

Wilsthorpe Community School

Derby Road, Long Eaton, Nottingham, NG10 4WT

Inspection dates 5–6 March 2013

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

- Standards and progress of students completing GCSE examinations in 2012 were not as good as previous years, and standards across subjects are too variable.
- Some disabled students and those who have special educational needs do not make as much progress as other students because teachers do not always know the activities that will help them.
- Some teachers' marking of students' work is not effective enough at helping students understand how to improve. This means that they do not always learn from their mistakes.
- Some teachers do not use all available information about students' progress to plan work that challenges students at the right level.
- While leaders and managers have been successful in improving students' behaviour, they have not ensured that the quality of teaching is sufficiently high across all subjects to make sure that achievement is good.
- The sixth form requires improvement. Students do not have enough opportunities to develop independence in their learning and teaching does not ensure that enough students are making good and outstanding progress.

The school has the following strengths

- Students' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are good. Teachers place a lot of trust in students, who respond very well.
- Senior leaders and governors have already demonstrated a clear commitment to improve the quality of teaching through innovations like the 'Learning Clinic', which are having a positive impact.
- The range of subjects on offer at all stages of the school is broad and balanced and offers opportunities that contribute exceptionally well to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The headteacher takes every opportunity to involve all staff in school improvement planning. This builds a cohesive team.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 36 lessons, of which six were joint observations with senior leaders. In addition, the inspection team made a number of short visits to lessons as part of themed learning walks. They also attended assemblies and tutorial sessions.
- Meetings were held with four groups of students, members of the governing body and school staff, including subject, pastoral and senior leaders. The lead inspector spoke to a representative of the local authority on the telephone.
- Inspectors took account of the 89 responses to the online Parent View survey and considered letters received from parents and carers. They also considered parents' responses to school surveys and analysed 63 questionnaires completed by school staff.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at a number of documents, including minutes of governing body meetings, records on the management of staff performance, records relating to attendance, behaviour and checks on the quality of teaching, and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Simon Blackburn, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Janet Bird	Additional Inspector
Andrew Lagden	Additional Inspector
Susan Tabberer	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average secondary school.
- Almost all students are from White British backgrounds and the proportion of students believed to speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is average. This is additional government funding for students in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free school meals and those with a parent in the armed forces.
- The proportion of students supported through school action is above average but the proportion supported through school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school occasionally uses alternative off-site provision to support its students through the Derbyshire 'Right Track' service, but no students are currently attending. The school also works in partnership with other local schools to provide a wider range of sixth form subjects to its students.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for student's attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good or better in all lessons by ensuring that:
 - teachers give students work that is always a good match to their abilities
 - the school's marking policy is followed consistently across all subjects so that students know how to improve their work
 - students act on the feedback given by teachers.
- Improve the achievement of disabled students and those who have special educational needs, and particularly those supported through school action, by:
 - making sure that teachers are aware of, and use, the strategies that are most effective to support students within their subjects
 - regularly reviewing the special educational needs register in the light of students' progress to ensure that changing needs are being met.
- Improve achievement in the sixth form by ensuring that teachers provide more opportunities for students to explore their own learning through open-ended problem-solving tasks.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that whole-school policies are applied in the same way throughout the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Standards across subjects are too variable. Standards in mathematics are consistently above average and they are improving strongly in English to be above average in 2012, but students do not make enough progress in geography and history. In these subjects, were well below average in 2012.
- The proportion of students attaining five GCSE examination passes including English and mathematics at grades A* to C improved for three successive years to 2011 but dipped in 2012 to just below the national average. Current student tracking data shows that standards are predicted to exceed the national average in 2013.
- The progress being made in English and mathematics by most groups of students currently in the school is improving strongly. They learn effectively in lessons because the quality of teaching is improving as a result of some innovative training practices that ensure teachers are constantly updating their skills.
- Students supported through school action make less progress than other students during their time at the school. This is because teachers are not always aware of the best strategies to use to support and challenge students and because the information about their needs is not updated regularly enough. Students supported through school action plus and those who have a statement of special educational needs make similar progress to other students.
- The achievement of students supported by the pupil premium is improving and the gap between their attainment and that of all other students is closing in both English and mathematics. Projections for 2013 show that supported students will have closed a gap equivalent to a term's learning during Key Stage 4. The funding is used to provide additional members of staff and small-group support in English and mathematics, as well as mentors and student services managers who liaise with external agencies and provide a common point of contact for parents and carers. Students supported through the Year 7 catch-up premium are well supported and make progress that suggests they will close the gaps in attainment with other students.
- The school enters students early for a number of GCSE examinations and they experience a high degree of success. They are able to improve on their grades if they or the school thinks they are capable of achieving more.
- Achievement in the sixth form requires improvement. The progress of students who completed courses in 2012 was well below average. Progress of students currently taking courses in the sixth form is much better because these students received better guidance about what the learning involves and the level of courses that students choose are a better match to their abilities.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is not consistently good in all subjects. This means that students do not always make sufficiently rapid progress. The teaching seen in English, physical education and mathematics was consistently good or better but teaching in other subjects was more variable and this is reflected in the progress and standards achieved across the school.

- In the least effective lessons, teachers give all students the same work and this slows the progress of the more able students.
- The school provides teachers with a wide range of information about students' progress from its accurate tracking system. Teachers add their own assessments to this and, in the best teaching seen, all this information is used to plan activities that challenge students very effectively from the start of lessons. In an outstanding French lesson, students were constantly reminded of the high levels they were expected to achieve individually and the teacher adjusted the activities to make sure that all students made rapid progress. This level of challenge is not seen in all lessons.
- Students' work is marked regularly in all subjects but teachers do not consistently give feedback that gives students information about how to improve their work to reach the next level towards their target. Students do not routinely act on the written feedback they receive. Marking in English and physical education is of very high quality, providing additional challenge or corrections and with a clear expectation that students will respond and make improvements, which they do.
- Literacy is taught well in English lessons and teachers in other subjects develop students' literacy skills well, checking their written work and ensuring that spelling, punctuation and grammar errors are commented upon. Students are encouraged to read in a range of subjects but teachers do not always ensure that mathematics skills are developed in other subjects.
- Teaching in the sixth form is improving strongly as a result of well-directed training for teachers that ensures that they take greater account of the starting points of their students. Some of the teaching seen during the inspection did not involve the students enough in thinking deeply about the topic or solving problems either independently or in groups.
- Parents and carers who responded on Parent View feel that their children are taught well and inspectors saw signs that teaching is improving in a number of subjects. This is reflected by the better progress being made by students currently in the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Teachers develop very positive relationships with their students. These enhance students' moral and social development. Students have a positive attitude to learning which is shown through their work, their improving attendance rates and the purposeful approach they take to lessons.
- The school has taken very effective actions to improve behaviour since the last inspection. As a result, the vast majority of students behave well in lessons and around the school. They are polite and courteous towards each other and to staff and visitors. The school places a high degree of trust in its students and they respond well to this. Students have access to the public spaces around the school at all times and they show respect for the fabric of the school.
- A very large majority of parents and carers who expressed a view agreed that the school makes sure that its students are well behaved and students themselves echoed this view. The school's own records of behaviour show that incidents of indiscipline are reducing year-on-year and that fixed-term exclusion has been decreasing as a sanction used for poor behaviour.
- Students feel safe in the school and all those that inspectors met with said that they had someone they could go to if they had any concerns. Students understand the different forms of

bullying, including cyber-bullying, and they have a good awareness how to keep themselves safe from these. They say that bullying is rare, and school records confirm this.

- Students appreciate the wide range of after-school and enrichment activities that the school offers. These contribute to their cultural development and provide additional interest and motivation. For example, a fashion show of clothes made from recycled materials combined environmental awareness and artistic and design skills. Students understand and support the school's simple but effective sanctions and reward system.
- A strength of the school is the Leadership Academy. This gives students the opportunity to develop leadership skills through planned activities in a variety of subjects which place them in supported leadership roles where they can achieve a volunteering award. Students speak very warmly about these opportunities.
- Attendance is above average and improving. Effective steps have been taken to reduce persistent absence, including through working with external agencies and families.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Training to improve teaching has not yet resulted in teaching that is consistently good across all subjects. However, effective steps are being taken to improve teaching and the progress of students currently in the school indicates that these are having a positive impact.
- Some leaders and managers failed to anticipate and act upon concerns about the achievement of some students who completed GCSE and A and A2 examinations in 2012 with the result that some students attained at lower levels than expected.
- Some policies, for example, the marking and assessment policy, are not put into action in the same way in all areas of the school and checks by leaders and managers have not ensured that improvements are carried out in all subjects.
- The leadership and management of support for disabled students and those who have special educational needs requires improvement because the support students require is not regularly reviewed. This means that the school is not responsive enough to changing circumstances and students' progress, and that teachers' planning does not reflect the current needs of all students.
- The headteacher and senior leadership team have established a clear vision for how they want the school to be. The headteacher has taken every possible opportunity to involve every member of school staff in the discussions on how the school can improve and, as a result, has moulded a cohesive team who have a shared purpose and high morale. All staff who responded to the inspection questionnaire said they are proud to work at Wilsthorpe.
- All levels of leadership and management are involved in checking aspects of teaching and this is helping to develop the leadership skills of less experienced managers. During joint lesson observations, the school demonstrated accurate judgements of the quality of teaching seen and the ability to identify appropriate areas for development.
- The 'Learning Clinic' is an innovative teacher-training tool that is having a decisive impact on the quality of teaching in the school. For short periods during the year, staff who have been identified as exhibiting good practice in aspects of teaching volunteer to allow other teachers to

come and observe them. Teachers choose who to observe on the basis of their own self-evaluation. This sharing of the best teaching the school has to offer is improving lessons for the students.

- The school provides a good range of subjects at Key Stages 3 and 4 and in the sixth form, which offer a balanced choice to students. It offers some students the use of alternative provision to provide appropriate courses that enable them to be successful.
- The school offers a range of enrichment and out-of-school activities which provide students with opportunities to develop their personal and academic skills. For example, a textiles group visit to the Paul Smith design studios and a science trip to look at stem cell research at Derby University gave relevance to students' work. The sports journalism club and the recycling club appeal to students' personal interests and help their moral development.
- Assemblies further contribute to students' moral development and an outstanding assembly observed during the inspection left students in awe and wonder after reflection on the difficulties some people face in their lives and how they overcome them. Fostering good relations and tackling discrimination are at the heart of the school's values.
- The local authority offers effective light-touch support which includes checking the progress of agreed plans of action and providing a network of support with local school.
- Arrangements to safeguard students meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a diverse set of skills that complement their roles and ensure that they have the ability to interpret the evidence the school presents and to hold the school effectively to account. Governors know how the school is doing and can identify areas of weakness and the actions being taken to address them. They are fully involved in the school's 'evaluation day', when all staff and governors discuss what has gone well and what needs to be improved. Governors understand the process used to manage performance and ensure that only those teachers whose teaching results in expected or better than expected pupil progress advance on the pay scales. The governors have helped the school to build strong links with parents and partner schools. Governors have a good grasp of the financial situation of the school, including the allocation of pupil premium funding.

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	112935
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	401325

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Both
Number of pupils on the school roll	785
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	130
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Paulson
Headteacher	Jonathan Crofts
Date of previous school inspection	10 February 2010
Telephone number	0115 9729421
Fax number	0115 9461974
Email address	enquiries@wilsthorpe.derbyshire.sch.uk

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