



# Wadham School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 123893  
**LEA** Somerset  
**Inspection number** 281588  
**Inspection dates** 19 October 2005 to 20 October 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Martyn Rhowbotham HMI

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

|                                    |                      |                           |                              |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>              | Comprehensive        | <b>School address</b>     | Mount Pleasant               |
| <b>School category</b>             | Voluntary controlled |                           | Yeovil Road                  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>         | 13 to 18             |                           | Crewkerne, Somerset TA18 7NT |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>            | Mixed                | <b>Telephone number</b>   | 01460 270123                 |
| <b>Number on roll</b>              | 761                  | <b>Fax number</b>         | 01460 270124                 |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>       | The governing body   | <b>Chair of governors</b> | Mr A Hutchings               |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b> | 10 January 2000      | <b>Headteacher</b>        | Mrs G Gee                    |

|                              |   |                                    |
|------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| <b>Age group</b><br>13 to 18 | <b>Inspection dates</b><br>19 October 2005 -<br>20 October 2005 | <b>Inspection number</b><br>281588 |
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Wadham School is the only secondary school in the market town of Crewkerne. It also serves Ilminster and the mainly rural area surrounding the two towns. A high proportion of students travel to school by bus. The school gained business and enterprise specialist school status in 2003. It is a Church of England Voluntary Controlled school. Students join the school at the start of Year 9. There are 136 students in the school's sixth form. Over 96% of students are white British and the number of students whose first language is not English is very low. The proportion of students that qualify for free school meals is 5.2% which is significantly below the national average. The proportion of students with learning difficulties is also well below the national average. The school belongs to a number of educational partnerships with other schools and colleges. The school site consists of a number of separate blocks some of which are in need of refurbishment. There has been significant investment in information technology.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 4**

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its students an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvements in the school.

The overall effectiveness of the school is inadequate. This does not concur with the school's own overall evaluation which rates the school as satisfactory, with some aspects as good.

Whilst leaders and managers have an awareness of the school's main weaknesses, actions taken have not addressed the decline in standards over the last two years. The students' behaviour and their attitudes to learning do not help them to learn well or make the progress they are capable of. Parents and carers express very serious concerns about poor behaviour in the school and the negative impact it is having on achievement and standards. Some also express concerns about the safety of students whilst at school. Poor behaviour was also expressed as a major concern by students and some staff during the inspection. Attendance is too low. Students enjoy the wide range of extra activities such as sporting events that the school provides.

The school's performance has declined when set against students' capability and their prior attainment since 2003. It showed no evidence of recovery in 2005 when GCSE results fell dramatically. Standards and achievement vary too much between subjects and groups of students. Teaching and learning are too often disrupted by poor behaviour and as a result students do not make enough progress.

Governors and the local authority are committed to the success of the school and they are very aware of the very important issues that it is facing. They have not yet been able to take actions that have led to improvement.

## **Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 3**

The efficiency and effectiveness of the sixth form is satisfactory. The school's self evaluation rated the sixth form as good. There is an appropriate range of AS levels, GCE A levels and vocational courses on offer. Standards are below the national average but the students' achievement is satisfactory overall. The proportion of students gaining higher grades at GCE A level is significantly below the national average.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise achievement at GCSE
- Improve behaviour and attendance in the main school
- Improve attitudes to learning in lessons
- Monitor students' progress more effectively
- Improve the impact of and consistency of management policies

## **Achievement and standards**

**Grade: 4**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

Achievement is inadequate. Until 2003, students at the end of Year 9 and Year 11 had been generally progressing well. Whilst standards and progress at the end of Year 9 in 2004 were broadly average, this represented a significant decline from 2003. Students' progress relative to their prior achievement declined in 2004 and deteriorated further in 2005. There is too much variation between the achievements of different groups of students and between subjects. For example, students with learning difficulties do not make the progress expected. Students do well in science tests at the end of Year 9 but make too little progress in English.

Standards at GCSE were broadly average in 2004. They then fell dramatically in 2005 with the proportion of students gaining 5 or more A\*-C grades dropping from 60% to 40%. This meant that the school's own target for 5 or more GCSE passes at grades A\* - C in 2005 were missed by a very wide margin. Boys under-perform far more than nationally in both key stages. For example, only 49.5% of boys gained 5 or more GCSE passes at grades A\* - C in 2004, compared with 72.5 % of girls. In addition, many lower attaining students make too little progress.

The school recognises these issues but, in rating achievement and standards as satisfactory, does not give sufficient weight to the problem. The school has not dealt adequately with negative student attitudes and its inconsistent expectations sustain these weaknesses.

In the sixth form there is some variation between performance in different subjects and the proportion of higher grades is low.

## **Personal development and well-being**

**Grade: 4**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

Students' personal development and wellbeing are inadequate. Too many students display a lack of interest in school life, behave badly in lessons or are frequently absent. A significant number of lessons is disrupted by the anti-social behaviour of some students who are inattentive, are uncooperative and sometimes confrontational. In those lessons where teachers know students well and have established a good rapport with them, students enjoy practical work or learning through the use of computers. During the inspection a number of students made critical comments about the school to inspectors. An adult presence is often lacking around the school at break times and at the end of school. Several students expressed criticism over the way the school deals with poor behaviour and bullying. The findings of the inspection confirm many of the very serious concerns about behaviour expressed by parents and students. The number of fixed term exclusions is well above average. The school's proposal to establish a unit to support those at risk of exclusion is timely and necessary. Sixth

formers have generally positive attitudes to learning and take an active part in school life.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is inadequate. Too little time is allocated for citizenship and personal and social education. Although there are some opportunities for students to take responsibility around the school, too many students show a lack respect for authority, and are unconcerned that their behaviour affects others' learning and progress. Most students do not wear their school uniform with any sense of pride.

Attendance is too low and because of this some students do not make as much progress as they could. Although attendance this term has shown an improvement on the previous year, strenuous efforts still need to be made to improve it further.

The school has taken some steps to promote healthy lifestyles, and work related skills are given due attention. Many students take part in extra curricular activities and competitive sports. Involvement in the local community is satisfactory. Students take part in a number of local events and raise money for charities. Students in the sixth form support those lower down the school and run the school council very well.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

**Grade: 4**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

The quality of teaching and learning in the main school is inadequate. In the sixth form it is satisfactory. In the main school, too many lessons are unsatisfactory because they are disrupted by poor behaviour. The management of students' behaviour is inconsistent and ineffective. This seriously slows the progress and achievements of many students. Too many students' attitudes to learning are too often poor. In many lessons, expectations are too low. Some students do not focus on their work enough and make little progress.

In some lessons, a minority of students did no work at all. Instead they spent their time chatting to friends and paid no attention to the teacher. In a few instances, they were rude and confrontational. Teachers' attention was taken with trying to persuade groups of students to attempt the task set and too often, little support was given to those students who were keen to learn. As a result standards and progress of the class as a whole were often unsatisfactory. In the more effective lessons, expectations were high and the management of behaviour was firm and consistent. Lessons were planned well and included a range of challenging and interesting activities. Students responded well and learning and progress was good. In the less effective lessons, tasks lacked challenge and students did not focus on their work. They became bored and behaviour deteriorated.

Teaching and learning in the sixth form is satisfactory. Students have good attitudes to learning and are keen to do well.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The overall quality of the curriculum and other activities is satisfactory. The curriculum meets the needs of the large majority of students, including the sixth form. A good range of enrichment activities is provided.

The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 reflects the specialist nature of the school and meets the requirements for work-related learning and ICT in relevant contexts. A range of options includes vocational subjects and the school makes effective use of local partnerships, for example with colleges of further education. Most students make well-informed choices, although the curriculum in Year 9 does not prepare students well for vocational courses in Year 10 and Year 11. The number of students progressing into the sixth form is declining.

The provision for students with statements of special educational needs is satisfactory, but that for students with special educational needs but without statements is inadequate and leads to poor achievement and standards for this group.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 4**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 3**

Students receive inadequate care, guidance and support because the school lacks comprehensive systems for tracking students' personal and academic progress. Many individual staff provide good pastoral support which is valued by most students. External support services are used well and students receive appropriate careers advice. However, there is too little regular use of assessment information for students in Years 9, 10 and 11 to know and understand their targets or what they need to do to meet them. At whole-school level, staff do not monitor the progress of individuals or year groups rigorously enough, so that the school has not been able to take action to prevent underachievement. Arrangements for monitoring behaviour have not made an impact. Systems for child protection are in place and known to all staff. The school council is effective in making students' views known to senior managers and they feel their views are taken seriously.

The "time out" system for removing disruptive students from lessons is ineffective and does little to address the causes of inappropriate behaviour.

Guidance and support in the sixth form are satisfactory. Students have their own sixth form forum and a clear picture of the progress they are making.

## Leadership and management

**Grade: 4**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

The overall quality of the school's leadership and management is inadequate and does not provide the school with the capacity to improve. Leaders and managers have had too little impact on raising achievement or in preventing the decline in GCSE results in the last academic year. Leadership and management in the sixth form are satisfactory overall, with some good features.

The senior leadership team is aware of the main areas of weakness in the school. Though many of these areas are identified in the school's self evaluation, leadership and management have placed insufficient emphasis on addressing the key issues of declining achievement and standards. Actions taken have had little or no impact and are not embedded in practice or applied consistently. This is particularly the case in managing poor behaviour, improving students' attitudes to learning, in assessment and in the monitoring of students' progress.

The procedures for monitoring the performance of departments have not significantly reduced the wide variation in the quality of middle leadership and management. Improvement plans do not reflect the school's intended focus on learning. The objectives identified in these plans are frequently about systems and procedures. The monitoring of middle managers is not robust and lacks rigour. Insufficient attention is given to the evaluation of students' progress, achievement and standards. Staff morale is very low and many staff, at all levels, feel unsupported by the headteacher and the senior leadership team.

The governing body has little involvement in the school self-evaluation and, although it is aware of the main issues concerning the school, has been unable to take any actions leading to improvement. The governors have given insufficient attention to ensuring the accountability of the headteacher and the senior leadership team.



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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> | <b>School Overall</b> | <b>16-19</b> |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|

### Overall effectiveness

|  |    |     |
|--|----|-----|
| <b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b> | 4  | 3   |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?  | 3  | 3   |
| The quality and standards in foundation stage  | NA | NA  |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation  | 4  | 4   |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements  | No | Yes |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection   | No | No  |

### Achievement and standards

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <b>How well do learners achieve?</b>   | 4 | 3 |
| The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners   | 4 | 4 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 4 | 3 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress                              | 4 |   |

### Personal development and well-being

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>                           | 4 | 3 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development                                     | 4 |   |
| The behaviour of learners   | 4 |   |
| The attendance of learners  | 4 |   |
| How well learners enjoy their education   | 4 |   |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices   | 3 |   |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles   | 3 |   |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community                                    | 3 |   |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 3 |   |

### The quality of provision

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>          | 4 | 3 |
| <b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b> | 3 | 3 |
| <b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>   | 4 | 3 |

<sup>1</sup> 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**

|  |     |     |
|--|-----|-----|
| <b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>                                       | 4   | 3   |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 4   |     |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review      | 4   |     |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can                     | 4   |     |
| How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money  | 4   |     |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities  | 4   |     |
| The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected  | Yes | Yes |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| <b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>  |     |
| Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily  | Yes |
| 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 |
| <b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>   |     |
| 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                                | No  |
| Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them   | Yes |
| <b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>  |     |
| Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships   | No  |
| 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 |
| <b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>                           |     |
| 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**

Wadham School Mount Pleasant Yeovil Road Crewkerne Somerset TA18 7NT

November 2005

Dear Students

As you know your school was inspected on 19th and 20th October 2005. Many of you will have seen inspectors around the school and an inspector may have visited one of your lessons. Some of you came to meetings with inspectors where we discussed the school with you. Many of your parents or carers filled in confidential questionnaires about the school and we took their views into account when reaching our judgements. You all made a contribution to the inspection and we would like to thank you very much for that.

We found that the school offers you a good range of courses in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form. You also enjoy taking part in many sporting activities including matches against other schools. The school council is important in making your views known and the sixth form students are involved in helping students lower down the school. You also raise a lot of money for charity.

We found that behaviour of some students in too many lessons in the main school is unsatisfactory. This prevents many of you learning as well as you could. Also some students do not work as hard as they could do in lessons. This means that examination results, especially at GCSE, aren't as good as they could be. On occasions behaviour around the school by a small number of students is also poor.

The inspection team decided that the school needs special measures to help it improve as quickly as possible. The school needs to take action to improve behaviour in lessons and around the school so as to help everyone learn as well as they can. The school also needs to make sure you have clear targets that you understand so that you can see how well you are doing with your work.

Many thanks for taking part in the inspection.

Yours sincerely

Martyn Rhowbotham HMI