

Wandle Valley School

Welbeck Road, Carshalton, London, SM5 1LW

Inspection dates 15–16 January 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students make good progress during their time at the school, particularly in English and mathematics. The proportion of students achieving GCSE passes is now increasing.
- Teaching is good. Work is matched well to individuals' learning needs and abilities. All adults working in the room have a calm, purposeful approach and high expectations of students' behaviour.
- Students say that the school is a safe place to be and that the school deals effectively with any problems that may arise. The school's arrangements for safeguarding are robust.
- Students' behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Their attitudes to learning in lessons are positive and the students like the help and support they receive from all staff.
- The highly experienced and committed headteacher provides motivational leadership and is supported effectively by his senior and middle leaders.
- Governors are active and supportive of the school. They are effective in holding the school to account to make sure it provides the best possible education for all.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers' marking is inconsistent. This is because students' next steps in learning are not always clearly stated. There are often comments written about the quality of students' work, but these are not always followed up.
- The quality of the structured reading programme for the increasing number of primary pupils is at the very early stages of development and improving standards for all are not yet fully evident.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed seven lessons taught by seven different teachers. Five of the lessons were observed jointly with a member of the senior leadership team. In addition, the inspector visited four different activities timetabled on the Wednesday activities afternoon.
- A meeting was held with a group of Year 11 students. Meetings were also held with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, others with posts of responsibility, the Chair of the Governing Body and Chair of the pupil, staffing and curriculum committee, as well as the governor with responsibility for safeguarding. In addition, the inspector listened to a small group of primary pupils reading.
- The inspector took account of the online questionnaire (Parent View), parents and carers responses to the school's own questionnaires and 21 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspector observed the school's practice and looked at a range of documentation, including its checks on how well it is doing and improvement planning, information on students' progress, documents used by senior leaders to check the school's work, governors' documentation, as well as records relating to attendance, behaviour and safeguarding.

Inspection team

James Bowden, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- In September 2011, Wandle Valley became an academy. This is its first inspection.
- The school provides for students with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD). An increasing number also has additional learning difficulties and mental health needs.
- Currently, almost all students are boys. Most students are in the secondary department and there are increasing numbers in the primary department. The majority are from White backgrounds and small minorities are from either Black backgrounds or mixed backgrounds. There are no students from homes where English is not the home language. All students have a statement of special educational needs for BESD.
- The proportion of students at the school eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional government funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children in local authority care and children from service families, is well above the national average. Currently, there are very few in local authority care and almost all are entitled to free school meals.
- Students new to the school are admitted at different times throughout the school year. Students are generally not admitted after the end of Year 9.
- The school uses the local Skills and Integrated Learning Centre (SILC) for two students one day per week, which has continued their placements organised by their previous schools.
- The school provides a private outreach service available to schools within the local authority.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and make it all as good as the best by making sure that:
 - marking is consistent in making clear what students' next steps in learning are
 - comments written about the quality of students' work are always followed up to make sure the students are improving the quality of their work.
- Provide a more structured reading programme for the increasing number of primary pupils to make sure individuals' reading standards improve quickly in order to improve learning in all subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- For almost all students, attainment on entry to the school is well below that of their classmates in mainstream schools and many have been underachieving. This is as a result of missed schooling, often because of exclusion, and difficulties in settling comfortably into school life. Attainment remains below that of their classmates at the end of Year 6 and Year 11.
- All are tested when joining the school, particularly in relation to their abilities in English and mathematics, because information from mainstream schools is not always available or up to date. Individual support plans are provided and targets are set for improvement in the important skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT).
- In relation to their starting points, students make good progress and achieve well as a result of the help and support they receive. Progress towards targets is checked regularly and new targets set when appropriate. The very few pupils who completed Year 6 in 2013 made good progress in relation to their starting points, particularly in literacy and numeracy.
- At the end of Year 11, in 2013, almost all those sitting GCSE or equivalent examinations achieved A* to G grade passes, including English and mathematics. A few achieved A* to C grade passes in art, and two students have transferred successfully to the BRIT School of Performing Arts in Croydon. There are no early entries for GCSE examinations. The two students attending SILC have yet to complete their courses. Numbers of students not in education, employment or training when they leave school fell. This was a significant improvement since 2012.
- As a result of good quality teaching and individual support, there are no particular differences in the rates of progress made by students with different levels of learning difficulties, by boys and the very few girls, the small minorities from non-White backgrounds or the few more able.
- School data confirm that students eligible for pupil premium funding (almost all) make similar progress to others in the school. The extra resources provided are being used successfully to extend learning and social skills generally, as well as providing extra support and resources for improving literacy and numeracy skills. In addition, those pupils in the recently introduced primary nurture group in the primary department are also making good progress as a result of the extra support they are given. However, leaders recognise the reading programme for primary pupils is not, as yet, improving reading skills quickly enough.
- In almost all lessons, progress is at least good and there is effective support for students reading, writing, speaking and listening skills in all subjects. In the physical education activities on Wednesday afternoon activities session, effective use of questions improved students' speaking and listening skills, as well as making sure the students understood exactly what they had to do to make progress.
- Parents and carers are pleased with the progress their child makes at the school.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching across the school is improving and promotes good learning for all because the work set is hard enough for all students. Teaching in English and mathematics is good. In a secondary English lesson, students were successfully improving their awareness of how to produce creative writing based on their choice of a particular setting and using the five senses to enliven their use of language. One student commented, 'I can taste the victory,' when writing about a football match.
- In all lessons, teachers and teaching assistants work very effectively as a team and manage students' behaviour particularly well. They have high expectations and their calm, yet purposeful, approach keeps students on task. This in turn makes sure students make good progress towards the learning intentions described at the start of lessons. In a primary mathematics lesson, despite some frustration shown by one pupil, all improved their skills in

addition sums using hundreds, tens and units.

- Learning is also enlivened by teachers' and students' use of ICT, as well as by teachers' good use of questioning to make sure students are making progress. This was particularly evident in the four physical education activities visited as part of the Wednesday activities afternoon and in a secondary ICT lesson where students were completing coursework assignments.
- Teachers generally mark students' work promptly and written comments are often provided. However, comments about students' next steps in learning are often unclear, which means students not sure about what it is exactly they should do. In addition, teachers often write comments about the quality of students' written work but are inconsistent in checking if students respond to them.
- Most parents and carers are pleased with the quality of teaching and their child's enjoyment of learning. Students told the inspector that they are given individual help when needed and that they find the work hard enough.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of students is good. This is as a result of staff's high and consistent expectations and effective management of their behaviour throughout the day. In the secondary department, morning assemblies set a positive tone for the day and reinforce the school's motto '*Together Everyone Achieves More*'. Students respect the fabric of the building and its environment. All have behaviour plans with clear targets for onsite and alternative provision, as well as for visits out of school.
- Typically, behaviour over time has varied depending on particular cohorts of students. There are instances where students have not been allowed to go to school for short periods of time because of poor behaviour. However, there has only been one permanent exclusion since the school became an academy. There are very few recorded instances of racism, decreasing incidents of bullying and no recorded instances of homophobia or sexual harassment.
- Attitudes to learning in lessons are generally positive, which is as a result of interesting lessons. Students want to do well, all current Year 11 students are hoping to move on to further education or training when they leave school.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good and is overseen effectively by school governors. Internet safety has a high priority, with access denied to inappropriate sites when students are online, and rules as to the use of mobile telephones. Students told the inspector that the school is a safe place to learn and that the school had acted quickly and successfully to combat an incident of cyber bullying amongst older students earlier during the school year.
- Attendance improves for many compared to their previous schools and is improving year on year. A few remain persistent absentees despite the school's best efforts to improve attendance, including the use of fixed penalty notices to parents and carers.
- Most parents and carers believe the school has a warm, friendly and secure atmosphere and that teachers deal with any bad behaviour effectively.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and his leadership team are committed to sustained improvement and have the best interests of all students at heart, working closely with parents and carers to support students' learning and progress. Staff are overwhelmingly committed to achieving the best outcomes possible for all students.
- Regular self-evaluation is used effectively to plan for further improvements. Teaching is checked by senior leaders and is used to make decisions about how well teachers are working, plan for training opportunities and to recommend additional responsibilities and pay awards. Middle leaders, including subject leaders in English, mathematics and ICT, are effective in their roles.
- The school provides a broad and rich range of subjects and activities throughout the year. The

subjects and topics students study are the same as in mainstream schools. In addition, the school provides high levels of physical activities including formal physical education lessons and extras such as cycling, trampolining and outdoor and adventurous activities. Further activities include horticulture, performing arts and student involvement in the 'bistro', a non-profit making activity, led by a chef.

- There are equal opportunities for all to succeed. The extra support and guidance given underpin well students' good all-round personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Regardless of their circumstances, all students make good progress and are very well prepared for the next stages of their education.
- Parents and carers appreciate their involvement in their child's education, believe the school promotes respect amongst its students and that it is well led. Students told the inspector that they believe the headteacher knows them well and wants to make sure they do well at the school. Schools that have bought in to the outreach service provided by Wandle Valley appreciate the support they have received.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors are highly experienced and highly effective in holding the school to account for the quality of teaching and students' progress and achievement, as well as students' behaviour and safety. There is a member with specific responsibility for safeguarding, which ensures procedures and protocols are robust and effective in the school as well as at the alternative provision used. Governors challenge the headteacher and senior leaders to make sure continuing improvements are sustained in all aspects of the school's work. They have developed their own skills so as to be confident in supporting school self-evaluation and the performance management of staff, including that of the headteacher. Governors ensure the school is financially stable and oversee carefully the use of pupil premium and check if this is being used to best effect to improve students' progress in literacy and numeracy.
 - The school receives no Year 7 catch-up funding. It has only very recently received primary school sports funding, which is being used to hire external specialist coaches.

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	103026
Local authority	Sutton
Inspection number	430837

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Academy alternative provision converter
Age range of pupils	5–16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	63
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brenda Morley
Headteacher	Doug Bone
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	020 8648 1365
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