

The Wey Valley School

Dorchester Road, Weymouth, DT3 5AN

Inspection dates	20–21 November 2014
-------------------------	---------------------

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Require improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Require improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Improvements in standards of teaching have not yet secured good progress for all students in all subjects, including mathematics.
- In some lessons the tasks do not engage students' interest and the pace of the lesson is too slow so that students do not focus sufficiently to make good progress.
- The behaviour of some students is not allowing all lessons to flow smoothly and time is lost to low-level disruption.
- Students do not always show good consideration in their behaviour towards each other.
- The progress of disadvantaged students does not yet match the progress of other students nationally.
- Marking of students' work is inconsistent across the school. When teachers give advice to students about improving their work, students do not always follow this advice.
- The systems to check the progress of students are not sufficiently thorough to ensure that there are opportunities to catch up when necessary.
- There is some lack of clarity about the responsibilities of senior leaders, which is reducing effectiveness, especially in the use of pupil premium funding. Governors, senior and middle leaders have not always focused enough on improving all students' progress.

The school has the following strengths

- Since the last inspection there has been an improvement in the progress made by students in English. In 2014 the GCSE results showed that students made progress to match that made by students nationally in the previous year.
- There have been improvements in the progress of students in mathematics so that the students are catching up with the progress made by other students nationally. This is particularly the case for the more able students.
- The GCSE examination results in 2014 were the best ever achieved by the school in English, mathematics and several other subjects.
- The progression of Year 11 students to local colleges and sixth forms is well managed by the school and very few students fail to make this progression.
- The most able students gained a high proportion of A and A* GCSE grades in 2014.
- There have been significant developments in the leadership of English and mathematics, resulting in improvements in the teaching of both subjects.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good.
- The school has worked effectively to bring about improvements in attendance and reducing exclusions.
- The school's curriculum offers a broad and balanced experience to students.
- There is an extensive range of extra-curricular activities, including visits to Wales, the USA and Nepal, and opportunities to participate in sports, expressive arts, and a wide variety of clubs.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed students’ learning in 25 lessons. In addition, inspectors made short visits to lessons and looked at the school’s provision for disabled students and those who have special educational needs.
- Meetings were held with five members of the governing body, senior and middle leaders, teachers and representative groups of students. Informal conversations were held with students around the school between lesson times. An inspector had a conversation with a person who acts as an independent advisor to the school, focusing on self evaluation and planning for development. One inspector listened to individual students reading aloud and talked to students about their reading.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work, visited an assembly and looked at samples of students’ work to look at the rate of progress and the quality of the assessment and marking processes. 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.
- Inspectors took into account the views of 40 parents who completed the online questionnaire (Parent View). All members of staff were invited to contribute their views in a questionnaire and 46 responses were received and taken into consideration.

Inspection team

Ann Cox, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Elizabeth Bull

Additional inspector

Justine Hocking

Additional inspector

Michael Walters

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Wey Valley School is smaller than the average-sized secondary school. The school roll has fallen over the last four years reflecting a drop in numbers of students of secondary age living locally.
- The school is one of three secondary schools which serve the town of Weymouth and the surrounding area.
- The school is part of a cooperative trust with Wyvern School and shares the same campus with it. A nursery and primary school are also on the same campus. The four establishments are managed and inspected separately.
- Almost all students are of White British heritage. Very few students do not speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding is in line with the national average.
- In Years 7 and 8, a fifth of students benefit from additional help in mathematics and English, funded by the government's catch-up programme.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs is above the national average.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The school has received support from Her Majesty's Inspectors since the last full inspection, particularly focused on improving achievement in English and mathematics, and strengthening the leadership of these two subjects. It has also received support from independent consultants.
- A small number of students are educated off site at Weymouth College as part of the Chesil Partnership. A very small number of students receive alternative education at The Compass pupil referral unit.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate progress and improve outcomes for all students, including those supported by the pupil premium and those with lower starting points, by:
 - ensuring that tasks are matched more appropriately to the ability of students and engage their interest to inspire a thirst for knowledge
 - increasing the pace of lessons so that students move quickly to new learning
 - marking work and offering constructive feedback so that students know how to improve, then following this up by checking that they do follow the advice.
- Consistently apply the school's policies to promote good behaviour in order to support rapid progress and personal development.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - clarifying the responsibilities of all senior leaders to ensure that the progress of all groups of students is comprehensively checked and that actions are taken as necessary
 - increasing the rigour of monitoring all students' progress to make sure that none slips behind.
- An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

require improvement

- The Principal, supported by senior leaders, has worked with determination to bring about improvements since the last inspection. Some of these changes have not yet had sufficient time to make significant differences to the learning and progress of students. There is some lack of clarity about the precise responsibilities of leaders. They are not clear about who is responsible for monitoring the progress of particular groups of students, or about the effectiveness of the school's work to help students who have fallen behind to catch up .
- There are inconsistencies in the application of the school's policies, for example for behaviour management, and this leads to some delayed opportunities to improve learning.
- The school has given high priority to improving standards of teaching. Teachers are offered training appropriate for their professional development, and any underperforming teachers are given additional support. The standards of teaching are improving throughout the school.
- The school is still developing its methods for tracking students' progress and is not yet efficient at quickly identifying all students who need additional opportunities to improve their learning.
- The school has acted decisively to strengthen the leadership in English and mathematics. As a result of the improvements in planning and teaching, students are now making better progress. All subject leaders are now working effectively to manage teaching in their areas and are securing improvements.
- The school has analysed its own strengths and weaknesses, and drawn up improvement plans. It has been over-optimistic at times in its recognition of the advances made, but the foundations have been made for further improvements.
- The school promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through a variety of activities, including assemblies, extra-curricular activities and activities delivered through subjects. For example, in music, students work with an African drummer, and in history, Holocaust survivors visited the school. Students confirmed that the school had been particularly successful in raising awareness about e-safety matters. The school promotes democracy and British values, for example through activities on a day dedicated to 'vision and values' and by participating in the UK Youth Parliament Elections.
- The school's curriculum is broad and balanced, offering a good range of subjects to interest students and prepare them for their future lives.
- The school has invested heavily in improving students' reading skills and progress is evident; students read confidently and well. More attention needs to be given to match this to writing and spelling skills.
- The school has used the funding allocated to disadvantaged students in a variety of ways to support their progress. The school has been successful in narrowing the gap between disadvantaged students and other pupils nationally, particularly in English. The use of this funding is not closely evaluated and the school accepts that there is still more to be done to close the gaps.
- The school works closely with local primary schools to ensure that the transition of Year 6 students is smooth. On completion of Year 11, nearly every student continues with their education or training at local colleges and sixth form centres. The school provides very good careers guidance and support to help students make these choices.
- There is good liaison between the school and other providers to ensure that the students being educated off site are making good progress on appropriate courses. Nearly all of these students then progress to further training and have enhanced employment opportunities.
- The school offers an extensive range of opportunities for extra-curricular activities. There is active support for students in a range of sports, including golf and martial arts; students have been encouraged to reach regional and national levels. Other opportunities include participation in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, drama, music and mathematics clubs, and residential trips to Wales, Europe, the USA and Nepal.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is generally well informed about the work of the school by receiving reports from senior leaders and subject leaders. The governing body also consults an independent advisor about the school's progress.
 - Governors ensure that they keep their training up to date and so they are competent when examining data about the performance of the school compared to others locally and nationally. Members of the governing body have regular visits to the school to make first-hand contact with students and teachers. Governors challenge and support the senior leaders effectively and with optimism, and this has helped to bring about some improvements in teaching and students' progress. They make sure that the pay of teachers is linked to the progress of students.

- The governing body meet all their current statutory duties, including arrangements for the safeguarding of students. The school manages financial assets so that staff and resources are generally used effectively.
- Governors realise that it has taken a while to address weakness in students' achievement, teaching and in monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of school leaders.
- Governors know how the pupil premium funding has been spent, but are not clear about the impact of the particular measures taken.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. In some lessons time is wasted because of low-level disruption, especially where the lesson activities have not been well planned and matched to the needs of all students. When lesson materials are engaging, students take far more interest in the learning and make better progress.
- When students are reminded by staff about the need to settle and focus on tasks, they do so, but the attitudes of students are not consistently positive.
- The conduct of some students when moving around the school requires improvement. Although students are well mannered and polite to staff and visitors, they do not always show respect to each other. Movement around the school site is not always orderly and students were heard by inspectors using unkind and derogatory language towards each other on several occasions.
- Exclusion rates have fallen since the last inspection and are now in line with the national average. The sanction is only used when no other course of action is appropriate. The school has developed ways to help students who have been excluded to successfully re-join their classes as soon as possible.
- Most students arrive promptly for lessons, generally with the equipment that they need to get on with their learning activities.
- All users respect the school buildings and facilities; for example, there was a total absence of litter in the school buildings and grounds.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. The school takes active steps to prevent all forms of bullying. There have been few recorded incidents since the previous inspection. Students confirmed that bullying, including racism, is unusual. They were confident that if it does occur in school, reported incidents are dealt with effectively. Students are given clear and practical advice about how they may keep themselves safe from risks including cyber bullying and exploitation.
- Students, their parents and school staff all agree that the school provides a safe environment. The school has a programme of lessons to support personal development and promotes attitudes that are tolerant of differences, including race, ethnicity and sexual orientation.
- Students told inspectors that they feel well supported and they know where they can seek help if they need it.
- Attendance at school is now in line with the national average and has improved since the last inspection. The rate of persistent absence has declined over the last three years and is now close to the national average. The school has developed good systems for following up any patterns of absence and has taken decisive and effective actions to bring about these improvements.
- The school makes sure that all students have equality of opportunity and it actively tackles potential sources of discrimination.
- A small number of 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 quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The school has made improvements in standards of teaching since the last inspection but these have not yet secured good achievement for all students in all subjects, particularly in mathematics.
- Students with lower starting points are not always given tasks with sufficient challenge and they spend too long repeating work without moving on; this slows the pace of learning. Where teachers have clear and high expectations of students, they respond more positively and learn well with greater confidence.
- In some lessons the tasks do not engage students' interest so that students do not focus sufficiently on their learning to make good progress. From this disinterest some low-level disruption arises.

- The marking of students' work is inconsistent across subjects and classes. Inspectors saw some very good examples of marking and feedback where students responded positively to advice, for example in the feedback sheets stuck in science books. In some classes the marking was less detailed and many students ignore any advice they are given, and so they do not make good progress.
- In the most effective teaching of mathematics and of English, there was wide evidence that the tasks given to groups of students were planned to be not too hard or too easy for all groups of students. Consequently, current students are making secure and rapid progress. Teachers are particularly skilled in extending the most able students, who are then making the most rapid progress.
- Some teachers have encouraged effective ways for students to help each other, for example in information and communication technology, students act as 'test buddies' to review each other's work and suggest improvements to it.
- The school has dedicated time for younger students to read, and has invested in a scheme to monitor their progress in reading. A selection of students read to an inspector with confidence, and the evidence seen across the school confirms that the teaching of reading skills is good.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The achievement of all students is not yet consistently good. In particular, disadvantaged students who are entitled to additional support through the pupil premium funding and those students who have low starting points do not make sufficient progress.
- Overall, students in every year group throughout the school have joined the school with skills and abilities below levels typical for their age.
- The school has worked successfully to improve teaching and secure better progress by students. The most recent examination results are in line with the national average for English, and still slightly below average in mathematics.
- Within the school there are no clear gaps in the performance of boys and girls, and students with disabilities or special educational needs achieve as well as their peers.
- The school's examination results in 2014 were the best it has ever achieved in English, mathematics and several other subjects.
- Progress of students in mathematics has improved since the last inspection but does not yet match the progress expected, compared to all students nationally. Inspectors saw evidence that current students are making better progress.
- The school has worked successfully to secure improvements in English and now its students are making progress as good as that of all students nationally.
- Disadvantaged students are given help to catch up and the school has been successful in reducing the progress gaps in English. In mathematics these progress gaps are reducing, but not as quickly as they are in English. Although the school's disadvantaged students are catching up with other students within the school, there is a bigger gap with other students in other schools because the school's overall progress have been less good than the national average. The most recent published data, for 2013, shows a gap in English of nearly a GCSE grade for disadvantaged students compared to the school's other students, and in the same year the gap between the school's students was about half a grade in mathematics. Compared to other students nationally, the gap for GCSE English in 2013 was just over one grade, and for mathematics the gap was about one and a half grades.
- The most able students in the school are now matching the achievements of similar students nationally. In 2014 there was a big increase in the number of students who gained the highest GCSE grades.
- Overall, the progress of current students is good but it is better for those who had higher starting points. Those who have lower starting points are not making progress at the same rate, and this requires improvement.
- The progress of students who are disabled or who have special educational needs is good. Targeted provision for them ensures that they are able to achieve well.
- The school checks that students who attend alternative centres make good progress in their courses. Nearly all of these students make good progress and gain qualifications in the courses they are following.

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	138616
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	451249

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	765
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Diane Day
Principal	Philip Thomas
Date of previous school inspection	6–7 June 2013
Telephone number	01305 817000
Fax number	01305 815851
Email address	office@weyvalley.dorset.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

