

Wisdom School

336 Philip Lane, Tottenham, London, N15 4AB

Inspection dates 27–29 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Pupils' achievement	Good	2
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Quality of curriculum	Good	2
Pupils' welfare, health and safety	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2

Summary of key findings

This school is good because

- Good teaching and excellent assessment and monitoring procedures enable students to achieve well. They make good and often rapid academic progress from their starting points.
- The newly appointed headteacher and senior leaders have sustained the nurturing ethos of the school, which contributes exceptionally well to the outstanding personal development and behaviour of the students.
- The school's senior leaders have worked hard to ensure that the school meets all regulatory requirements.
- The senior leaders continue to implement highly effective systems and procedures to ensure that teaching is good and that students have a well-balanced programme to make good progress in their learning.
- Students say they are extremely well cared for and that they are safe and happy in the school. All parents are highly satisfied with the provision and outcomes for their children.

It is not yet outstanding because

- On occasion, the lack of pace results in slower progress and limited student participation.
- Teachers do not always set tasks which meet the needs of all the students.
- While systems for staff training and the management of their performance are in place, they have not yet led to teaching which is regularly outstanding.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- The inspectors observed 18 lessons, looked at students' work, teachers' planning and information about students' progress.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, teaching staff, students, parents and carers. School policies and documentation were examined.
- The inspectors took account of the responses in 12 staff questionnaires and the views of parents and carers through discussion and from 29 online Parent View questionnaires.

Inspection team

Flora Bean, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Rory O'Doherty

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Wisdom School is an independent coeducational day school for students aged from 11 to 16. The school opened in 2006 with provision for 100 students.
- There are currently 82 full-time students on roll. No students attend part-time.
- The school is located in Haringey in north London.
- The school is a Limited Company by Guarantee and Registered Charity (charity no 1142914) which was set up by businessmen and academics of the Turkish-speaking community. The current headteacher was appointed in September 2013 and has operational responsibility for the school.
- The school uses a local park and leisure centre for additional provision.
- The majority of the students come from the local area but an increasing number of students travel from neighbouring London boroughs.
- The great majority of students speak English as an additional language and many do not speak English at home.
- Two students have statements of special educational needs.
- The school is currently in the process of planning to move to its newly acquired building in Hendon, north London.
- The school was last inspected in May 2011.
- Wisdom School aims to 'inspire children to become confident, respectful, caring individuals who achieve personal success and develop a love of learning'.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of the teaching by
 - ensuring that the best practice in the school is shared, including developing peer observations across teaching departments
 - ensuring that teaching and assessment include consistency of marking of students' work, as indicated in the marking policy
 - increasing the amount of pair and group work so that students are given opportunities to practise the skills taught
 - ensuring that tasks set match the needs of all students.

Use the established system for the management of staff performance to set further targets for teaching in order to raise the quality to outstanding.

Inspection judgements

Pupils' achievement

Good

Students achieve well in this school. Their achievements continue to be good in all areas of learning across the ability range from their varying starting points because they are part of a small, caring school which motivates and nurtures them. Students join the school with a wide range of knowledge and skills ranging from below to above expectations for their age. As a result of sustained good teaching and highly effective monitoring and assessment procedures, students are enabled to identify their progress and areas for improvement. Consequently, they make good and often better-than-expected progress in many areas of their learning.

Students have excellent opportunities to improve their literacy, numeracy and communication skills through regular English and mathematics lessons. In addition, they make good progress in Turkish and Spanish. Almost all students speak English as a second language and as a result of good teaching and additional support lessons, if required, they make at least expected progress. Students develop good information and communication technology (ICT) skills through regular lessons and within curricular subjects. Students develop good physical education skills through regular PE sessions. They achieve well through the Wisdom house points competitions, and success and effort are celebrated in assemblies with rewards for good achievements and positive effort. By the end of Key Stage 3, students are well prepared for the next stage of their learning.

At Key Stage 4, students make good and, on occasions, rapid progress from their starting points across a range of subjects. A number of students with below-expected levels in English join the already established Year 10 and Year 11 students. As a result of excellent monitoring and support they almost all make rapid progress to reach at least expected levels in English and, as a result, make visible progress in all other areas of their learning. They make above expected progress in mathematics for their age and ability. The proportion of students achieving A* to C grades in five GCSE subjects, including English and mathematics, was comparable to the national average in 2011, and above in 2012 and 2013. A good proportion of the GCSE grades were awarded at A* or A in mathematics and in science. There is a marked upward trend. Students' achievement is good rather than outstanding because this high level of achievement has not yet been sustained for a long enough period. The proportion of students making outstanding progress is not yet sufficiently high. However, the school continues to improve teaching, and in science, for example, students are achieving exceptionally well throughout the school. This is an improvement on previous years.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Outstanding

Students' behaviour and personal development are outstanding. This is as a result of the nurturing ethos of the school where students' individual needs are carefully considered and emotional well-being is at the heart of the pastoral care provided. Students demonstrate very positive attitudes to learning and are happy and motivated to achieve well and to participate in many different aspects of school life. They learn increasingly to take responsibility for their behaviour and are exceptionally well behaved in lessons and around the school. As a result of well-organised support systems, students who arrive in the school with motivational difficulties gradually improve their ability to learn well and to integrate successfully.

In discussion, students talked highly of the excellent support they receive from all staff and the inclusive family atmosphere of their school. They relate extremely well to staff and to each other. They report that they feel very safe in school and are confident to ask for support should they have any concerns. They feel free from harassment and report that there is no bullying in the school. They look after each other well and help each other and celebrate success together as a school in regular whole-school assemblies and house meetings.

The provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Students develop exceptionally well at their own pace within a relaxed yet structured environment. This is provided through: regular weekly assemblies and tutor time; personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE); psychology lessons with life skills talks; and ongoing monitoring and support of individual needs. Students take part in presentations in assemblies, in clubs, educational visits, challenges and competitions. Good effort and special achievements are celebrated together as a school and, as a result, students develop high levels of self-esteem and self-confidence.

Students develop excellent leadership skills through residential visits, visits abroad for Comenius projects and through working together for competitions. Collectively they raise money for charities both locally and abroad. In addition to citizenship lesson, students gain an excellent understanding of institutions and democracy through the work of the student council and educational visits. They have, for example, visited the Houses of Parliament and welcomed visits from speakers such as the local MP. Students learn to take an interest in current affairs and to express balanced opinions from their Comenius projects and participation in local community events. These enhance their understanding of democratic multicultural Britain. They write for their own regular school newsletter and share their vision for a tolerant and fair world.

Quality of teaching

Good

The quality of the teaching is good overall. Clear learning objectives are set for each lesson, with teachers taking time to explain what is to be achieved. Detailed planning with a good range of activities involves students fully in the lessons in most cases. Teachers set realistic but challenging expectations of what students can achieve. They use focused questioning and plan tasks that are designed to challenge students well. They generally motivate students well by giving them the opportunity to take an active part in their learning, whether through paired or group work or through interactive sessions. They encourage motivation through praise. They communicate enthusiasm for their subject and respond well to students' questions and curiosity, extending their learning appropriately. They listen to students' responses carefully and re-shape questions or tasks to ensure that all students understand new concepts well, or can apply and develop new skills successfully. Teachers make very effective use of interactive whiteboards to support students' understanding. They promote students' literacy and speaking skills consistently well, ensuring that key vocabulary is highlighted to extend students' practical use of English. Good revision of material and related tasks set for homework ensure students understand how to progress well. Homework is marked but does not always follow the school's policy on marking to help students progress beyond good work to outstanding.

In the small number of satisfactory lessons, teaching does not always engage students fully. This is because whole-class teaching does not allow for active involvement or rapid enough participation in tasks to practise new skills or to share ideas. As a result, students focus less well; the pace of the lesson slows, momentum and enthusiasm are diminished and progress is slower.

Assessment and monitoring procedures are excellent and ensure students gain a clear picture of how well they learn and how they can improve their work. On arrival, at all stages of learning, students' ability levels are checked in literacy and numeracy to verify their starting points and to identify any individual learning needs. The two non-teaching academic mentors work closely with teachers to ensure excellent systems which enable teachers to track students' progress rigorously. The information from assessments is used well to inform the planning of future work. Excellent intervention at whatever ability level ensures all students are helped and guided to improve the quality of their learning. One-to-one targeted sessions in school provide good additional support to students when required. The well-planned programme of home visits by academic mentors helps parents understand their children's progress and provides additional support for parents whose first language is not English.

Quality of curriculum**Good**

The quality of the curriculum is good. It covers the required areas of learning well. It provides varied opportunities for good academic learning and personal development. The curriculum has several strengths: the provision for English with additional English language support if required; mathematics; modern languages, including Spanish and Turkish; regular ICT; and science chosen either as double or separate sciences. The curriculum is supported well by a good variety of resources, including the excellent use of the interactive whiteboards which enhances students' learning. In Key Stage 3, students cover all the required areas of learning as good preparation for Key Stage 4, including a rich mix of linguistic, aesthetic and creative aspects of learning. In Key Stage 4, students have opportunity to choose from a wide range of subjects, including psychology, as preparation for GCSE. In addition they have an excellent programme of careers talks and visits to help them make informed choices as preparation for the next stage of their education.

Personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) is taught as a discrete subject as well as through the curriculum, in assemblies. The Wednesday afternoon activities programme enhances life skills and team work. A good range of enrichment activities develop students' self-confidence and self-esteem. These include eco warriors, Comenius projects both at home and abroad, and science and mathematics Olympiads, together with residential camps. All these activities contribute to students' creative, thinking, physical, communication and technological skills, and ensure that they have a balanced education.

Students who have specific learning difficulties benefit from an excellent, well-planned individual support programme that meets their needs accurately as a result of careful initial and continuous assessments and specialist support teaching. The academic mentors provide additional curriculum support to any identified student who requires help, ensuring that the curriculum is accessible and extended to meet the needs of all abilities.

Pupils' welfare, health and safety**Good**

Provision for the welfare, health and safety of students is good. A comprehensive range of policies and procedures are in place and are implemented effectively to ensure the welfare, health and safety of the students. Procedures for the safeguarding of students are in place and meet requirements and, as a result of improvements, robust procedures for safer recruitment are followed rigorously. All the required checks on the suitability of staff are recorded correctly in the single central register. The school has trained and appointed designated safeguarding officers who are appropriately trained. Risk assessments are thorough and updated as required.

Arrangements for fire safety, first aid and security are rigorous and procedures are implemented consistently. The policies and procedures for child protection, the prevention of bullying, the promotion of good behaviour, and the safe use of the internet are sufficiently detailed to support the staff. Staff training and procedures for first aid and health and safety are up to date and appropriate. Supervision is vigilant, without being too oppressive. Staff promote consistently high standards of behaviour in lessons and throughout the school through the example of their excellent relationships with each other and with the students and parents. It is a thriving, inclusive school community where trust is a hallmark of the commitment to each other. Students report no bullying and staff deal very swiftly with any behavioural issues. The school provides a well-balanced lunch and students know they should eat healthily and take regular physical exercise.

Leadership and management**Good**

The leadership and management of the school are good. The proprietors of the organisation support the senior leaders very effectively. For example, plans for the move to the newly acquired building in Hendon are well under way and the proprietors meet regularly with the headteacher for forward strategic planning. The newly appointed headteacher and senior leaders work extremely well together to support the aims of the school and the ongoing educational developments. Insightful leadership and management have resulted in identifying needs and in significant improvements in the quality of education.

The proprietors and senior leaders have an ambitious vision for the school and share this with all staff. They direct the impetus of their aims to sustain the nurturing ethos of the school and to promote students' outstanding behaviour and personal development. The ongoing mentoring role through the appointment of two new academic mentors, the recruitment of highly skilled teachers, and the systems to appraise and develop staff, have led to good achievement, good teaching and a well-balanced curriculum. The senior leaders generally manage the performance of teaching staff but this could be developed further to bring about further consistency in teaching. Teaching staff have access to in-house staff training but senior leaders do not always identify the particular training needs of the staff members.

The premises are maintained well and provide suitable accommodation for safe and effective learning. The proprietors ensure that parents and carers receive all required information and that the complaints procedure meets all requirements. From the online questionnaires and interviews in school, it is clear that parents are highly satisfied with all aspects of the school's work and would recommend the school to others without hesitation.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of education and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of education that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of education it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and/or the quality of education has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	134764
Inspection number	422772
DfE registration number	309/6086

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Coeducational day school
School status	Independent
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	82
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Axis Educational Trust
Chair	Sahin Metin and Mehmet Meric
Headteacher	Gultekin Yapar
Date of previous school inspection	11 May 2011
Annual fees (day pupils)	£6,750
Telephone number	020 8880 9070
Email address	info@wisdomschool.org.uk

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