

Wyvern Academy

Dorchester Road, Weymouth, DT3 5AL

Inspection dates 8–9 July 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good		2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good		2
Quality of teaching	Good		2
Achievement of pupils	Good		2
Early years provision	Good		2
Sixth form provision	Good		2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The pupils at the school are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment by the time they leave.
- All groups of pupils throughout the school make good progress in all areas of learning, particularly communication, physical development and in managing their behaviour.
- All aspects of work in the sixth form prepare students well to relate to others, participate in the local community and gain workplace skills.
- Children in the early years provision make a good start to their education. Their skills are checked carefully and they make good progress in all areas of learning and development. This is because there are high expectations of what they can achieve.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They are polite, motivated to learn in lessons and conduct themselves well around the school. Pupils know that they are safe at school and that adults will look after them.
- Governors have made sure that the strategic direction of the school continues through the appointment of a new headteacher.
- Teaching is good. Activities are adapted well to individual pupils' needs, continually ensuring that pupils make good progress in acquiring skills. The class teaching teams know each individual exceptionally well so that all their educational, communication and medical needs are met.
- Leaders and managers, supported by governors, make sure that the school continues to improve by training staff in teaching techniques that improve pupils' progress. These well-planned actions have made sure that disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as their peers at this school.
- There is a high standard of care for all pupils at the school. This is appreciated by parents and communicated daily through the home-school books so that parents know exactly what has happened at school.
- Parents are very supportive of the work of the school. They have good opportunities to learn about new developments in teaching at the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, teaching does not enable all pupils to demonstrate their full range of skills. This is because activities are insufficiently challenging or too much help is given to pupils.
- Leaders do not use a wide enough range of evidence to evaluate the quality of teaching and middle leaders are not always involved. Plans for improvement do not have precise targets for leaders to check how well the school is improving.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 16 lessons or parts of lessons, 10 of which were observed jointly with the acting headteacher or assistant headteacher. In addition, short visits were made to classrooms and inspectors listened to a number of pupils reading in lessons. The inspectors reviewed samples of pupils' work in books to check their progress.
- Meetings were held with the acting headteacher, assistant headteacher, middle leaders, the Chair and four other members of the Governing Body, an external consultant, and two groups of pupils. The inspector held a telephone conversation with a member of the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of the 26 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. They also analysed the 71 responses to the staff questionnaire. There was an email from a parent and a local residential provider.
- The inspectors looked at school documents, including information relating to checks on pupils' progress, plans for school improvement, records of the monitoring of teaching, records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance, the minutes of governing body meetings and safeguarding documents.

Inspection team

Janet Dinsmore, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Andrew Buckton

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Wyvern Academy is a special school. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. Pupils have severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties. Almost a half has autistic spectrum conditions and a fifth has complex conditions. A few have significant social, emotional and mental health difficulties.
- The academy is part of a cooperative trust with the neighbouring secondary and primary schools who share the same campus. Trust partners also include the local authority, Cooperative College, Weymouth College and a local social care provider. There is also pre-school provision on the campus, Scallywags, which is inspected separately.
- Wyvern Academy converted to an academy school on 2 October 2012. When its predecessor school, Wyvern School, was last inspected by Ofsted, in September 2011, it was judged to be good overall.
- Wyvern Academy is an active partner in the local teaching school alliance, Teaching Alliance of Dorset Special Schools.
- The deputy headteacher was acting headteacher at the time of the inspection. The previous headteacher has resigned and a new headteacher has been appointed to start in September 2015.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for pupil premium (additional funding for those known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority) is above average.
- There is part-time provision for Nursery children and full-time provision for Reception children in the early years class.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- There are small numbers in each year group. There were very few disadvantaged pupils in either Year 6 or Year 11 in 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching by making sure that activities in all lessons:
 - provide sufficient challenge for all pupils
 - enable pupils to demonstrate a wide range of skills
 - are designed so that pupils complete them without too much adult help.
- Improve leadership and management by making sure that:
 - precise targets are set in the plans for improving the school so that leaders and managers, including governors, can accurately check how actions are making a difference
 - a wide range of evidence is used to check the quality of teaching in all areas of the school
 - middle leaders are fully involved in checking the quality of teaching in the parts of the school for which they have responsibility.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The senior leadership team is continuing to make improvements to the school. The members are maintaining the ethos of the school as an inclusive community that values each individual, promotes consistently high expectations of behaviour and seeks to improve the standard of teaching in all parts of the school. Equality of opportunity, valuing diversity, fostering good relations and tackling discrimination are core values evident throughout the school and its practice.
- The performance of teachers is managed well and support is provided if there is any underperformance. Teachers' pay is related well to the progress that pupils make and their contribution to the work of the school.
- The range of subjects and the way they are taught are continually being developed, for example the physical development programme promoting functional mobility for daily tasks and all forms of augmented communication. This makes sure that new developments in technology and understanding of pupils' disabilities continue to improve the progress of pupils. Leaders and managers have made sure that staff are trained well for these and share responsibilities for these widely in the staff team.
- The curriculum prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain, for example promoting tolerance and awareness of other religions and cultures in both lessons and special events.
- There are excellent partnerships and strong team work between school, nursing staff and speech and language therapy staff. These make sure services are fully integrated into the school so that pupils receive the precise support they need for their medical conditions and communication development.
- Pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up premium are spent effectively. For example, electronic tablets are provided for communication and specific programmes that support those with autistic spectrum conditions to accelerate progress for these pupils.
- Primary sport funding is spent effectively to provide additional training for staff that promotes pupils' movement and physical development well.
- Middle leaders carry out their responsibilities effectively to check how subjects are taught and in supporting teachers' skills in each section of the school. However, middle leaders do not yet have responsibility for checking the overall quality of teaching in areas of the school that they lead.
- Senior leaders use data collected to show pupils' progress in the main subjects effectively. However, they do not use this to set measurable, challenging targets for the overall development of the school. They make sure that each pupil receives precise support for their needs, but have not yet fully evaluated the new programmes that are in place.
- Leaders and managers make sure that parents receive good daily communication about their children. Parents' views are sought and taken into account in all aspects of the school's work and parents speak highly of this. This is particularly evident when students are moving on to the next stage after the sixth form. This is done through a variety of work experience provided that enables students to make informed choices about their next steps.
- Statutory requirements for safeguarding are met and are effective. The school clearly prioritises safety and protection from harm and risk for pupils and staff in all the daily practice and procedures.
- The school has strong partnerships with other local special schools so that they can check assessments. They also provide outreach support to mainstream schools to train staff and support provision for pupils with disabilities and special educational needs.
- The local authority knows that this school is effective at providing outreach in other schools and as part of the partnership of special schools. It is aware that there have been changes in leadership during this year and provided support to the governing body for the appointment of a new headteacher.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors make sure that they have a range of improving skills to hold the school to account by auditing these each year. This ensures that they are effective in their role. They fulfil financial reporting requirements and use resources well.
 - Governors receive regular and accurate reports from senior and middle leaders about all aspects of the school's work. They know about the quality of teaching at the school and make sure that teachers are rewarded appropriately. They know how any underperformance is challenged and they manage the performance of the headteacher well. They have secured a new substantive headteacher for September 2015. Governors know how to compare the school's data about pupils' progress with national progression data and, therefore, how the school compares with similar schools nationally. They know that all groups of pupils make good progress.
 - Governors can identify how they question and challenge the school, but plans for improvement do not

have clear targets to enable them to check that actions make a difference.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils enjoy learning and demonstrate the ability to concentrate on activities. They say that bullying is non-existent because, as one pupil explained, 'They are all friends and they help each other.' Pupils support each other well, encouraging recollection of the previous day's activities, for example.
- Pupils contribute to decisions about activities in school through the school council. They are aware of how democracy works.
- Relationships throughout the school are strong. It is a learning community characterised by mutual support and respect.
- There are robust procedures for pupils whose social and communication difficulties mean that their behaviour is more difficult to control. Class routines and visual symbols are used well and as pupils mature this helps them to manage their own behaviour well.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The school keeps accurate records of incidents when pupils present challenging behaviour. They use these to adjust what is provided and reduce these.
- All staff are trained well for medical procedures and all aspects of safe handling, so that the pupils are kept safe and well cared for. There is a nurse at the school four days a week and a strong partnership with health services for those pupils with complex medical needs.
- Making sure that all risks are managed well is a strong characteristic of all that the school does. Risk assessments are accurate and support pupils and staff well in the many activities, both within school and when pupils go out for a wide variety of learning experiences. For example, there are music days and weekly trips for sixth form students.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers use assessment well to plan activities that make sure pupils make good progress. The small steps of progress that pupils can achieve are fully understood by all staff, so that they can be incorporated into a variety of activities.
- Class teaching teams know the pupils extremely well. Learning activities are planned and adapted to meet each individual's need. These help pupils to make the progress of which they are capable and minimise poor behaviour. Staff record progress well against the targets that are set so that any slight slowing can be speeded up.
- Teachers make good use of time in lessons and pupils know what to expect so that learning is maximised. All parts of the school day are used well to provide learning experiences because all staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- A wide range of means of communication is used effectively, including signs, symbols, routines, electronic tablets and 'eyegaze' technology. All staff are trained effectively so the technology is used seamlessly in learning activities and each individual pupil makes good progress.
- Reading skills at all levels are taught well and some older pupils can also apply these to words in Spanish. Literacy skills are promoted through all subjects and pupils use these particularly when using computer programmes.
- Pupils learn to count and use money. They have frequent opportunities to do this when using the school shop.
- Profoundly disabled pupils' attention and emerging communication skills are particularly closely checked so that their progress is good. A wide range of sensory activities is well planned and used for this.
- Pupils' physical development is carefully checked and programmes individually designed so that pupils can become as independent as possible. Teaching assistants throughout the school are trained well to make sure this happens throughout the school day.
- Occasionally, activities are not challenging enough to speed up progress and enable pupils to develop a wider range of skills. Activities are not always designed for pupils to be able to complete these without a lot of adult help.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make good progress. There is no difference in the progress of disadvantaged pupils and their peers at this school in any subject.
- Pupils gain a range of accredited awards, demonstrating that they have acquired skills for work and functional literacy and numeracy skills. The most-able pupils' abilities are recognised and developed throughout the school.
- Pupils with severe learning difficulties make good progress throughout the school. They have frequent opportunities to practise the skills they need for beginning to live as independently as possible by the time they leave.
- Pupils with medical difficulties make good progress because learning is continually promoted in all daily activities, particularly for all aspects of communication and literacy development.
- Pupils have a love of books. They use books frequently throughout the day. They also use reading skills well to communicate and employ a variety of information and communication technology devices and programmes to do this.
- Pupils with autistic spectrum conditions or significant social, emotional and mental health difficulties make good progress in learning. They learn to communicate successfully and follow procedures that minimise their anxiety effectively.
- Disabled pupils make good progress in physical development and there are notable examples of pupils gaining independent walking skills.
- Early communication skills for the most profoundly disabled pupils accelerate quickly. All groups of pupils make good progress in communication skills. Those who do not use spoken language utilise a wide range of devices and programmes that are well designed for their individual needs. This is particularly effective at minimising frustration and anxiety.

The early years provision is good

- Children make a good start to their education in the early years class. Staff are highly skilled at assessing their capabilities and making sure that they receive exactly the right forms of support. They are well prepared to move into Year 1 because they understand the sequence of activities in the day and are beginning to use appropriate communication systems for themselves.
- There are strong partnerships with parents so that systems for communication, for example, can also be used at home, so reinforcing learning. Class routines are well established, resulting in good behaviour.
- Targets for children's learning and development are continually reviewed so that their progress is good in all areas. The staff team is well managed to make sure that this happens. Staff are highly skilled at adapting learning quickly to avoid anxiety or poor behaviour. Teaching is good.
- Leadership is effective. Leaders make sure that the children are safe and that all necessary medical procedures are carried out safely.

The sixth form provision is good

- There are frequent opportunities for students to gain experiences outside school and there are strong partnerships with local colleges and employees to do this. Students also run a school shop and café so that skills are practised in a purposeful way.
- The skills that students need to relate to others, travel and live as independently as possible are at the core of activities in the sixth form. The teaching is good, clearly focused on checking that good progress is being made towards the highest level of accredited award that each student can achieve.
- Students are enthusiastic and articulate, through whatever form of communication they use, and keen to tell of their achievements. They are increasingly supportive of each other's achievements. Behaviour is good and staff ensure that students are safe, both within school and in all other placements or activities.
- Students have good opportunities to try a range of different work environments so that they can make informed choices when they leave. There are strong partnerships with the range of settings that students will move on to, so that transition is good.
- Leaders and managers are continually improving the curriculum and teaching to suit individual students. This means that students are successful at the school and proud of their achievements when they leave.

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	138716
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	449453

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

Type of school	All-through
School category	Academy alternative provision converter
Age range of pupils	2–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	84
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	21
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cindy Lane
Acting Headteacher	David Tomlinson
Date of previous school inspection	NA
Telephone number	01305 817917
Fax number	01305 770965
Email address	office@wyvern.dorset.sch.uk

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