

Royal Wootton Bassett Academy

Lime Kiln, Royal Wootton Bassett, Swindon, SN4 7HG

Inspection dates 28–29 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Students' achievement is well above national standards. They make excellent progress in English and mathematics and other subjects, including art, music, German, religious studies and leisure and tourism.
- Sixth form students achieve outstanding A-level results.
- Standards of teaching are outstanding in all years. The school's designation as a teaching school generates opportunities to train new teachers and further develop skills within the profession, enhancing the school's provision.
- There is a strong emphasis on developing students' personal skills, with many opportunities for them to take on responsibilities. This promotes very high standards of behaviour and conduct.
- Students are very well prepared for the next stage of their lives. The iLearn tutor-led lessons provide an excellent, structured opportunity for students to develop independent learning skills.
- Leadership and management of the school are excellent. The headteacher is supported by a very able team of leaders who share the same vision of securing the highest possible achievement for all students.
- The governing body is fully informed about the school's relative strengths and areas for improvement. It works very effectively to support and challenge the leadership team to ensure that standards continue to improve.
- The sixth form is outstanding. High-quality teaching and the wide range of subjects on offer cater for students' needs. They typically progress to their chosen university or college or to further training.
- Correctly described as a 'global school in a local community', the school has extensive links across the world and promotes tolerance, and a focus on enhancing the lives of others.
- Students participate in a very wide range of activities including sports, music, arts, summer schools and competitions in science. Personal skills can also be developed through trips to Sweden, the USA, France, Belgium and China, and many other countries and by participation in the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme.
- There is a strong focus on developing students' sense of responsibility for others and for the environment, for example fundraising activities which paid for a school to be built in a community in Burma.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 38 teachers in 38 lessons, most of which were observed jointly with a member of the school’s leadership team. In addition, inspectors made several short visits to lessons and to the school’s special educational needs base.
- Meetings were held with representatives of the governing body, staff and groups of students. Over 100 parents and carers added their opinions to the online questionnaire (Parent View), and one letter was received by the inspectors. All members of staff were also able to contribute views by means of a questionnaire; over 70 responses were received.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work, visited several tutor groups and an assembly, and looked at samples of students’ work. They also looked at progress data, documents about the school’s development and evaluation, safeguarding information and records about attendance and behaviour. The records showing the impact of professional development for staff were also examined.

Inspection team

Ann Cox, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Linda Peck	Additional Inspector
Lesley Voaden	Additional Inspector
Cherie White	Additional Inspector
Stephen Williams	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average secondary school and its sixth form is also large. The school serves the town of Royal Wootton Bassett and the surrounding area. The vast majority of students are of White British heritage, with small numbers of several minority ethnic groups.
- The school became an academy in July 2011. The predecessor school, known as Wootton Bassett School, was judged as outstanding at its last Ofsted inspection in 2010.
- The school was designated as a teaching school in 2013 and the headteacher is a national leader of education. The school leads an alliance of 13 schools and works with schools and teacher training establishments in the region to train new teachers and improve the quality of teaching across the profession.
- The school is the senior partner in Challenge Partners and leads a hub with one special school and two primary schools.
- The school is growing steadily in size. An above-average number of students join or leave the school at times other than the usual, reflecting the high number of service families who live in the area.
- The proportion of students supported through school action is below average, and the proportion supported through school action plus or with statements of special educational needs is also below average.
- A small proportion of students receive pupil premium funding. This provides additional funding for looked-after children, students known to be eligible for free school meals and children of service families.
- In Years 7 and 8, a sixth of all students benefit from additional help in mathematics and English, funded by the government's catch-up programme.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress, in all areas.
- In Key Stage 4 a small number of students attend work-related training courses at other sites through Springfields College, Lackham Agricultural College and Swindon College.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that students maximise their progress, especially in written tasks, by:
 - extending the very good practice seen in some written work and marking where teachers write comments and pose questions to students about their work
 - encouraging students to reflect upon and respond to their teachers' advice.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Students enter the school with standards in English and mathematics which are in line with the national average for Key Stage 2.
- In 2012, GCSE English results dropped a little but the school worked hard to ensure they improved. In 2013, English results were better, with the proportion of students gaining the highest grades being above the national average. Mathematics results have consistently improved in recent years.
- From their starting points, the majority of students make progress in English and mathematics, which compares very well to the national averages. A relatively high proportion make progress at a rate which exceeds the national average, especially in English.
- The progress data for current students indicates that there will be a further improvement in GCSE outcomes in 2014 in both English and mathematics.
- The gap between the small number of students entitled to pupil premium funding and others is smaller than that seen nationally, equivalent to less than one GCSE grade lower in both mathematics and English in 2012. The school uses pupil premium funding in a variety of ways, ensuring that students receive specialist help, have appropriate small-group tuition and have copies of revision guides. The school continues to look carefully at additional ways to help these students in lessons and current students entitled to this funding are achieving closer to other students and the gap is closing rapidly.
- A small proportion of students are from service families and their performance is very similar to other students'. When service family children arrive at the school, care is taken to ensure that they settle in quickly and are able to make very good progress.
- Achievement in the sixth form is outstanding and is a strength of the school. A wide range of A-level subjects is offered and pass rates, the proportions attaining the highest grades, and outcomes relative to national averages have improved year on year.
- The school enters some students early for GCSE examinations in mathematics or English. Almost all of these students gain a grade, which demonstrates very good progress; students then focus on other subjects.
- Extremely good attention is given to encouraging students to develop their literacy skills; most students develop into confident readers. For those who are experiencing difficulty the synthetic phonics system used generates significant improvements.
- The provision for disabled students and those with special educational needs is focused on enabling them to acquire skills essential to take up work. Their curriculum is designed so that they make very good progress across their courses.
- A small proportion of students in Key Stage 4 receive vocational, work-related training at other centres for a part of the week; they make excellent progress and all leave school with useful qualifications.
- For the students who receive help from the government's Years 7 catch-up funding, the use of small-group work has enabled them to make very good progress, especially with their reading.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Inspectors observed consistently good and often outstanding teaching in many lessons, and the records of observations made by the school over time support this view. Teachers have consistently high expectations of their students.
- In the best lessons, written assessment and feedback to students provide advice and further challenge to them, promoting further progress. Where there is real dialogue between the teacher and student through the written comments and responses, students develop excellent understanding. This process of detailed marking is not yet fully developed with all teachers in all

subjects.

- Teachers know their students very well and have excellent relationships with them in lessons. This promotes students' strong independent learning skills and their passion for learning. As a result, students make progress which is above the level seen nationally.
- Teachers plan lesson activities with a range of opportunities and tasks catering for students' different abilities. In a science lesson, students were learning rapidly through developing their practical skills which they could then apply to everyday-life situations.
- Students are given learning objectives which match the different stage they are at in their learning. Teachers blend support with challenge and other adults in lessons give extra support to those who need it. The school ensures that the needs of students who have special educational needs or disabilities are met, and students from all backgrounds are given the right support to ensure that they can secure success.
- In all subjects, students' literacy skills are developed very well. Reading skills are developed systematically so that students acquire good communication skills. Opportunities are also taken to ensure that students develop and use the skills they learn in mathematics in other subjects.
- The standard of teaching in sixth form lessons is outstanding. The best sixth form teaching is frequently characterised by teachers and students sharing responsibility for high-quality learning, with both involved in discussion and debate. Teachers are highly skilled in using probing questions effectively to extend students' learning. This makes extremely good preparation for the next stage of students' lives, which for many is university or college courses.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Each school day begins with a tutor-led session known as iLearn. These exceptionally well-planned sessions allow students to develop mature and extremely positive attitudes to learning, and encourage both independent and group work. The effectiveness of this programme is seen in the positive learning behaviours throughout the school and the clear impact on progress.
- Around the school students are polite and courteous to each other, to members of staff and to visitors. Students listen attentively in lessons, and almost always respond rapidly to teachers' instructions.
- Students are given many opportunities to take on responsibilities, for example Year 8 students work with primary school pupils on matters of personal finance. Some post-16 students form a senior student leadership team, providing excellent role models for younger students.
- Attendance rates are in line with those at similar schools, and the rate of persistent absence has remained unchanged at low levels.
- It is very rare for the school to permanently exclude a student, and the use of fixed-term exclusions has decreased to very low levels as a result of the school's excellent behaviour management systems, timely interventions and close working with external agencies.
- Students are well informed about different forms of bullying and the school takes steps to ensure that anti-social behaviour and unnecessary risks are minimised. Training is given to students in order to equip them to avoid cyber bullying. Students are sensitive about issues such as racism and homophobic bullying and they have a good understanding of potential hazards, including alcohol or substance abuse.
- Students feel very safe and secure at school. There are few instances of bullying reported in the school and on the rare occasions when there is an issue, the school deals with it swiftly and effectively. The students who spoke to inspectors reported that they have complete confidence in the school to deal with any matters which are reported. Parents who responded to the online questionnaire confirmed students' views.
- The school makes sure that all students have equality of opportunity and it actively tackles potential sources of discrimination.
- When older students attend courses at other centres, their attendance and behaviour are

carefully checked, as are all aspects of ensuring their safety and well-being.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher, supported by the school's staff and governing body, is relentless in the pursuit of excellent outcomes in both academic qualifications and personal development. Senior leaders examine all aspects of the school's work to ensure positive outcomes. There is an underlying expectation of the highest levels of achievement and personal development.
- The school gives high priority to securing the staff's professional development. The award of teaching school status has enabled the school to work more widely in teacher training and professional development. Middle leaders have benefited from development opportunities which have strengthened their capacity to bring about positive changes. The professional development of staff is underpinned by performance management that encourages, challenges and supports teachers to continually improve.
- Leadership and management of the sixth form are outstanding. Systematic monitoring of students' learning and careful tracking of their progress lead to excellent outcomes. The guidance and support given to sixth form students ensure that they are placed on courses matching their interests and abilities; the vast majority complete their courses successfully.
- There are excellent policies underpinning practice that ensure high levels of literacy, reflected in students' outstanding progress in developing their reading and writing.
- The school's curriculum provides a wide range of subjects and opportunities for all students. When it supports their interests and abilities, students follow alternative pathways to ensure that they remain motivated and achieve as well as they can.
- The school has worked hard to engage hard-to-reach families in a variety of ways. Senior leaders recognise that there is more to be done to build on the good impact made already.
- For the relatively small proportion of students entitled to pupil premium funding there is a wide range of innovative interventions in all years to close the gap further between them and their peers. These students make very good progress in both mathematics and English.
- The school has rigorous systems in place to ensure that safeguarding and child protection arrangements meet statutory requirements. Record keeping is exemplary.
- The school emphasises developing students' moral standards, tolerance and responsibility towards others. The school's outstanding promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education pervades the school's work. The school is recognised for its exemplary approach to education about the Holocaust and genocide. Recently, the school has actively participated in fund raising towards the construction of a school in Burma; there is a great deal of pride and satisfaction in this achievement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body works very closely with the headteacher and other senior staff. Governors are well informed about the quality of teaching and its impact on learning as they have regular meetings with the school's leaders and other members of the teaching staff. Governors keep up to date with appropriate training and examine information about the school's performance so that they can evaluate the school's progress. The governing body challenges the school's leaders to constantly review their work to ensure a continuous drive for excellence.
 - The governing body plays an active part in performance management of the senior leaders and monitors performance management to ensure that teachers' salary progression is related to students' achievement and the quality of teaching.
 - Governors scrutinise the school's finances and make sure that the funds, particularly pupil premium funding, are used to raise standards. The governing body works hard to engage parents, carers and representatives of the community so that their views help to inform its decisions. The governing body fully meets its responsibilities with regard to safeguarding.

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	136911
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	426861
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,631
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	258
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Gardner
Headteacher	George Croxford
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01793 841900
Fax number	01793 841969
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