

Wyre Forest School

Comberton Road, Kidderminster, DY10 3DX

Inspection dates

24–25 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils' do not make enough progress for achievement to be good because of weaknesses in teaching.
- The achievement of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage requires improvement. Children join in activities but their responses are not always fully followed up by staff.
- The sixth form requires improvement. Teaching does not always ensure that the students fully engage in their activities and give their full attention during lessons.
- Teachers sometimes talk to the whole class for too long, and do not always ensure that other staff support pupils' learning, or that pupils know how well they are learning and what to do next.
- Pupils are not always keenly involved in learning. At the Comberton Road site pupils' behaviour is sometimes poor.
- The school is improving but not rapidly enough. The governing body has not focused sufficiently on quickly improving teaching.
- The actions that leaders and managers have taken have not been wide ranging enough to rapidly improve teaching and ensure good achievement.

The school has the following strengths

- In Key Stages 1 and 2, good teaching and thorough marking ensures good achievement.
- Pupils feel safe because they know staff listen to them.
- The school evaluates its strengths and weaknesses accurately and information about pupils' progress is thoroughly analysed.
- Close partnerships, for example with the health services, enhance individual pupils' progress and wellbeing.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 14 lessons taught by 14 teachers on the three sites. Five of the lessons were jointly observed with senior staff. In addition, a playtime, lunchtime and snack session were observed and samples of pupils' work were looked at.
- Meetings were held with staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors, a representative of the local authority, and three groups of pupils.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documents including those concerning safeguarding, data on pupils' progress, records about behaviour and attendance, and planning and monitoring documents.
- Inspectors heard individual pupils read aloud.
- Inspectors took account of 19 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and met a small group of parents and carers in school.

Inspection team

Michael Farrell, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Phiippa Holliday	Additional Inspector
Lynda Morgan	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Wyre Forest School was formed on three sites in September 2011 by the amalgamation of two former Kidderminster special schools and a nursery. The Bewdley Road site educates 98 pupils from Reception to Year 14 with profound or severe learning difficulties or autistic spectrum disorder. The Comberton Road site educates 97 pupils from Year 5 to Year 14 with moderate learning difficulties, autistic spectrum disorder, or behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. There is sixth form provision on both of these sites. Radford Avenue assesses and educates 10 nursery children. With the exception of children in the Radford Avenue Nursery, all pupils have a statement of special educational need.
- The school provides off-site education for a very small number of pupils through home tuition and a special college.
- Over a third of pupils are eligible for pupil premium (extra money from central government).
- Most pupils are White British. A below-average proportion are from minority ethnic backgrounds and a very small number are learning English as an additional language.
- There are funded plans to relocate the school in new custom-built premises in September 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching in Key Stages 3 to 5 to good or better by making sure that:
 - pupils are aware of how well they are learning and what they need to do next
 - parts of lessons where the teacher talks to the whole class are not too long
 - all staff in lessons help pupils learn.
- Improve pupils' behaviour:
 - in lessons, by making sure that all are keenly engaged in their learning
 - around the Comberton Road site, by raising expectations that pupils move around the school sensibly and making sure that this happens.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - leaders and managers urgently develop a range of effective strategies to improve teaching to good or better
 - staff have the opportunity to observe and learn from good and outstanding teaching in this and other schools
 - the governing body challenges leaders and managers over improvements in teaching and rates of progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Children join the nursery with standards well below average because of pupils' special educational needs. From varied but low starting points, the progress that pupils make across all three school sites requires improvement, including in communication, mathematics and life skills.
- Although the school uses a wide range of strategies to encourage and support communication, including hand signing and symbols, the progress of pupils with different types of special educational needs requires improvement because teaching is not as good as it needs to be.
- The school's own monitoring indicates that the progress of the very small numbers of pupils educated at home and at a special college requires improvement.
- In the sixth form, students' progress requires improvement because teaching does not ensure that they are fully engaged in their learning and giving their best attention. They follow a range of courses that lead to a qualification for example in vocational and life skills.
- Achievement is improving as teaching improves, but not fast enough. Pupils are not making fast enough progress in literacy, communication, numeracy and skills that help learning. Pupils who read to the inspectors concentrated hard and tried different ways of tackling words but they were not sure about, for example, how to sound out the letters.
- In the nursery, children are encouraged to interact with each other well. Children in the Reception Year enjoy activities and picture symbols, representing a range of items, are used effectively to help communication.
- Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 make stronger progress than the older pupils because teaching is good and marking is more thorough. Close working with partners has a strong impact on the progress and wellbeing of some individual pupils.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching over time requires improvement. The school's own monitoring indicates that is the case for about half of the lessons. The proportion of good lessons is increasing but not quickly enough.
- Typically, teaching requires improvement, especially in Key Stages 3 and 5, because:
 - teachers often speak to the whole class for too long, so pupils find it hard to concentrate and their progress is slowed
 - questioning is not always probing enough to reveal what pupils do and do not understand
 - marking in pupils' books and comments written on work as a reminder to the teacher do not always show what the pupils need to do to improve
 - teachers do not always make sure that teaching assistants are fully involved in helping pupils learn.
- Teachers use a range of effective strategies to manage challenging behaviour, which is dealt with in a straightforward manner so that it does not hold back learning. Relationships between pupils and staff are warm.

- Teachers take care to choose interesting activities for lessons including studying internet safety, predicting shape patterns, and creating film posters on the computer or large sheets of paper. Staff are often enthusiastic and this encourages pupils to enjoy their learning and to try hard. Pupils in Key Stage 3 enjoyed getting ready to make pumpkin cakes and several pupils used their initiative in checking if they had all the utensils they needed by using a picture list.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- In lessons that require improvement pupils do what is asked of them but are not always absorbed, and this slows their learning.
- At the Comberton Road site, pupils do not always behave sensibly when moving around the school between lessons. At lunch times and break times behaviour is good.
- At the nursery site, children behaviour is good because it is well managed and they feel secure.
- Pupils know the system for rewards and sanctions and say that it is applied fairly. They are keen to explain about the stickers and postcards that are used as indications of good behaviour.
- Pupils can give examples of different types of bullying, including calling names, and are confident that something will be done if they go to a member of staff.
- According to their age and learning difficulties, pupils have a developing awareness of situations which are safe and unsafe, including when using the internet. They generally feel safe in school, although they say there are areas where they feel less safe than others; for example, places furthest from the school building. Parents and carers indicated they are confident about their child's safety and a large majority say their child is well cared for and happy. In a meeting with parents and carers, very positive views were expressed about the support the school offers to parents.
- Attendance is average when account is taken of a small number of pupils who are absent for clear medical reasons. The school works hard and with increasing effectiveness to encourage regular attendance.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- What the school has done to improve teaching and achievement has not been comprehensive enough or precise enough to make the rapid improvements needed. It has not provided enough structured opportunities for teachers whose teaching requires improvement to observe and learn from others in the school and in other schools. Consequently, the proportion of good teaching in the school is not increasing fast enough and there is too much teaching that requires improvement.
- The governing body, headteacher and senior staff have a clear vision for the school and the morale of most staff is high. Improvement planning sets out suitable areas to concentrate on and check the progress towards them.
- The local authority provides considerable support, including working with the school to identify and tackle what gets in the way of pupils' learning. This has improved the understanding of such issues but has not yet led to strong improvements in teaching.

- The management of staff performance and pay is consistently related to the effectiveness of teaching and the impact on pupils' achievement.
- Changes have been made to what is studied in Key Stages 1 to 3 to improve literacy and encourage independence. In Key Stages 4 and 5, courses leading to qualifications have been increased. For example, GCSE options have been introduced for some students in the sixth form.
- The schools' efforts to bring together work on three main sites, paving the way for the transfer to a new campus are determined and informed by a clear vision of the new school. The school has tackled inadequate teaching vigorously and considerably reduced it. The proportion of good teaching is beginning to increase. These successes show the school's capacity to improve.
- Statutory requirements relating to safeguarding are met.
- The pupil premium is used for specific pupils, including paying for teaching assistants to give extra support. The impact on pupils' achievement is closely monitored and the school can demonstrate that it is beginning to improve achievement.
- The school makes sure that individuals and groups of pupils have equal opportunities to make progress and strong relationships are promoted. The school tackles any signs of discrimination seriously for example any name-calling is challenged.
- Effective partnerships with others such as the health services lead to individual instances of strong improvements in pupils' wellbeing and progress. Off-site provision is monitored carefully. The school also monitors the holiday club and the after-school club run by the governing body, for example by checking that the views of parents, carers and pupils are positive.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has not ensured that the school's strategies to improve teaching are focused enough to lead to rapid improvements. It is supportive but has not challenged leaders sufficiently on the need to improve teaching and accelerate pupils' progress. Consequently, although the proportion of good teaching is increasing, it is not doing so fast enough. The governing body has a clear overview of funding and the use made of the pupil premium to improve pupils' achievement.

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	135791
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	400259

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community Special
Age range of pupils	2–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupil in the sixth form	N/A
Number of pupils on the school roll	212
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	N/A
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pam Tildesly
Headteacher	Mick Russell
Date of previous school inspection	N/A
Telephone number	01562 753066
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Email address	admin@wfs.worcs.sch.uk

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