

The Wavell School

Lynchford Road, Farnborough, Hampshire, GU14 6BH

Inspection dates 16–17 October 2012

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Teaching is good and occasionally outstanding.
- Students do well in most subjects regardless of their academic ability or starting point when they join the school.
- Behaviour is good. Misbehaviour is very rare. Students feel safe. Students aspire to become Year 11 prefects and want to make a difference to their school.
- Outstanding pastoral care helps students deal with issues affecting their learning.
- An extremely well-led learning resource centre guides students in receipt of pupil premium and those with special educational needs, to achieve well.
- There are good relationships with parents and the armed forces community. Students who join the school within the school year are welcomed to the Wavell family and make a good start at the school.
- Leadership is ambitious, forthright and determined, well attuned to the needs of every student at the school. Leaders check the progress of each child so that everyone achieves.
- The school caters well for the training needs of staff and this is helping improve teaching.
- The governing body and senior leaders base their pay decisions on the impact teachers make on students' achievement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all students show exemplary attitudes to learning. Some do not make the most of good teaching.
- In some lessons students are not stretched to achieve their very best. Some students need harder work to accelerate their progress.
- The quality of marking and feedback in some subjects is not of a high enough standard.
- Not all middle leaders are equally adept at challenging teachers to improve their teaching and plan lessons that always maximise students' learning.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 40 lessons including eight joint lesson observations with senior leaders. In addition, inspectors visited several lessons for short periods of time to look at students' work and assess behaviour in lessons.
- Meetings were held with students, two members of the governing body and middle and senior leaders. The lead inspector also met with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors considered 271 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and analysed the results from 87 staff questionnaires.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and scrutinised statistical information about student achievement, attendance and exclusions. In addition they reviewed the school's analysis of how well it is doing, the school development plan, minutes of governing body meetings and examined reports about leaders' observations of teaching.

Inspection team

Joanna Beckford-Hall, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Samantha Morgan-Price	Her Majesty's Inspector
Lynne Kauffman	Additional Inspector
Christopher Allen	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Wavell School is a smaller than average-sized secondary school. Over 20% of students join the school at times other than the usual start of the academic year. Most of these students come from military families who are relocated to the Farnborough area.
- The proportion of disabled students and students who have special educational needs is in line with that found nationally. The proportion of students supported through school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for students entitled to free school meals, those in care and those with a parent serving in the armed forces) is above that seen nationally.
- The student population includes students of different ethnicities. Over 80% of students are of White British heritage.
- The percentage of students who speak English as an additional language is below that found nationally.
- A very small proportion of students attend courses at Farnborough College of Technology.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the proportion of consistently outstanding teaching in all subjects, , by:
 - planning lessons that are more accurately matched to students' levels of ability and to their targets
 - using demanding questions to check students' learning at different points in lessons and subsequently give additional, harder work to students who are ready to move on to greater challenge
 - marking students' work regularly and making detailed comments to students so that they know how to improve their work
 - encouraging students to discuss feedback with teachers so they get the most out of this written guidance
 - ensuring that all middle leaders give precise feedback to teachers.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Whenever students join this school they get off to a good start. Their progress is carefully checked so they do well. In 2012, the school's result of 81% for five or more A* to C passes at GCSE level was the highest seen to date.
- In recent years, this school has seen rising results. There was a dip in 2011, particularly for middle ability girls and lower ability boys, and students made less progress in mathematics than in English. Leaders took swift action to improve teaching and as a result students' progress is now back on track. In 2012, students did extremely well in mathematics.
- The very few gaps in achievement within the school are closing rapidly because leaders check students' progress in detail. Not all teachers use the information from this checking well enough to adapt learning for all abilities in their classes.
- The school helps students deal with any problems that prevent them from learning well. It provides excellent support for disabled students and students with special educational needs. This means they make good progress.
- Leaders carefully assess the use of early entry for GCSE examinations to make certain that students can achieve higher grades. Most do so.
- In the past, students known to be eligible for free school meals did not do as well as others. They are now catching up quickly. Their progress in mathematics over three years is significantly better than that of their fellow students at the school. Their mathematics results in 2011 were particularly impressive and were close to the national average for all students.
- Students from military families who join the school at times other than at the start of the school year make good progress. This results from excellent induction and good support for their learning.
- Most students develop good quality reading and writing skills. They are encouraged to speak in lessons and read their work aloud, developing their confidence. Students are less secure in using problem-solving skills learnt in mathematics lessons in their other subjects.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good. Some lessons are outstanding. When teachers' planning is detailed, the teaching is inspiring and students are keen to learn. Teachers ask probing questions and help students to mark each other's work, as well as writing about their own progress. Most teachers use subject-specific vocabulary to help students improve their writing and speaking skills.
- In an outstanding history lesson the buzz in the classroom was infectious. Animated students wanted to draw on the teacher's expertise even more by asking their questions built on the excellent knowledge they had picked up during previous lessons. An outstanding English lesson motivated students to want to learn more about key texts such as *Of Mice and Men* and *To Kill a Mocking Bird*. Students relished discussing ideas about morality and cultural identity.
- A few lessons require improvement because students need more challenge, especially the brighter students. A minority of teachers expect too little of students and their lesson planning does not show how they will meet the needs of students of different abilities. This means that learning is too similar for all students in the class. In these lessons progress is too slow and students do not reach their potential in the lesson.
- Not all teachers mark students' work regularly. A few teachers leave it too long before giving students written feedback about their work. They do not include detailed comments that tell students what to improve.
- Good quality marking helps students understand their targets, know what to improve and how. In the best lessons teachers ask questions which create an enjoyable discussion about students' work. Some teachers do not encourage students to talk to them about the feedback. This means

they do not always follow up and get the most out of the written guidance they receive.

- The school helps students develop an excellent understanding of different cultures. Many partnership projects enrich students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural appreciation.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Occasionally students' concentration lapses in lessons because teaching is not challenging and students lose interest. Rare moments of misbehaviour are dealt with firmly. Students say that teachers 'are more strict than they were a few years ago' and feel that behaviour is at least good.
- The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to Parent View feel that the school manages behaviour well.
- Racist or homophobic bullying is rare. Students get on well together. A very small minority of students wish for more guidance about preventing homophobic bullying.
- Students keep themselves safe on the internet. They have good awareness of the dangers of knife crime, misuse of drugs and why they have to take care if they use social networking sites.
- Attendance is above average. Most students are punctual to lessons. The number of students excluded for short periods of time is just below that usually found nationally. Students benefit from counselling support and the 'military and health drop-in' at school which help them manage frustrations, trauma and emotional issues, sometimes caused by the anxiety of a parent serving on the front line.
- A sculpture, The Hug, at the centre of the school's garden symbolises the values of this school. This is a 'hugging' school because of the 'wraparound' care students receive from teams of staff to help with attendance, behaviour, academic, personal and family needs. Pastoral care is outstanding, helping students to feel safe.
- Regular meetings with the headteacher, a buddy system and good engagement with parents, helps families join the Wavell school community. One student who joined the school a week before the inspection said, 'This is the best school I've ever been to.'

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is an inspirational and caring leader. Her vision helps staff and students aspire to do their very best. She is relentless in her drive to secure more money to help improve the resources at the school. Students and their families are pleased with the new technology suite where they can use the online facility to talk live to their relatives and friends on active service.
- Staff are highly complimentary about the calibre of the headteacher and senior leaders. Comments include, 'The headteacher is a very fair head, the senior leadership team is always working to support in any way they can.' 'I love working at this school, we are a team, there is a good system of line management in this school.'
- Senior leaders check the quality of teaching through regular lesson observations, examining students' work in books and going into classes to watch behaviour. Leaders tackle weaker practice by helping teachers work together and share ideas for how to plan and teach more imaginative lessons. Last year this approach really helped improve teaching in science, languages and physical education.
- Some lesson observation judgements last year were too generous. Leaders are now helping teachers be more confident in knowing how to push students' progress from good to outstanding and how to improve students' reading, writing and speaking skills in lessons. Leaders are training teachers to use a new way of lesson planning so that teachers talk less and students do more independent work. Inspectors observed some excellent examples where this is working well.
- Senior leaders regularly meet with middle leaders who manage different subjects to discuss how well teachers are doing against the targets they have been set. The school development plan for

this year includes plans to help all middle leaders securely judge teaching and the progress of different groups of students.

- The way leaders set and review targets for staff is robust. The governing body scrutinises target setting for staff, making sure that staff only move up the pay spine when their work is helping students to do really well. The headteacher and governing body are not afraid to make difficult decisions that sometimes staff find hard to hear. In doing so they help staff understand why they are not ready to take on more responsibility.
- Decisions about spending money are focused on raising students' achievement. The use of pupil premium money for a parent support adviser working closely with families is helping support transition and, therefore, better learning for these students. Additional in-class support assistants are well trained and use of pupil premium is pivotal to the improvements seen in achievement.
- School development planning involves all leaders. The school's own assessment of the quality of education it provides is more generous than judged by inspectors, but leaders have accurately identified priorities this year to move the school forward.
- Students study a good balance of different subjects and at Key Stage 4 the choices on offer meet the interests of students. Students on vocationally-based courses at Farnborough College of Technology enjoy their studies. They behave well and are safe. Most gain qualifications that help them carry on in further education after Year 11.
- Procedures for safeguarding meet statutory requirements.
- The local authority knows this good school well and supports through a light touch approach.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has a good, and improving, understanding of the quality of teaching. Reports by the headteacher summarise the success of leaders' work in helping weaker teachers improve and teach more creative lessons. For example, issues previously affecting the language and science departments were discussed at governing body meetings. The headteacher and governors made appropriate staffing changes and, as a result of better teaching, the percentage of students attaining A* to C grades in GCSE science and languages improved significantly in 2012. The governing body is increasingly aware of the need to ask forthright questions about students' progress. The governing body receives reports about the achievement of students who are supported by pupil premium funding, but it has yet to complete a review of the impact of this funding over time.

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

Unique reference number	116448
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	395705

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	903
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anthony Camfield
Headteacher	Amanda Rowley
Date of previous school inspection	11 June 2009
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