-being.

The residential provision is an extremely safe environment. Students feel safe and they speak very confidently about safeguarding procedures. They are fully aware of anti-bullying procedures and the zero tolerance rule that applies. Visual displays throughout the residential provision demonstrate the extent of the work undertaken in raising awareness with residents about their safety and well-being.

The residential provision produces excellent outcomes for students. Many make exceptional progress as a result of their residential experience. They speak glowingly about the many leisure and other opportunities that are on offer, such as youth work and involvement in community-based activities. The residential provision makes a strong contribution to students' academic achievements too through, for example, assistance with homework. An excellent, comprehensive transition programme that is tailored to individuals' needs and aspirations helps students to prepare for leaving school.

Leaders' monitoring of the residential provision is thorough and consistent, which has enabled them to address successfully the four improvement areas from the previous inspection. However, independent monitoring visits by the governing body are not taking place every half term, which is the requirement of the relevant national minimum standard. Furthermore, the reports of visits that have occurred do not show that the visitor has assessed fully the minimum checks required.

National minimum standards

The school must meet the following national minimum standards for residential special schools.

- The governing body, trustees, partnership, or organisation responsible for carrying on the school arrange for one of their number, or a representative who does not work at, or directly manage, the school, to visit the school once every

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half term and complete a written report on the conduct of the school. Where the school has an individual proprietor, that person may carry out such visits personally if they are not also the headteacher (or school equivalent) (NMS 20.1).

- Most monitoring visits are carried out unannounced. They include: checks on the school's records of attendance, complaints, sanctions, use of physical interventions, risk assessments, and where they exist, individual care plans for children; assessment of the physical condition of the building, furniture and equipment of the school; and opportunities for any child or member of staff who wishes to meet the visitor (in private if they wish) (NMS 20.2).

These are the grades for the residential provision

Overall effectiveness of the residential experience	2
Outcomes for residential pupils	1
Quality of residential provision and care	1
Residential pupils' safety	1
Leadership and management of the residential provision	2

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons, and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



4 May 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Wendover Campus, Wendover, HP22 6NL

Thank you for making us welcome and for speaking with us when we visited your school. We were very interested in what you had to say. Your school is satisfactory and the residential provision is good. You make satisfactory progress in your work. Your behaviour is satisfactory, although more of you should attend school more often. You are taught well in some lessons, although teaching is usually satisfactory. We agree with your view that the school is safe.

The people who run your school have made lots of changes recently and they have many ideas about how to make the school better. We have asked them to do some things as well.

- Make sure that the residential provision has in place all of the procedures that it should have and that governors check regularly to see what is going on.
- Improve the attendance of some of you and have more lessons in the week so that you can learn more, especially in science.
- Ensure that teachers plan for you to make as much progress as you possibly can in every lesson and that they check exactly what you have learned.
- Give you more choices in Years 10 and 11 and check very carefully how much progress you have made at the end of every year.

You can help them to make these improvements. You can do this by going to school as often as you can, and when you are there to continue going to lessons on time, staying there and doing what is expected of you without fuss. An inspector may visit you soon to see how you are getting on.

Finally, I wish each of you every success in the future especially if you are taking examinations and leaving school this year.

Yours sincerely

Mike Kell
Lead inspector

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