



Worle Community School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 109313
LEA North Somerset
Inspection number 278181
Inspection dates 19 October 2005 to 20 October 2005
Reporting inspector Daniel Towl HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Redwing Drive
School category	Community		Mead Vale
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		Weston-super-Mare, North Somerset BS22 8XX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01934 510777
Number on roll	1478	Fax number	01934 520941
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Nigel Dean
Date of previous inspection	22 November 1999	Headteacher	Mr Trevor John Bailey

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11 to 16	19 October 2005 - 20 October 2005	278181

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Worle Community School is a large comprehensive school in Worle on the eastern outskirts of Weston-super-Mare. The school has expanded recently and now has 1500 boys and girls aged between 11 and 16 years of age. Most of the large employers have closed down and in many ways Weston-super-Mare is an economically depressed area. The school has achieved Specialist Arts College status as well as being part of a wider educational partnership with other schools in the area. This has broadened effectively the range of activities and opportunities to support learning that the school is able to offer to its students. There are very small numbers of students from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of students who are eligible for free school meals is below average. There is little movement of students to and from other schools.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory. The school is accurate in its evaluation of how well it is doing. The headteacher and senior staff know where the strengths and weaknesses are and what needs to be done to improve. It is rightly proud of its care and curriculum for students but a lack of rigour in checking the quality of teaching and learning in classes has meant that some students do not make the progress that they should. Not enough students make good progress. In 2004 the standards reached were broadly average. The proportion of students reaching the higher levels was below average. There were improvements in performance in 2005 for both 14 and 16 year olds following additional support and developments in some departments. While teaching overall is satisfactory, not all teachers have high enough expectations of students and lessons are not always sufficiently challenging or stimulating for them. When lessons are lively, the students respond well and learning is effective. Worle Community School is a safe community that cares well for its students. Behaviour overall is good. The curriculum provides a wide range of activities to meet the needs and interests of students. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Bring more rigour into teaching to raise expectation and challenge for all students.
- Rigorously monitor teaching and learning and ensure that the improvement plan is sharply focused on this area of the school's work.
- Ensure that all groups of students have challenging targets and make good progress towards them.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

On entry into Year 7, students have average attainment. At the end of Year 9, standards are broadly average although in 2004 the school was ranked in the bottom 10% of schools for achievement of students between 11 and 14 years old. There was significant improvement in the standards reached in the 2005 tests because of improved performance by the English, mathematics and science departments. More able students do not make adequate progress through Years 7 to 9. Some girls of middle and upper ability are not performing as well as they should.

By the time students leave the school, the standards they reach are broadly average but the number of students gaining A* and A grades at GCSE is too low. Girls in Year 11 do better than boys overall. Within the 2005 GCSE results, there were increases in the proportion of students gaining A* - C grades of between 10 and 32% because of additional support to departments. French, German, business studies, food technology, drama, fine art, information and communication technology short course, mathematics and media studies all improved.

Not enough students are achieving the most challenging targets. The school is working on a new programme of assessment, target setting and monitoring but this has not yet had a significant effect on raising the achievement of all students. In the 2005 GCSE examinations more students on the 'Aim Higher' programme, reached their targets than other groups of students. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities and those who are most vulnerable make satisfactory and sometimes good progress because of effective support and guidance.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development of the students is good. They take opportunities when given to be independent, work cooperatively and enjoy roles of responsibility, both in school and in the local community. They are confident, voicing their views in lessons and through the effective year, school and community councils, knowing that their opinions are considered. The 'buddy' system is highly valued by those who give and receive support. They are proud of their achievements.

Students' behaviour is good and exclusions are below average. A small number of parents and students express concerns about behaviour and the disruption to learning in some lessons. The school is anxious to help the students to create their own policy to deter bullying. The students enjoy being at school and appreciate each other's views. They are well prepared for the workplace or future education. Attendance overall has improved and is now satisfactory. Because of the very effective encouragement and guidance provided in the learning support unit, there has been a marked improvement in the attendance, attitudes and learning of some students who were less inclined to come to school. The students conduct themselves safely and are aware of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. However, the canteen menu does not allow the students to eat as healthily as they should. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, with many opportunities provided for them to explore different lifestyles.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers plan lessons effectively. They ensure that each lesson starts with clear objectives. However, the work set does not always match the varying abilities of the students. Teachers and learning support assistants offer good one-to-one support where students need it. This ensures that students are able to get on with their work. Teachers manage classes well. The result is that students respond satisfactorily. When the teacher enthuses them with good questioning or exciting activities, the students respond well and with interest. Teachers' questioning styles are such that students are happy to respond although many do so all too briefly. Teachers do not give the students sufficient opportunities to work independently or

with each other. This leads to lessons where the students are passive and inconsistently challenged.

The school diagnoses the students' additional needs accurately. It is successful in offering them the support needed and they make satisfactory and sometimes good progress. Teaching assistants provide effective support for students with learning difficulties. The monitoring and recording of the progress of individual students is inconsistent because it differs from subject to subject. Appropriate staff keep careful and useful records about students with learning difficulties and disabilities. The school has identified groups of gifted and talented students as well as those who are underachieving and a well planned programme of additional support is made available through the work of the learning mentors.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is suitably broad and well balanced to meet the needs of all students. Students in Years 7 to 9 study the National Curriculum subjects as well as drama and dance. Students joining the school with low literacy skills receive an intensive support programme, which improves their communication skills over time. In Years 10 and 11, students have opportunities to study academic as well as vocational subjects. They also get opportunities to follow subjects in the local college. A small number of students study the advanced supplementary (AS) level course in critical thinking.

In order to encourage students to stay on after Year 11 the school has started to offer some AS subjects in conjunction with the college. Although this programme started only recently, students speak well of the provision.

To make learning more interesting, the school gives students many opportunities to take part in extra-curricular enrichment activities. These extra-curricular activities are well attended and the students speak highly of them.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school is an orderly community and students feel safe. Arrangements for health and safety, risk assessment and child protection are fully in place. Most parents believe that their children are well cared for. Students are aware of what to do if they have any problems. The tutorial system is well organised but some students commented on the inconsistency in the usefulness of tutorial lessons between different classes. Adults in school know their students well, especially the staff who support those who are more vulnerable. The learning support unit makes an extremely valuable contribution to guiding and supporting students who are most at risk. Staff make good links with outside agencies and parents are generally kept well informed. Some parents would like to see an improvement in communication with the school and there is some limited evidence to support this view. There is an effective programme to ensure that Year 7 students have a smooth transition to secondary school. Students talk enthusiastically about learning in their new school and parents support this viewpoint. Rewards for

success and referrals for poor behaviour are well understood by students but they are also aware that teachers do not use the procedures consistently. In some departments, there has been a marked improvement in assessing how well students are doing, allowing them more opportunity to be involved in making judgements about their own learning. In these departments, students are more aware of the levels to which they are working. Overall assessment procedures are satisfactory.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The school's own evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses is accurate. The headteacher knows the school well, is aware of its strengths and what needs to be improved. The impact of the leadership and management can be seen in the smooth day-to-day running of the school, the good procedures for the personal development and well-being of students and recent improvement in standards in many subjects. However it is relatively recently that the school has come to terms with the need to make more rapid improvements in its performance. There is a common sense of purpose amongst the senior staff, and some subject leaders show a real enthusiasm and commitment to improvement. The headteacher's vision of a challenging yet caring school is reflected in an ambitious plan designed to move the school forward. This improvement plan drives the work of all the subjects but it is not focused clearly enough on what the school needs to do to improve the quality of teaching and learning in order to raise the achievement of students. Currently, teaching and learning are not checked thoroughly enough and as a result, some students are not achieving as well as they should. Since the last inspection, there have been a large number of new initiatives introduced into the school, all of them focused on improving the provision for learners. These initiatives are, as the students and parents have told us, improving behaviour and attitudes. The support given to some departments and subsequent improved performance, and the many procedures now in place to monitor more closely the work of the school, provide the leadership team with a satisfactory capacity to improve.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	No
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Worle Community School Redwing Drive Worle Weston-super-Mare

21 October 2005

Dear Students,

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we inspected your school. We enjoyed talking to you and finding out about your thoughts on your work and more generally about the school. You told us that most of you enjoy coming to school, especially those of you in Year 7. Most of your parents are happy about what you are doing.

The evidence from the inspection showed that the performance of your school is satisfactory overall. The school cares well for you and it is successful in supporting you in your personal development especially those of you who may need extra help and guidance from time to time. You have a good range of subjects to study and there are many extra activities that you can take part in. It is good to see that your attendance has improved.

The inspection team felt that although your exam results improved in 2005, with the help of your teachers you could be doing even better, especially those of you who should be reaching the higher Levels 6 to 8 in Year 9 and A* and A grades in Year 11. In other words, many of you should be making even more progress than you are at present.

We have asked the headteacher to ensure that he and the senior staff do a more thorough checking of lessons to make sure that you are learning effectively all the time. We want teachers to have very high expectations of what you should be doing and work with you to set challenging targets. We want you to make the most of the opportunities that you are given in lessons.

Thank you again for your help.

Yours sincerely

Daniel Towl HMI