

# Willingdon Community School

Broad Road, Lower Willingdon, East Sussex, BN20 9QX

**Inspection dates** 3–4 October 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Students achieve well and their attainment, as measured by GCSE results and outcomes on vocational courses, is significantly above average overall by the time they leave.
- The school has made a significant impact on the progress of lower achieving student groups, so their attainment is rising at a good rate, including in key areas such as literacy.
- Teaching and learning are good with an increasing proportion that is outstanding. Staff have high expectations of students and ensure that lessons are productive and enjoyable occasions.
- Students' behaviour is outstanding and the students feel very safe at school. They approach learning with enthusiasm, and the great majority are polite and courteous to staff and each other.
- The school has been very successful in raising attendance and it is above the national average. Here too, staff focus closely on groups of students requiring help to attend well, so they come to school much more often.
- The curriculum is of good quality with some outstanding features, including the breadth of study opportunities matched to students of differing ability.
- School leaders, including governors, are doing a good job in improving teaching, and the school overall, and show a good capacity to go further. They understand well the areas which could be better so that the actions taken are suitably focused. Staff share the vision and feel positive about the school's direction.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding. In some lessons teachers do not enable students to gain a deep enough understanding of the ideas underpinning their learning, match work precisely to their varied needs or exploit all opportunities to develop students' writing.
- The monitoring and development of teaching within subjects is good but is not always of sufficiently high quality to ensure teaching improves rapidly and consistently enough to be outstanding.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 33 lessons, of which 6 were joint observations with the headteacher and other senior staff. Inspectors also made short, focused visits to a number of other lessons, including small-group sessions offering extra support for students, and to sessions in the hearing support facility. An assembly was observed and inspectors spent time around the school site at break and lunch times, talking informally to students.
- Discussions were held with senior and middle leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority and four groups of students.
- Inspectors took account of 71 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. There were 64 responses received from staff to their optional questionnaire.
- The team observed the school’s work and looked at a wide range of documents including school improvement plans and evaluations, data concerning students’ academic performance and behaviour, performance management arrangements for staff, safeguarding procedures and other policies. Samples of students’ work were scrutinised during lessons.

## Inspection team

Stephen Long, Lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Patricia Metham	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Susan Jackson	Additional Inspector
Glenn Mayoh	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Willingdon Community School is of average size.
- It has specialist status for media and visual arts.
- It houses a special facility for hearing impaired students which is managed by the local authority, although the students are on the school's roll. There were three students attending the facility at the time of the inspection, all of whom have statements of special educational needs.
- A lower-than-average proportion of students are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, or have special educational needs and disabilities requiring support at school action, school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs. A small number of Traveller students attend the school. Numbers fluctuate and there were 14 attending at the time of the inspection.
- The great majority of students are White British with few having first languages other than English.
- The school supports the leadership of other local schools through its designations as a Leading Edge School and a Gifted and Talented Lead School. In the last year the headteacher has provided support for three local secondary schools.
- The school meets the current floor standards which set the government's minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

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

- Improve further the impact of teaching on students' achievement by ensuring lessons consistently:
  - enable students to understand fully the ideas which underpin their learning so they are clear about what they are trying to achieve and how to take a lead in their own learning
  - provide work which is matched closely to students' varied needs
  - develop students' skills in writing.
- Ensure that the monitoring of teaching by subject leaders is outstandingly effective in:
  - evaluating the impact of teaching on learning so as to identify aspects which need improving and provide sharply focused guidance for teachers
  - reflecting back on teachers' past targets for improvement when observing teaching and monitoring their performance so as to check the progress being made.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Students join the school with attainment which is broadly in line with the national average.
- Examination results have risen well over time. Students' overall attainment, as shown in key measures such as the proportion gaining five or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C including mathematics and English, is consistently significantly above average. Attainment is above average on the vocational courses in areas such as media studies. As a result, students are well prepared for life after school and very few fail to progress to further education or employment.
- Achievement in subjects such as mathematics and art and design has been a strength for some years. The school has worked successfully to boost achievement in other subjects so it is now more even. For example, students' progress in English and science has improved so that attainment is above average, as it is in a wide range of subjects.
- In lessons students achieve well overall and enjoy learning. They make outstanding progress when they develop a deep understanding of the key ideas concerned and know how to move on for themselves. In a small minority of lessons work is too hard or too easy for some students.
- The school does a good job in ensuring different groups of students achieve well, reflecting its determination to include all. Girls continue to outperform boys, but the gap is closing securely. Effective use of resources in areas such as additional literacy support means students supported by the pupil premium are making good and accelerating progress. Students from Traveller backgrounds make good progress because of the effective support provided by staff.
- Disabled students, including the hearing impaired, and others with special educational needs achieve well. Their attainment is below that of other students in the school and other students nationally, but their progress is accelerating faster so they are catching up.
- More able students make particularly good progress and the proportion of high grades achieved, for example at GCSE level, compares favourably with the national average.
- Students develop good skills in literacy and mathematics, as reflected in work seen in different subjects as well as in examination results in English and mathematics. In lessons their speaking, listening and reading skills develop more quickly than those in writing because they have more regular opportunities in these areas than in writing.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good with examples of outstanding practice.
- Teachers ensure a lively atmosphere for learning. They are enthusiastic, knowledgeable, enjoy positive relationships with students and create a climate where students say it is 'OK to do well'.
- Teachers have high expectations, including of disabled students, those with special educational needs and other potentially vulnerable groups. Students' progress over time is tracked carefully so teachers usually set work in lessons at the right level to challenge students. Additional catch-up intervention is effective in areas such as reading to help students if they fall behind.
- Occasionally, tasks in lessons are not tailored closely enough to individual student needs, with all expected to tackle similar work to a greater or lesser degree, which slows the pace of learning.
- Reading, writing and mathematics are taught well in specialist mathematics and English lessons and through other subjects. However, the development of students' writing is not planned for systematically in subjects across the curriculum. For example, students are not always guided in developing good note-making skills, and some spelling mistakes are missed in teachers' marking.
- Lessons are characterised by regular discussion which leads to good development of students' speaking and listening skills. Teachers usually use discussions to ensure students know what to do and how to do it well. They make good use of questioning and observation to check progress and intervene where necessary. However, it is only in the outstanding lessons that teachers exploit discussion to fully develop students' understanding. For example, in a mathematics lesson on angles, the teacher enabled a rich debate between students to get to the heart of the

mathematics and, as one student said, 'nail it'. The teacher was creative in adapting activities to help students grasp ideas, including taking them outside the classroom. That these features are not commonplace explains why teaching is good overall, not outstanding.

- Teamwork between teachers and additional adults is effective in meeting the needs of disabled students and those with special educational needs. Staff carefully integrate hearing impaired students into mainstream lessons, to complement good quality sessions in the special facility.
- Teachers set homework regularly in most subjects and make good use of the on-line virtual learning environment to support home study.
- Students understand well the progress they are making and know their target levels or grades. They receive good verbal feedback from staff. Marking is regular and gives good guidance for improvement, with some outstanding practice. The outstanding marking is distinguished by teachers ensuring students respond to it; a feature not consistent among all staff.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**

- Students are keen to learn. They arrive punctually to lessons, follow expected routines naturally and contribute strongly to their own learning.
- They form an exceptionally harmonious group, with positive relationships very much in evidence. Students were keen to say how much they enjoyed attending the school and how safe they felt while there. Transition arrangements with primary schools ensure highly effective care for new Year 7 students, as do transition procedures for those transferring in at other times.
- Inclusion is at the heart of the school. For example, students in the hearing support facility are very much part of school life. Alongside praising the quality of academic provision, parents are very happy with their children's wider personal development. Derogatory language about potentially vulnerable groups, such as the disabled, is not tolerated by staff and actively discouraged by students.
- Between lessons, students' safe and careful behaviour in the sometimes crowded corridors, and in outside spaces, reflects their maturity very well.
- Students readily take on roles in the school, such as attending the student council, being prefects or welcoming visitors to the open evening which took place during the inspection.
- Their awareness of the dangers of bullying, including in forms such as cyber bullying or prejudice-based bullying, is very well developed. They take steps to tackle it when it occurs, including reporting it to adults, and are confident that it is dealt with. They have a very good awareness of how to stay safe, including when using the internet.
- Students who find difficulty behaving properly receive outstanding support. This has improved in recent years so as to sharply reduce previously above average levels of exclusion. The school has not permanently excluded a student for over a year and has successfully integrated a number of students excluded from other local schools.
- The school is not complacent about the improved attendance of students and is determined to improve it further through working with specific groups and individuals who could still do better.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- Led very effectively by the headteacher, senior and middle leaders are highly ambitious for further improvement. Accurate self-evaluation gives them a clear understanding of strengths and where the school's work can be improved. This ensures the actions taken address the right issues, as evident in the gains in teaching, achievement and students' behaviour.
- Challenging overall targets for students' achievement filter down well into subjects so subject leaders, and staff as a whole, know the priorities.
- Improving teaching further is a high priority among leaders. Observations of teachers by senior and subject leaders, alongside analysis of their long-term impact on students' progress, are used carefully to target a wide range of training. Good quality feedback is given to staff about how to

improve. However, on occasion, subject leaders' analysis of teaching after lesson observations does not focus sharply enough on learning, notably for different groups of students, or check teachers' progress against previously set targets. This lessens the impact of development work.

- The effective professional development of leaders is evident in the continued improvement and smooth running of the school when the headteacher is away working with other local schools.
- The curriculum is very well adapted to meet students' needs, including through a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Different curriculum routes are closely matched to students' differing abilities. There is a strong focus on literacy, leading to good progress overall, albeit with the development of students' writing not always systematically promoted in subject teaching. Close work with feeder primary schools ensures students build well on prior learning.
- The development of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is securely mapped into subject teaching and through assemblies and tutor times, so students emerge as very well-rounded young people.
- The local authority provides effective, but limited, support because it rightly judges that the school has strong internal capacity for improvement. Indeed the school, most notably the headteacher, is a valued source of support for leaders in other schools.
- Communication with parents, including the hard to reach, is very efficient about their children's progress, about pastoral issues such as attendance or behaviour and about events at the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - is committed to its further development and knows the school well
  - challenges school leaders supportively, but as a critical friend, holding them effectively to account, including for the quality of teaching, so that this has improved
  - ensures that key policies are in place, are reviewed and meet requirements in crucial areas such as safeguarding
  - monitors finances closely to ensure resources are used effectively to achieve value for money.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	114592
<b>Local authority</b>	East Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	403244

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	986
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Michael Pye
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ian Jungius
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 February 2008
<b>Telephone number</b>	01323 485254
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