

Wadham School

Mount Pleasant, Crewkerne, TA18 7NT

Inspection dates 21–22 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires Improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
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

- Leadership and management, although improving, are not yet good enough to enable students to make good progress.
- There is too much variation in students' achievement between subjects and different groups of students. Boys do not do as well as girls.
- The sixth form requires improvement because students do not develop the skills to learn independently and achievement is not yet consistently good.
- In too many lessons teachers do not fully meet the needs of all students, including disabled students and those who have special educational needs.
- Plans for improving the quality of teaching are not effective enough in identifying how to reduce variation in the quality of teaching within and across subject departments.
- Opportunities for students to apply their English and mathematics skills in other subjects are underdeveloped and this stops them making faster progress.

The school has the following strengths

- Students' achievement has continued to rise in some subjects, notably mathematics and science.
- Students behave well, feel safe at school and have positive attitudes to learning.
- Arrangements for keeping students safe in school are robust.
- This is an improving school. Systems to identify, support and track underperforming students, including boys, are helping close the gap between their results and those for all students.
- Attendance rates have risen sharply as a result of the steps taken by the school to reduce absence.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed parts of 38 lessons, some with members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, staff including curriculum team leaders and directors of learning, the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority and several groups of students.
- The inspection team examined a range of school documentation including information about student exclusions and attendance and the work of governors, senior and subject leaders. The school’s monitoring procedures and improvement plans were also considered.
- The inspection team considered the views of 27 parents who responded to Parent View. It also considered the views on 56 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

David Townsend, Lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Jonathan Palk	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Joanna Peach	Additional Inspector
Jacqueline Goodall	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Wadham is a smaller than average secondary school with a sixth form. It serves the market town of Crewkerne as well as Ilminster and the surrounding rural areas.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority and for students known to be eligible for free school meals, is below average.
- Most students are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The proportions of disabled students and those with special educational needs who are supported at school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, are below national averages.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- A small number of students receive some of their education away from the school site, including a specialist centre and pupil referral unit.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Eliminate a small amount of inadequate teaching and ensure more lessons are good or better by:
 - securing the right level of challenge in the work set by teachers for students of different abilities
 - enabling students to be fully involved in responding to thought-provoking questions through group debate and paired work
 - encouraging students to work more independently and to become more skilled in assessing their own work, especially in the sixth form
 - checking that students are responding to their teachers' advice through marking on how to improve their work
 - ensuring boys achieve as well as girls.
- Ensure all leaders plan for and drive improvements to teaching at a more rapid pace by:
 - identifying, from lesson observations, whole-school and subject department targets for improving teaching that focus on how to secure good progress for students
 - enabling all staff to learn from the best teaching found in the school
 - holding teachers to account properly for the quality of their teaching and acting decisively to improve the work of those that are underperforming
 - ensuring that all senior and middle managers check that staff training and coaching result in consistently good teaching in each subject.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because, although there is a rising trend in standards, there remains too much variation in performance between subjects.
- In recent years, students' results at GCSE have been similar to those seen nationally. The proportion of students who achieved five or more GCSE A* to C grades has been average. In 2012, the proportion rose to above average, partly reflecting the stronger starting points of last year's Year 11 but also improved teaching, particularly in mathematics and science.
- Over time, there has been too much variation in subject standards and in 2012, below average standards remain in subjects such as history and geography. Students are not entered early for GCSE examinations.
- While the proportion of students making expected progress is strengthening further in mathematics, it remains broadly average over time in English. Girls are progressing well in both subjects. Boys' progress improved in mathematics but remains average in English and fell back this year.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs are making progress at the same rate as other students. The overall quality of support is variable, ranging from well-judged questions to help move their learning forward to instances where not enough is asked of the students.
- The school has used its pupil premium money to fund a range of personalised learning support for eligible students, particularly those entitled to free school meals. Students have responded well and the proportion making expected progress improved significantly. As a result, the gap in their average point scores in English and mathematics narrowed in 2012, particularly in mathematics.
- Achievement in the sixth form requires improvement because standards and the proportions of students staying on from Year 12 to Year 13 are below those seen nationally. The progress they make varies between subjects. While some lessons are challenging and motivating, this is not always the case. Not enough has been done to develop students' independent learning skills.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is improving. It requires further improvement because a very small amount of inadequate teaching remains and not enough lessons are good or better.
- In the most successful lessons, clear guidelines are given to students on how to complete tasks to a high standard. Teachers use questions skilfully to check and extend the understanding of less confident and more-able students. In these lessons, students relish the opportunity to take part in practical activities, to work on their own and with others in solving challenges. For example, in a Year 11 design and technology lesson, students studying graphics were absorbed in considering how to alter their designs to reflect comments on them by their peers.
- However, teaching is not always this effective. In less successful lessons, the match between the work set and the needs of all students is imprecise. This results in a lack of challenge for students, including for more-able students in Years 12 and 13. In others, the work set was too difficult, as in one session seen where lower ability boys struggled to understand what they were being asked to do. In some lessons, students get fewer opportunities to reflect on teachers' questions through group discussion and partner work. This serves to slow the pace of learning.
- Good examples of clear helpful marking of students' books were seen, especially in English and mathematics. However, teachers do not always check students have responded to their advice through marking in books and, in the sixth form, how they might assess their own learning.
- Students are encouraged to apply their literacy skills to their work in other subjects. This is starting to have a positive effect but some still struggle to present ideas using accurate spelling, punctuation and subject-related language. This can impede their chances of showing

their subject knowledge fully in examinations.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students have a positive attitude to learning and behave well in lessons. They exercise self-control when moving around the school.
- Parents, staff and students confirm that behaviour has improved. Leaders have established high expectations, clear systems, good levels of supervision and effective care for individual students.
- The proportion of students who are excluded has fallen markedly. Leaders work very closely together on behalf of students at risk of not doing as well, putting in place effective additional learning support and alternative teaching away from the school site. Many of those students whose behaviour was causing concern have been helped to improve as a result.
- The school has worked hard to communicate the risks posed by absence from school and lateness to lessons on students' examination chances. This and concerted action taken to combat persistent absence have helped improve attendance to slightly above the national average.
- Older students in the sixth form act as good role models for younger students. They take on responsibilities and offer advice and support to individuals, which is particularly appreciated by the Year 9 students.
- Bullying is rare. Students have a clear understanding of the different forms bullying can take, including the risk of cyber-bullying. They are confident the school would follow up any incident effectively and know to whom to report any concerns.
- Students feel safe in school. Parents are similarly confident that students are well cared for and enjoy school.
- The provision of after-school activities and a wide range of special events, such as a recent technology challenge, languages week and a school production of the musical 'Grease', effectively promote students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The headteacher is widely respected. He has secured the full support of governors, staff and parents in his drive for higher standards. Consequently, expectations have risen, improvements have been secured and students are achieving more.
- The systematic tracking of students' achievements is proving beneficial in helping leaders to raise standards for all students and target those in particular need of support. The use of extra money (the pupil premium) is carefully checked to ensure that rates of progress for targeted students are improved.
- Senior leaders judge the quality of teaching accurately and this, alongside effective staff training and coaching programmes, has helped secure improvements across the school; for example, in the way teachers manage behaviour in class.
- The school's improvement plan lacks clear targets for how the variation in the quality of teaching will be tackled. As a consequence, some middle leaders are not focused sharply enough on the task of quickening the rate of learning and progress. Insufficient emphasis is placed on ensuring good teaching is shared effectively between departments.
- Arrangements for managing the performance of staff are appropriate. Governors and senior leaders have taken decisive action when a teacher's performance is causing concern. However, decisions on whether teachers should be paid more are not yet sharply linked to evaluations of whether performance warrants it.
- The range of subjects has improved since the last inspection and is meeting the needs of students, including those in the sixth form. There is a wider choice of academic and vocational courses on offer and effective guidance is given to students.
- All safeguarding requirements are met. Staff are well trained and have a good awareness of child protection and risk assessment issues.
- The local authority gives light touch support for the school. Senior leaders have engaged the

support of its advisers in reviewing the effectiveness of teaching. This has been beneficial in helping the school develop accuracy in evaluating its own performance.

- The school enjoys positive relationships with parents and the local community. There are effective partnerships with other agencies and schools to provide extra learning opportunities for all students and particular support for those needing extra help.
- The school arranges and oversees off-site placements effectively. Inspection evidence shows that the arrangements have been tailored to students' needs, are carefully monitored and have resulted in improved achievement and attendance.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They monitor alongside senior leaders, attend leadership meetings and request regular update reports. They understand about setting targets for teachers and recognise the need for a sharper focus on checking how well teaching leads to good outcomes for all students. Governors provide valuable support for the headteacher. They readily hold the school to account and play a full part in decision making about the school's future development.

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	123893
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	402027

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	13–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	659
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	80
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stuart Shepherd
Headteacher	David Derbyshire
Date of previous school inspection	16–17 September 2009
Telephone number	01460 270123
Fax number	01460 270124
Email address	office@wadham.somerset.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012

