

The Westgate School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	116407
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	379253
Inspection dates	12–13 July 2012
Lead inspector	John Seal HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The registered childcare provision, managed by the governing body, was inspected under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006. The inspection of boarding provision was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for boarding schools.

Type of school	Modern (non-selective)
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1100
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Jeremy Brecknell
Headteacher	Mr Paul Nicholson
Date of previous school inspection	18 March 2009
School address	Cheriton Road Winchester Hampshire SO22 5AZ
Telephone number	01962 854757
Fax number	01962 840080
Email address	contact@westgate.hants.sch.uk

Registered childcare provision	Rotherly Nursery
Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision	55
Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision	18 March 2009

Age group	11–16
Inspection date(s)	12–13 July 2012
Inspection number	379253

Boarding/Residential provision	Rotherly House
Social care unique reference number	SC012023
Social care inspector	Anna Williams



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Introduction

Inspection team

John Seal

Her Majesty's inspector

Desmond Dunne

Additional inspector

Jason Wye

Additional inspector

Una Stevens

Additional inspector

Cyndi Millband

Additional inspector

Anna Williams

Social Care Regulatory Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 36 teachers teaching 37 lessons, some of which were joint observations with the headteacher and other senior members of staff. Inspectors spoke to different students in meetings, during lessons and at break times. Meetings were held with members of the governing body and senior and middle leaders. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online Parent View questionnaire in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at the school development plan, the safeguarding policies and the minutes of the governing body meetings. They analysed 204 questionnaires returned by parents and carers and others completed by students, boarders and staff.

Information about the school

The school is larger than the average sized secondary school and holds specialist status for science. The vast majority of students are of White British heritage. A very small number of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds and speak English as an additional language. The percentage of students who are known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion of students who are supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is broadly in line with that found in most schools. The majority of these students have specific or social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school meets the government's current floor standards for academic performance which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress. The school has boarding provision for 26 students, of whom a few are from overseas. The governing body manages an on-site childcare and nursery provision which was inspected at the same time as the school. Within the nursery, there is a small proportion of children who are disabled or who have special educational needs. The nursery currently has a few children who are in the early stages of speaking English. The inspection took place when there were no Key Stage 4 pupils on site. Students in Year 10 were all on work experience placements and Year 11 students had left school after sitting their GCSE examinations. The future of the boarding provision is currently going through a local authority review and a consultation for developing an all-through school for four to 16 year olds is underway.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of students	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of students	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. It is not yet outstanding because students' progress is not consistently rapid and sustained in all key stages. The effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. The overall effectiveness of boarding is satisfactory.
- Achievement is good. Attainment in nearly all subjects at the end of Key Stage 4 is higher than average. Standards in English are significantly above those seen nationally, and in mathematics well above average. Students make good progress overall, but progress is less rapid in Key Stage 3 than Key Stage 4. Most groups of students, including disabled students and those who have special educational needs, are making better progress than similar groups nationally.
- Teaching is good. A small but growing number of lessons are outstanding, while the majority of them are good. The teaching in a minority of lessons is satisfactory and in a very small number, inadequate. The weaker lessons occur when teachers' explanations or instructions are too long and this prevents students from having enough time to develop skills for independent learning. Not all teachers use assessment information to plan work that is well matched to students' different needs and abilities.
- Students' behaviour is good over time. Generally students are very polite, courteous and well behaved around the school and in lessons. A small number of lessons are occasionally disrupted by low-level misbehaviour but when this occurs it is tackled effectively by staff. The behaviour of boarders is good although the promotion of their safety is satisfactory.
- Leadership and management are good. The headteacher's vision for the school is clearly communicated and understood by the school community. Senior leaders, most middle leaders and the governing body know the school well. The school has highly effective systems and procedures for monitoring and evaluating teachers' performance. The leadership of boarding is satisfactory. This is a rapidly improving area because senior leaders have recognised the need to strengthen the links between education and boarding provision and have made tangible improvements in a short space of time.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure all students' progress, especially in Key Stage 3, consistently matches the best in the school by:
 - using assessment information more precisely in lessons to plan work that is matched closely to the different needs and abilities of all students
 - ensuring that students are given enough time and support to develop their skills to learn independently.
- The school must ensure that it meets the national minimum standards for boarding schools which have not been met.

Main report

Achievement of students

Students' attainment on entry is consistently above average. Their attainment at the end of Key Stage 4, particularly in English and mathematics has a track record of being significantly above average. Over their time in the school, students' progress is accelerating in the majority of subjects. Consequently, their attainment in the majority of subjects is higher than average. However, evidence from lesson observations, students' work and the school's information about student achievement indicates that in the past their progress across most subjects in Key Stage 3 was inconsistent. The school was able to provide effective support strategies for students in Year 10 which enabled them to make up lost ground and achieve well. In the past two years the school has improved its systems for tracking students' progress and as a result, progress in the majority of subjects in Key Stage 3 is accelerating. There are still a few subjects where progress is slower than expected given the students' capabilities; for example, modern foreign languages. Students' literacy and communication skills are above those expected for their age; a good example of these can be seen in students' note-taking skills in different subjects. Most students know what they need to do to gain the next level or improve their work. Other groups, including disabled students and those who have special educational needs and those whose attainment was lower at the start of Year 7, are making the same progress as their peers.

A high proportion of students who returned questionnaires and spoke to inspectors feel positive about the progress they make. This is supported by the large number of parents and carers, whose questionnaire responses supported the view that their children make good progress.

Quality of teaching

The proportion of good and better lessons is increasing. As a result, the majority of lessons are well taught and a small proportion of these are exemplary. Although

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some inconsistencies remain within and between subjects, there are a growing number of lessons that highlight a set of consistently effective features. These include clear learning objectives, teachers' good subject knowledge and good behaviour and receptive attitudes to learning from the students. The school has been focusing successfully on developing a range different teaching styles which match the needs and abilities of the students more closely and these are evident in a growing number of lessons. The most effective teachers have very high expectations of all students. These are reflected in challenging targets which are well known to students, and lessons that include practical activities involving paired and group discussions about the work. Good examples of this practice were seen in a range of subjects including English, mathematics, science and physical education. In an outstanding mathematics lesson, Year 9 students were able to use extensive mathematical vocabulary and confidently explain their reasoning. In a science lesson exploring particles, Year 7 students made outstanding progress because of the teacher's high expectations. Students told the inspector that their teacher 'helps us to understand complex science concepts'. Disabled students and those who have special educational needs are taught well and make good progress from their individual starting points.

Where lessons are less effective, teachers take too much of the lesson time to provide overlong explanations and instructions. This leaves less time for students to spend on their learning. Lesson planning is not based sufficiently on students' different abilities, needs and prior learning. When this happens, more-able students are not sufficiently challenged and those who require more support are not provided with appropriate prompts or structure. Consequently, students' progress slows down and in a very small number of cases they become restless and disengaged. The school is focusing on improving the quality of written feedback on students' work and has been successful to a great extent, although mistakes and misconceptions in students' work are sometimes not corrected.

Students take a positive approach to working collaboratively during lessons and positive reactions to discussions about different topics. In art, students work with interest on comparing western and eastern influences, and in religious education students' awareness of different religions and cultures is well developed.

A very high proportion of parents and carers who returned questionnaires agreed that teaching was good and helped their children to learn well. This was supported by students who spoke to inspectors and those who completed questionnaires who were also generally positive about teaching.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Around the school, in the boarding provision and in lessons, students demonstrate positive attitudes and enthusiasm for their learning. This is seen in their above average and improving attendance over time. Students frequently turn up to their lessons on time. There have been no permanent exclusions for a significant period of time, and the small number of fixed-term exclusions is decreasing. Recorded racist

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incidents are very rare. Students have a good awareness of different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based harassment. Students told inspectors that overall, incidents of bullying are very unusual and when they occur are usually tackled well by staff. Senior leaders are working successfully to improve the school's procedures for dealing with any rare incidents of bullying. The recent appointment of the Information, Advice and Guidance Co-ordinator is widely recognised as a good step in the promotion of positive relationships and offers even more personalised support and guidance for vulnerable students. The behaviour of boarders is good and relationships with boarding staff are positive. Most students, including boarders, told inspectors that they feel safe and know of an adult they could turn to if they needed help. The majority of parents, carers, students and boarders who returned questionnaires or spoke to inspectors felt that the school, including boarding provision, was a safe place to be and cared well for students.

Leadership and management

The headteacher's vision for the school has been communicated effectively by senior leaders and, increasingly, the middle leadership team. A clear and cohesive whole-school approach to improving the quality of teaching has resulted in more students making good or better progress. Teachers, including those who are newly qualified, have received effective professional development. The headteacher's mantra of 'no excuses' ensures that all staff are held to account for students' achievement effectively. This is carried out through rigorous monitoring and evaluation procedures which are integral to the performance management of staff. Students' achievement is monitored closely and the systems for tracking their progress are accurate and effective, comparing the performance of individual students and different groups with national norms.

The school's areas of strengths and what it needs to do to improve further are accurately identified and shared with the whole school community. The governing body is clearly aware of what the school needs to do to improve further and is ambitious for the school. It holds the school to account very effectively. The curriculum is good and a strength of the school. It offers a range of flexible, personalised options for students and they receive high quality information, advice and guidance on courses at the school and the next stage of their education. The school's specialist status has provided good support for different subjects and effective input to events such as careers days and scientific themes for other subjects, for example English, mathematics and drama. The promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and is also a notable strength of the school. It is a tangible aspect of school life and is seen in assemblies, the wide range of cultural events in art, music and drama and the promotion of collaborative approaches to learning.

Senior leaders and managers, including the governing body, promote equality effectively and tackle discrimination appropriately. This can be seen in the robust approach the school has taken to monitoring the progress of all groups of students

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who may be at risk of underachieving and by providing them with timely support. As a result, the progress of these groups, for example those whose attainment is below average on entry to the school, disabled students and those who have special educational needs, is accelerating. The school's arrangements for safeguarding students and boarders meet statutory requirements. The improving track record of rates of progress for all groups, the continuing above average examination results at the end of Key Stage 4 and the effective impact of leaders and managers at all levels indicate that the school is on a trajectory of continued improvement.

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The Early Years Foundation Stage delivered in the registered childcare provision

Babies and children are provided with a safe, nurturing and secure environment in which they are given effective care and attention. The nursery has close and effective links with parents and carers resulting in positive relationships and very high levels of parental regard for the setting. Children’s good starting points, allied to the thoughtful care and attention they receive, help them to make good sustained progress in all areas of learning. For example, there are regular opportunities for children to practise letter names and sounds. There is a good team approach across the setting which enables all of the well-qualified staff to know the children well. However, although learning activities based on a good range of resources are well structured to promote good progress in all areas of learning, more formal planning and assessment are underdeveloped. The outdoor learning environment is rich and exciting but children’s access to it is hindered by the limitations of the building. After a period of uncertainty and turbulence, the nursery is now led effectively by the present nursery leaders and on course for further improvements. The leaders are clear about what they need to do to improve the setting further. Safeguarding policies and procedures meet requirements and there are strong links with external agencies. As a result of the good leadership and management, the strong and cohesive team has created a caring, warm and friendly place for children and babies to develop safely and happily.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage of the registered childcare provision, inspected under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage for the registered provision	2

Boarding provision

Provision and effectiveness of boarding are satisfactory, but the outcomes for boarders are good because of the good educational and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in the school. In addition, provision is beginning to improve because of the recent attention from senior leaders. Accommodation and staffing levels are of sufficient quality to provide a safe environment. However, one of the minimum standards for health and safety regarding fire regulations is not met because fire safety was compromised by keeping an external fire door ajar. As a result of the inspection findings senior managers are taking immediate action to

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remedy this.

Boarders say they enjoy their boarding experiences and are well cared for over time and if they are unwell. Consequently, boarders’ individual health and welfare needs are clearly identified and fully met. Contact with families and those who are significant to them are supported through a wide range of communications. Boarders are well prepared for further education and adult life because there is a good range of opportunities to learn everyday life skills. For example, they contribute to the running of the boarding provision through weekly house meetings. This has seen changes to interior decoration, menus and activity plans. Boarders have access to a suitable range of activities, including some which are off-site such as shopping, swimming and local walks. The talents and interests of boarders are well promoted and developed. As a result, their confidence and self-esteem are very secure. Boarders feel they learn about different cultures through sharing the boarding experience with those from overseas. In addition, different cultures and traditions are celebrated through themed food evenings and positive promotion of religious and cultural events. Consequently, the boarding community is harmonious, tolerant and inclusive. Not all boarders are aware of how to contact an independent person outside of the teaching and boarding staff. As a result boarders are not supported as well as they should be if they need to speak to an independent adult about any worries or concerns they may have about school. Recent moves to address this have resulted in a member of the teaching staff who also works part time within the boarding house. This offers a good link between school and boarding. Boarding staff are not yet fully involved in this leading to links with academic performance being underdeveloped. The senior leadership team recognises this and has developed a sound, specific and targeted action plan to further improve school and boarding communication and links.

National minimum standards

The school must meet the following national minimum standards for boarding schools:

- Identify at least one person other than a parent and carer, outside the boarding and teaching staff of the school, who boarders may contact directly about personal problems or concerns at school. Boarders need to know who this person is, and how to contact them (NMS 2.3).
- Comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (as referenced in ‘Boarding Schools National Minimum Standards’) and any requirement set out in regulations relating to school premises (NMS 7.1).

These are the grades for the boarding provision

Overall effectiveness of the boarding experience/Overall effectiveness of the residential experience	3
Outcomes for boarders	2

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Quality of boarding provision and care/Quality of residential provision and care	3
Boarders' safety/Residential pupils' safety	3
Leadership and management of boarding/Leadership and management of the residential provision	3

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons, and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



16 July 2012

Dear Children and Students

Inspection of The Westgate School, Winchester, SO22 5AZ

It was very enjoyable to meet you when we visited your school recently. We met some of you in lessons and in meetings, observed you in lessons and talked to you around the school. We judged your school to be a good school. What stops it from being outstanding is that many of you, particularly in Key Stage 3, are capable of learning even more than you do in most lessons. The particularly good things we found about your school are:

- your good behaviour and positive attitudes towards learning and each other
- your attendance, which is above average
- the above average results you achieve in GCSE examinations
- most of your lessons are good or better
- your headteacher, the team of leaders and managers have made effective changes to the way you learn and work together.

We have spoken to your headteacher, senior staff and governors about what they are doing to make things even better for you. We have asked them to:

- make sure that all teachers plan activities that match your needs and abilities even more closely
- give shorter explanations and instructions to make sure you have enough time to become even better at learning independently
- improve the links between the school and boarding provision
- make sure that the fire regulations in the boarding provision are met.

We all hope you continue to enjoy your time at school and wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely
John Seal
Her Majesty's Inspector

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