



Wadebridge School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112048
Local Authority Cornwall
Inspection number 289159
Inspection dates 30–31 January 2007
Reporting inspector Andrew Redpath HMI

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

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|---|--------------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| Type of school | Comprehensive | School address | Convena Hill |
| School category | Community | | Wadebridge |
| Age range of pupils | 11–18 | | PL27 6BU |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 01208 812881 |
| Number on roll (school) | 1228 | Fax number | 01208 814883 |
| Number on roll (6th form) | 164 | | |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair | Pauline White |
| | | Headteacher | S Thornton |
| Date of previous school inspection | 8 October 2001 | | |

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|------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Age group | Inspection dates | Inspection number |
| 11–18 | 30–31 January 2007 | 289159 |

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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

Wadebridge School has specialist status for business and enterprise and is of larger than average size. Pupils are drawn from Wadebridge, Padstow and the surrounding villages. Although the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is low, some of the school's pupils come from areas of significant deprivation where incomes are low. Almost all pupils are of White British origin and are fluent in English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) is smaller than the national average. There have been several recent building developments and the school's resources are used extensively by the local community.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Wadebridge School provides a satisfactory standard of education and has several good features. The school's business and enterprise work is very well managed and has a positive impact across the school. Strong links exist with local businesses, the community, and other schools. These help to prepare students well for the workplace and contribute to their good personal development. The large majority of parents are complimentary about the work of the school and recognise its important role in the community.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and students make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment. The school is successful in raising achievement at Key Stage 3 and in gaining above average results in GCSE examinations at the end of Year 11. Lower attaining students make unsatisfactory progress across the school and strategies have been introduced to tackle this area of weakness. The good curriculum is enhanced by a wide range of well attended extra-curricular clubs and activities. Students enjoy coming to school and appreciate the high quality of care and support they receive. This is particularly the case for the relatively small number of students with LDD, who make good progress in achieving their individual targets as a result.

The leadership of the headteacher and senior leaders is satisfactory, and in some respects good. The school has tackled successfully all the issues identified for improvement at the time of the last inspection. The leadership team has accurately identified key areas for improvement and has clear plans to take the school forward. The school has recently changed the management roles and responsibilities to focus more sharply on teaching and learning. Some aspects of its monitoring are still developing. The school's own monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are more positive than the inspection found. This is because they focus insufficiently on what students are learning. The school does not share its very good teaching effectively enough across the school. Given the strategies that have been introduced to raise achievement and the reorganised management arrangements, the school demonstrates good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 3

The school's sixth form provision is satisfactory. Learners on all courses make sufficient progress to reach broadly average standards which are in line with those expected, based on their achievements at the end of Year 11. Learners study a broad range of academic and vocational courses. The number of learners joining the sixth form is increasing and more of them now complete the courses for which they enrol. Learners hold the school in high regard and appreciate the additional time that their teachers freely give to help them if there is a difficulty. They are well advised about higher education, training and employment options and they particularly enjoy their experience of many aspects of business and enterprise. The supportive leadership and management

ensure good levels of care, support and guidance which promote learners' personal development well.

What the school should do to improve further

- Evaluate the strategies which it has introduced to help lower attaining students in order to ensure these approaches are successful in raising standards.
- Improve the monitoring of teaching to focus more sharply on how teaching can improve learning and raise achievement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Students generally enter Year 7 with above average standards, although there is a declining trend and attainment of the 2006 intake is slightly below the national average. At Key Stage 3, students make good progress, and their results in national tests at the end of Year 9 are consistently above average, especially in mathematics. By the end of Year 11, students gain passes in GCSE examinations which are above the national average. The overwhelming majority of students gain five graded passes and the school is successful in ensuring a high proportion of students gain five higher grade passes which include mathematics and English. In relation to their starting points and what students might be expected to achieve, this represents satisfactory progress overall.

Across the school, however, the progress of lower attaining students is unsatisfactory. This is particularly evident for lower attaining boys, who consistently perform below what they should expect to achieve. The school has introduced measures to raise the achievement of students who enter the school with low levels of literacy and has adapted the teaching of English to help improve the performance of boys. These measures are showing early signs of success, although their impact on raising achievement has yet to be realised fully.

Learners in the sixth form make satisfactory progress and achieve expected results in the A-level examinations and in the vocational courses. The small number of students with LDD make good progress due to the carefully arranged individual programmes of support they receive. The school comes close to meeting its targets and in some cases exceeds them, although they are not sufficiently challenging for all students.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Students' personal development is good. Vulnerable students, including those with LDD, those who are looked after, and those who have previously been excluded achieve similar personal skills to their peers. This is because of the high quality of care they

receive. Students enjoy coming to school, where they feel safe and secure. In the words of one younger student, 'The school is encouraging, kind and helpful.' Their attendance is good. Students who are excluded are monitored effectively, leading to good improvement in their attitudes to school. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Assemblies play an important role in helping them to develop positive attitudes, and in promoting their good spiritual development. For example, students in Year 8 learn about the Jewish Holocaust. Opportunities for students to celebrate their own Cornish culture are plentiful, resulting in the majority having pride in their own community. Behaviour is good although it dips during the lunchtime when students crowd into small areas, inside the buildings and in the outdoor recreational areas.

Students are well prepared for life in multicultural Britain through their personal, social, health and citizenship education curriculum. Their understanding of the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle is good. The wide range of sports clubs is well attended, helping them to keep fit. They make sensible food choices at lunchtimes, although several students do not sit down in the dining hall to eat, limiting opportunities to develop socially. Students aged between 14 and 19 work well with local businesses, developing good work skills. Most students join in enthusiastically with fund-raising for charities and the good range of themed days based on issues such as 'democracy,' 'poverty' and 'social responsibility'. These experiences prepare them well for their future lives. Students take on many school responsibilities; a key strength is the way older students help and support younger ones through the school's 'empower' system.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with some good features, both in the main school and in the sixth form.

In the best lessons, engaging teaching strategies actively involve students in their learning and the use of effective questioning encourages students to think more deeply about their responses. Teaching assistants work well in partnership with teachers and their skills are used to good effect, for example to provide targeted support for literacy and numeracy. Teachers organise their lessons effectively and use a wide range of learning resources, including information and communication technology (ICT). In these lessons, good working relationships exist between teachers and students which promote positive attitudes. However, teaching is often satisfactory rather than good because teachers do not provide tasks that are sufficiently challenging; as a result, students work slowly or lose concentration. Students also have fewer opportunities to take responsibility for developing their own learning in such lessons, for example through discussion in pairs or practical tasks. As a result, lessons do not enable all

students to make sufficient progress in relation to their individual ability. The school's focus on using assessment to improve learning is not yet applied effectively in these lessons and activities do not always match the needs of higher attaining students closely enough.

Most students' work is assessed regularly. However, teachers do not always give sufficient guidance to their students on how to improve. Students are given targets in their subjects and their progress is checked at regular intervals against what they might be expected to achieve, given their starting points. Procedures to identify, intervene and support students who need it are improving and the best departments use a range of data to plan lessons and offer additional learning opportunities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Overall, curriculum provision is good. The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum throughout Key Stage 3 where there is good provision for numeracy, literacy and ICT. In Years 10 and 11, students follow a wide range of courses including GCSEs and vocational qualifications in partnership with other schools, colleges and partnerships. The curriculum is not planned to provide enough opportunities for higher attaining students to extend their learning although the school is introducing suitable plans to tackle this.

The school's specialist business and enterprise status has had a substantial impact on the curriculum. Students develop their enterprise and business skills through the extensive opportunities they are offered; for example, enterprise days for each year group, self-employment workshops, the 'Go for It' programme and the school reward scheme, which promotes financial awareness. Creative initiatives in subjects and enterprise sessions in the primary schools all contribute to this well co-ordinated programme which develops students' skills for the future.

Good opportunities exist for enrichment through a wide range of well attended sports, drama and music clubs and visits, at lunchtime and after school. However, some students expressed a wish for a wider range of non-sporting activities after school. Students are given a range of opportunities to develop teamwork and other skills; for example, over half of the Year 10 students participate actively in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Care, guidance and support are good in the main school and the sixth form. The school gives a high priority to its students' welfare, especially for the most vulnerable. Committed staff ensure that these students receive extensive support. Child protection

arrangements are strong. The vetting of adults who work with students is thorough and records are up to date.

Students joining the school in Year 7 are well supported and special arrangements are sustained until all students are settled in well. Effective procedures ensure that learners receive good careers advice, and sixth form learners are well informed about university courses and other options open to them after leaving school. Individual academic guidance for other students about how they can reach challenging targets varies too widely. Some have detailed guidance that they understand and can apply, but others are less clear about how to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory with good and improving features. The recent carefully considered restructuring of responsibilities at senior and middle leadership levels has strengthened the focus on teaching and learning. Furthermore, the school development plan's main priorities are very clear in their identification of key areas for improvement; the main thrust for staff training is related to these priorities. However, monitoring and evaluation have not focused sufficiently on analysing how teaching is improving students' learning. This has led to some inaccuracies in self-evaluation. As a result there has been insufficient emphasis on raising the quality of satisfactory teaching so that it becomes good. The new management arrangements are tackling these weaknesses and provide good capacity for the school to raise standards and achievement.

The school manages its finances well with intelligent accountability at all levels. The very good leadership and management of the school's specialist business and enterprise work are particular strengths. This ensures that the benefits permeate and are central to all the school does. Equally important are the first-rate links with the business and wider community. The school is at the heart of the community with the governors playing an important role in this respect. They are a dedicated community-minded group of people and they understand clearly the school's priorities for development.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

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

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 | 3 |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being? | 2 | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 3 | 3 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 2 | 2 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes | Yes |

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 3 | 3 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 2 | 2 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 2 | 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? | 3 | 3 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 2 | 2 |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets | 3 | 3 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 3 | 3 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 3 | 3 |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 3 | 3 |
| Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements? | Yes | 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

As you know, your school was inspected on 30 and 31 January. I am writing to let you know the judgements that the team of inspectors made about your school. I thank those of you who helped the inspection by talking to us about your work and life at school. All of you were polite and discussed your views maturely. Many of your parents or carers returned a questionnaire and we also took their views and concerns into account when making judgements.

Wadebridge School provides a satisfactory standard of education and there are many things that are good about its work. You enjoy coming to school and your behaviour is good. The headteacher and staff provide a high standard of care and support and encourage you to help each other. This promotes your good personal development. Through its business and enterprise work the school has forged close links with local businesses and the community which help to prepare you well for leaving school. A good range of courses is provided across the school and in the sixth form. Many of you like taking part in the after-school clubs and activities on offer.

Most of you make satisfactory progress with your work. Some of you do better, particularly in Years 7 to 9 and in mathematics. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and good in some areas. It could get better with a closer check on how much you are learning in lessons. Some of you who have difficulty with your work could achieve better results in tests and examinations. The school is aware of this and is already giving extra help to several of you. You can help by always trying your best.