



The Wordsley School A Business and Enterprise and Music College

Inspection Report - Amended

Unique Reference Number 103858
Local Authority Dudley
Inspection number 286791
Inspection dates 19–20 September 2006
Reporting inspector Anne Taylor HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Brierley Hill Road
School category	Community		Wordsley
Age range of pupils	11–16		Dudley DY8 5SP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01384 816015
Number on roll (school)	702	Fax number	01384 816016
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	G Barker
		Headteacher	Mike Lambert
Date of previous school inspection	5 January 2006		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11–16	19–20 September 2006	286791

Amended Report Addendum

Report updated to resolve formatting inconsistency

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Introduction

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

Description of the school

The School serves a mixed catchment area including some wards with very high social deprivation near the town of Stourbridge. It is a small, mixed comprehensive school and since September 2005 it has had specialist college status for both business, and enterprise and music. On entry to Wordsley, pupils' prior attainment is low. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is high. The number of pupils identified as having learning difficulties is high and rising, while the number with statements of special educational needs is below the national average. The proportion of minority ethnic pupils has declined to below the national average and the proportion of pupils whose first language is not English has declined to around the national average. The school's aim is to raise the expectations of its pupils and its motto is 'High Expectations + Challenge = Success'.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education and has improved since the last inspection as a result of strong leadership and management. The headteacher provides very clear leadership and direction. He is focused on improving the status of the school within the community by ensuring better behaviour of pupils, creating a good environment for learning, developing partnerships with other institutions and building the self-confidence of staff and pupils. Standards have improved considerably since the previous inspection but remain below the national average, both at the end of Year 9 and at GCSE. The percentage of pupils attaining five GCSE grades A* - C rose from 24% in 2001 to 48% in 2005 but fell to 37% in 2006, which was still above the target based on pupil's prior attainment. In 2006, A* - G grades exceeded the school's targets so that very few pupils now leave without any GCSE qualifications. Achievement is satisfactory overall and good in some areas but there is underachievement in mathematics and English especially in GCSE. At Key Stage 3 action taken to improve pupils' literacy skills is starting to bring about an improvement in results. In general pupils with learning difficulties make good progress as a result of good teaching and support and a curriculum which meets their individual needs. There are particular strengths in achievement in business studies, history, geography, religious education (RE) full course and art/art textiles.

There is a good commitment to school improvement by the senior leadership team, which shares the headteacher's vision and disseminates it well. Data analysis by the senior team is very strong but not all middle managers use the data effectively to raise standards in their curriculum areas. Governors know the school well and energetically support the drive for higher quality. Capacity to bring about further improvement is good. The personal development and well-being of the pupils are good. Pupils enjoy coming to school a lot and value the friendly, helpful staff. Attendance has improved since the last inspection as a result of efforts made by the school; however, it remains below the national average partly because a significant number of parents take their children on holiday during term-time. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and improving. Pupils generally enjoy their lessons and behave well, focusing on learning. There are good relations between teachers and pupils. Although academic progress is monitored well by the personal tutor, short-term targets for improvement are not always included on marked work and there is significant variation in the quality of written feedback to pupils across subjects. As a result pupils do not always know what they have to do to improve. Difficulties in recruiting staff have further affected pupils' progress in English and mathematics because teaching has been disrupted.

The overall curriculum is good, although there is insufficient vocational choice in Years 10 and 11. The school's specialist status has been used successfully to expand the provision for business studies, enterprise and music. The facilities in these areas are especially good. There is a good range of enrichment activities, which pupils enjoy. The care, guidance and support given to all pupils, including those with learning difficulties, are good. Parents express a high level of satisfaction with, and confidence in, the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement in mathematics and English, especially at Key Stage 4.
- Ensure that the quality of marking and target setting is consistent across all subjects so that pupils know how to improve their work.
- Ensure that all middle managers use data consistently well to analyse and improve performance.
- Increase vocational choice in Years 10 and 11, especially for lower attaining pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

In 2006 results at the end of Year 9 in English and mathematics improved but, overall, standards remain below average. Standards at GCSE are below national averages. The percentage of pupils attaining five GCSE grades A*–C and A*–G has increased since the last inspection. This good improvement in A*–C was maintained until 2006 when it fell to 37%, but this outcome was still in line with pupils' target grades. In 2006, A*–G grades exceeded the school's targets so that very few pupils now leave without any GCSE qualifications.

Overall achievement at Key Stage 3 is satisfactory and improving in mathematics and English. In most subjects at GCSE pupils achieve appropriately except in English and mathematics. The school has taken action to help boys with low prior attainment achieve better at GCSE and this has been successful. The majority of more able pupils achieve appropriately. In general pupils with learning difficulties achieve well.

In 2006 at GCSE there were particular strengths in business studies, history, geography, the RE full course and art/art textiles. The school's specialist status has contributed well to the growth in business studies. The school has very good systems to track pupils' progress and work has started on following up pupils' particular strengths and weaknesses but it is too soon for this to have an impact on GCSE results.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development and well-being of the pupils are good, and pupils much enjoy coming to school and value the friendly, helpful staff. Although attendance has improved since the last inspection it remains below the national average partly because a significant number of parents take their children on holiday during term-time. Behaviour is good both in lessons and around the school. Pupils confirm that bullying is rare and the school takes effective action if it does occur.

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They generally get on well with one other and know what constitutes good behaviour. Questionnaires to pupils and the School Council provide effective opportunities for pupils to express

their views. A wide range of responsibilities in school and activities outside allow pupils to make a useful contribution to community life.

Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles. This is enhanced by healthy foods at lunchtime and the variety of sports-based clubs and other activities. In science and food technology lessons pupils were seen to demonstrate knowledge about safe practice and in a citizenship lesson awareness was raised about dangers of internet meetings. Older pupils gain an understanding of the outside world from work related activities although the weak numeracy and literacy skills of some are likely to limit their employment opportunities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and improving as a result of effective monitoring by senior managers and the sharing of good practice across the school. Pupils generally enjoy their lessons and behave well, focusing on learning. There are good relations between teachers and pupils. Teachers use a variety of teaching styles and include information and communication technologies (ICT) effectively to promote learning. Interactive whiteboards are well used in most lessons. Teachers' subject knowledge is good. There is good use of teaching assistants who support pupils with learning difficulties effectively.

In English, teachers miss opportunities to develop pupils' oral skills and in mathematics there is an over reliance on completing exercises from workbooks that do little to interest pupils or to develop their ability to solve problems independently. Although the school has plentiful data on pupils' progress it is not used sufficiently by teachers and curriculum managers in all subjects to plan lessons that cater for pupils' individual needs.

The school has a thorough system of monitoring teaching that is applied effectively across the school and is leading to positive improvements in the quality of lessons. As a result teachers are beginning to share good practice in matching teaching to learning needs and in developing strategies to engage pupils more effectively. Observations conducted jointly between inspectors and managers confirm that this system is working well.

The quality of marking is satisfactory overall but significant variation was observed in the quality of feedback to pupils on marked work, and short-term targets for improvement were not always included. This lack of consistency means not all pupils know what they have to do to improve, especially in mathematics.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The overall curriculum is good. To tailor provision to meet differing needs, teaching groups are based flexibly on prior attainment while a number of additional activities are organised for more able pupils. To improve the pupils' basic skills in English, particular attention has been given to developing pupils' reading and their grasp of the vocabulary needed in subjects. Subject choices at Key Stage 4 include some vocational GCSE options but alternative, less academic qualifications are not developed enough. The curriculum has a strong academic focus and the achievement of some pupils is restricted because they do not have enough opportunity to take the sort of vocational courses that would motivate them more. Almost all pupils are able to follow courses in subjects they prefer. The school's specialist status has been used successfully to expand the provision for business studies in Key Stage 4, while in Year 9 pupils also have an opportunity to study a business unit. Enterprise has been incorporated effectively into the curriculum in all years. Provision for music has also been expanded in Key Stage 4 but with mixed GCSE results. All pupils have the opportunity to undertake work experience in Year 10. There is a good range of enrichment activities provided which include after school clubs, visits and visitors to the school. For example, Year 7 pupils have a very good opportunity to settle into the school through the early residential experience that is provided for them.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support given to all pupils, including those with learning difficulties, are good. The revised pastoral system results in different age groups being in the same tutor group, which has been successful as older pupils support the younger. This has led to Year 7 pupils settling quickly. Recent, more thorough data analysis on individual pupils' progress is leading to an improvement in the setting of long-term targets. These are monitored effectively through the tutor group and twice yearly reviews. However, the use of data to monitor pupils' progress and set them targets is uneven in effectiveness between subjects. The pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities receive good support enabling them to make good progress.

The arrangements for health and safety are satisfactory and the school is in contact with the local authority to ensure all appropriate risk assessments are in place. Pupils feel safe in school and are willing to go to any adult if they need help. Child protection procedures are secure. The good links with partner primary schools ensure that pupils settle quickly when they first arrive. Careers advice is well established.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The key reason for the many improvements that have taken place since the last inspection is the leadership and management of the school, which are good. The

headteacher provides very clear leadership and direction, which has resulted in significant improvements in overall standards and achievement. The school has rightly received much external praise for this. There is a good commitment to school improvement by the senior leadership team, which shares the headteacher's vision and disseminates it well.

The school has placed data analysis and use at the heart of school improvement. The process for setting target grades with pupils is good and there is abundant data; however there are inconsistencies in its use between subjects, affecting pupils' progress. Lesson observations are being used effectively to improve the quality of teaching and learning and influence teachers' professional development. Peer observation of good practice and targeted training is being established.

The school has been over generous in its self-grading of achievement and standards, because it has not recognised the significance of the relative lack of progress in English and mathematics, especially in Key Stage 4. The school has previously correctly identified the need to focus on developing literacy in all lessons resulting in some improvement in standards at Key Stage 3.

The school is inclusive in its good support for pupils with learning difficulties and improving provision for gifted and talented pupils. Many and varied links with external stakeholders are effective in improving provision for pupils. Parents express a high level of satisfaction with, and confidence in, the school. Finances are well managed and this has led to many improvements in accommodation and resources that have helped increase pupils' pride in their school. The requirement to remodel the school workforce has been successful.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you very much for the polite way in which you made us welcome when we came to inspect your school. We enjoyed meeting you and listening to the very positive views you have about the school, especially your comments about the friendly and supportive staff. We know that nearly all your parents and carers share these views.

The Wordsley School is a satisfactory school which has improved since the last inspection. This is what your school does well

- The school is very well led by your headteacher and we were very impressed with the amount of daily contact that he has with you.
- There have been a lot of improvements in the school and you make the progress expected in most subjects.
- Staff care, guide and support you well. The mixed age tutor groups are helping younger pupils settle into the school and you feel safe and secure in school.
- You are well behaved and attentive in lessons and get on with each other well.
- There are plenty of opportunities for you to become involved in activities outside of lessons and many of you enjoy participating in them. Some of these are a result of the Business and Enterprise and Music specialist status.

This is what we have asked the school to do to improve things further

- We have asked for improvements to be made so that you achieve better in English and mathematics, especially at the end of Year 11, as these are such important subject as you go out into the working world.
- In future the school will look at whether some different types of qualification will prepare you better for certain types of jobs.
- We have asked your teachers to ensure through the way they mark your work and set you targets that you know what you need to do to improve your work.

We wish you well for the future and hope you are successful in whatever you want to do.