

Wolverley CofE Secondary School

Blakeshall Lane, Wolverley, Kidderminster, DY11 5XQ

Inspection dates

6–7 February 2014

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

- The progress students make as they move through the school has not been fast enough, particularly in mathematics and in the sixth form.
- The sixth form requires improvement. Teaching is not always challenging enough, though the courses students follow are appropriate.
- Teaching also requires improvement elsewhere in the school. Work is too hard or too easy when teachers do not take enough account of what students can already do.
- Marking is not consistently good. Not all teachers give students high-quality written feedback to help them to improve the quality of their work.
- Sometimes teaching assistants do too much for the students.
- Not all leaders with responsibility for subjects or parts of the school are doing enough to improve their areas.

The school has the following strengths

- The acting headteacher has strong support from the senior team, staff and governors, and the school is improving.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is of high quality.
- Progress is good in religious education, history, science and Spanish, and it is improving in English.
- The school looks after students very well.
- Students' behaviour is good, both in the classroom and around school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 32 lessons, of which seven were joint observations with senior leaders. Inspectors also made a number of additional visits to collective worship and tutorial sessions and carried out short visits to classrooms across a range of subjects.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, senior and subject leaders, the Chair and other members of the Governing Body and representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke informally to students in lessons, at break and at lunchtimes. They also met with groups of students.
- The inspection team looked at a range of documentation, including the school’s checks on how well it is doing, the school improvement plan, and statistical information about students’ progress, achievement, behaviour and exclusions. They scrutinised the work of students.
- Inspectors looked at the school’s documentation relating to the management of the work of staff, training arrangements for teachers and other staff, lesson observations and arrangements for the safeguarding of students and for governance.
- Inspectors took into account the 31 responses to the online questionnaire Parent View and the 39 responses to the staff questionnaire, as well as telephone conversations with parents.

Inspection team

Christine Young, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Christopher Crouch	Additional Inspector
Davinder Dosanjh	Additional Inspector
John Ubsdell	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Wolverley School is of average size for a secondary school.
- Most students are White British.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium is average. This is additional money allocated to the school by the government for children in the care of the local authority, those known to be eligible for free school meals and students with a parent in the armed services.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported by school action is above the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- The school is designated as a specialist music college.
- A small number of students attend alternative provision at the ContinU Plus Academy and Kidderminster College.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum levels expected for students' attainment and progress in secondary schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching by:
 - sharing the existing good or better practice effectively across the school to enable teachers to learn from each other
 - providing work that takes into account what students can already do and challenges them enough, particularly in mathematics and in the sixth form
 - ensuring that teaching assistants provide appropriate support and guidance.
- Ensure that all staff provide high-quality marking and feedback so that students know how to improve their work.
- Ensure that all leaders responsible for subjects or sections of the school play an effective part in raising achievement in their areas.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Students coming into the school often have lower levels of achievement than those found nationally; by the time they leave school, students have made progress that is broadly in line with national averages but it varies between subjects. Their average grades in 2013 were close to national scores in English but remained below in mathematics. In mathematics and some other subjects, progress was not rapid enough for them to catch up to the levels of students nationally.
- In the sixth form, some students do not make sufficient gains in their learning by the time they take their A- and AS-level examinations.
- In 2013, the percentage of students gaining five or more GCSE grades A* to C including English and mathematics was below average. Evidence from the school's records about current Year 11 students shows that achievement is improving. Although attainment is lower in mathematics, evidence from the school's most recent tracking indicates that this is rising rapidly.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs are all making progress at the same rate as other students. They often receive extra support and help when they need it.
- The attainment of students who are supported by the pupil premium was just under a grade behind that of other students in English in 2013, and over half a grade behind in mathematics. The progress they make is too slow. It is much slower progress than their classmates. The school is using funding to provide help for individuals and small groups, and its tracking of current students' progress shows that progress is now more rapid. However, it still requires improvement.
- The 2013 results of more-able students show they made slower progress than is typical nationally, especially in mathematics. Progress is improving this year, but they are still not always sufficiently challenged in lessons.
- A small number of students attend alternative provision outside the school. They are successful and achieve well. Students have developed greater confidence and self-esteem through raising their aspirations and focusing on preparations for future life.
- In Year 7, the 'catch-up' funding, which supports students who are weaker readers, has been used effectively. Students are reading more often and are now better at reading with understanding and confidence. The school's literacy programme is well embedded into the curriculum and is having a direct impact on students' significantly improving literacy levels.
- Students make rapid progress in religious education, history, science and Spanish. In 2013, GCSE examination results in these subjects were above national averages. Standards in many vocational subjects are above average and students' progress in these subjects is good.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because it is not good enough in some subjects to ensure rapid progress. There is a very small amount of teaching that is inadequate.

- Teaching requires improvement in the sixth form. Teachers do not always provide sufficient intellectual challenge or specific guidance on how to write higher-level answers. Sometimes, teachers do too much work for the students rather than challenge them to use their initiative and learn at a more rapid rate.
- Support provided by additional adults sometimes makes a good contribution to students' learning, particularly when students who need extra help are prompted and challenged. However, this support is not always good enough in all lessons. Sometimes, adults do too much of the work for the students.
- The school has correctly identified improving the quality and consistency of marking and feedback as an area to improve. Some work, in different subjects, is marked regularly and students are provided with helpful comments outlining what they need to do to improve. However, other work is not marked regularly or receives no more than a tick. Where this is evident, students do not know how to make their work better and how to reach higher grades.
- In some of the lessons where teaching requires improvement, work is sometimes too easy or repetitive and does not build on what students have learnt previously. In these lessons, progress slows and more-able students, in particular, are not challenged enough.
- In the most successful lessons, students of all abilities were challenged to achieve their best because work was interesting and teachers had high expectations of what students could do. In these lessons, students relished the opportunities to take part. For example, in a Year 9 technology lesson, students who were studying the ingredients that are found in food enjoyed learning when they were challenged to teach each other in order to demonstrate their understanding.
- Sometimes students assessed their own work or that of a classmate, and this was successful in enabling them to look at their work objectively and critically. For example, in a Year 7 science lesson students were investigating patterns in voltage across a circuit and entered into a detailed discussion to appraise the creative examples other students provided. The teacher supplemented this strategy by using questioning well to probe and extend students' responses and clarify their meaning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students are good ambassadors of their school. They are calm, polite and courteous, both in the classroom and around school. They are well meaning, inquisitive and fun to talk to. Students are proud of their school and the atmosphere is one of respect, sharing and learning together.
- The behaviour of students is good, and they have excellent relationships with the staff. This makes the school a very pleasant and purposeful place in which to learn. Attitudes to learning are good. Students develop resilience, drive and confidence.
- Quite a large number of students are involved in learning musical instruments with many taking part in musical performances. This helps students to grow in confidence and self-esteem.
- The vast majority of staff who returned the questionnaire agreed that behaviour is good. This is also the view of the parents on Parent View.
- Systems for managing behaviour are well established and used to support students' development and sense of common values. The school's fixed-term exclusion rate has

decreased.

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Students say they feel safe. They understand risk and have a very good understanding of the different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying. They say that there is very little bullying in school and express great confidence that any would be dealt with quickly and effectively.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and well supported by the nurturing ethos in the school. Sixth form students take on extra roles of responsibility and make a very positive contribution to the life of the school by supporting younger students.
- There are well-monitored procedures for ensuring the good behaviour and safety of those students who attend off-site provision. Students, including those in the sixth form, are well prepared for the next stage of their education, employment or training.
- Attendance is improving and has risen significantly since 2011. The school is aware that attendance is below average in the sixth form, and it taking action to improve this. The school has effective systems to identify students whose attendance is at risk of declining.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Although the acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher have only been in post a relatively short time, they have begun to make an impact in successfully raising the expectations of what can be achieved by both students and staff. The school has identified the right priorities for the future.
- School leaders' assessment of the school's strengths and weaknesses is accurate. They and some subject leaders are making good use of data to judge how well the school is doing. This is not yet used well by all leaders in charge of subjects or the sixth form to enable them to take full responsibility for improving achievement.
- The school has introduced a more robust performance management system for teachers, which is accurate and clearly identifies the skills that need to improve. The professional development programme is supported well by the school; there is a strong focus on the development of subject leaders and improving teaching.
- The curriculum is relevant for all students and includes good-quality vocational courses and off-site provision for different groups. Alternative courses are available for older students through the partnership arrangements, resulting in the vast majority of students leaving school with appropriate qualifications. The school does not enter students early for GCSE examinations.
- Sporting, artistic and dramatic activities are good, and students take full advantage of the range of opportunities to develop clear, personal values and to make an impact on school life. As a specialist music college, the school offers students many opportunities to learn instruments and to take part in performances. During the inspection, for example, more than 60 students were involved in rehearsals for an upcoming production of the musical *Bugsy Malone*.
- Among many other programmes, the Duke of Edinburgh, Arts Awards and collective worship give students ways of developing leadership skills. Students speak very highly of the chances they are given to take part in activities beyond their lessons.

- All safeguarding requirements are met. The staff are well trained and have a good awareness of child-protection and risk-assessment issues.
- The local authority has provided good support for the school's acting leadership that has helped in developing their expertise.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body takes an active role in the life of the school. The governors understand data well, so know how well the school is doing, and they have a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. They know how good teaching is and hold leaders to account for the quality of teaching and students' achievement.
- The governing body is aware of how targets are set for teachers and monitors how these targets are linked to pay increases. Governors know how the pupil premium funding is spent and the impact it is having for eligible students.
- All governors have undertaken appropriate training and are confident about their roles and responsibilities. Governors make regular visits to the school and link with curriculum areas and take active steps to engage with parents.

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	135061
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	427047

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary controlled
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	670
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	79
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Baldwin
Headteacher	Mark Pollard
Date of previous school inspection	5 October 2011
Telephone number	01562 859800
Fax number	01562 859807
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