

# Wellfield Community School Specialist Maths and Computing College

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114315
<b>Local Authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	289875
<b>Inspection dates</b>	7–8 June 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Ann Wallis

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	1061
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Miss Fiona Campbell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Jennifer Elliott
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 February 2003
<b>School address</b>	North Road East Wingate County Durham TS28 5AX
<b>Telephone number</b>	01429 838413
<b>Fax number</b>	01429 838127

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<b>Age group</b>	11–16
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Wellfield is a larger than average school, which has had Specialist Mathematics and Computing College Status since September 2004. It serves an area with a broad socio-economic mix drawing students from Wingate and the surrounding villages. Students enter the school with below average standards. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. There is also a unit that can take up to 10 students with physical disabilities. The vast majority of students are of White British heritage and there are very few who do not have English as a first language. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is well above average. Wellfield has Healthy Schools and Information and Communication Technology mark awards and has gained Investors in People status.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Wellfield is a satisfactory and improving school that gives satisfactory value for money. Inspection evidence confirms the school's own accurate self-evaluation. Students' achievement is satisfactory. They enter the school with below average standards and make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. Standards are below average at the end of Year 11. Although the proportion of students gaining five or more A\* to C grades including English and mathematics is still not high enough, standards over the last three years have improved. The curriculum is satisfactory. For example, it helps most students to enjoy learning and achieve well in the good range of vocational courses that the school offers, such as construction and health and social care. Students also have good opportunities to develop their information and communication technology (ICT) skills, which reflect the positive impact of the school's specialist mathematics and computing status.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory but improving, especially in lessons when teachers use the school's good behaviour management strategies effectively. In the best lessons, teachers make good use of interesting resources, the pace is brisk and students work hard. In other lessons, the progress of some students is hindered by staff absence and by the unsatisfactory behaviour of a significant minority of students.

Students receive good care, guidance and support. Students' progress is tracked well and, as a result, students who need extra help are identified and support provided. The school makes enormous efforts, supported well by external agencies, to help disaffected students stay in education so that all gain at least one GCSE grade. Students' personal development is satisfactory. Most attend school regularly and want to learn. Students have a sound understanding of how to stay healthy and keep safe, though some parents and students expressed concern about poor behaviour. However, the inspection finds that because of the good strategies that have been implemented, behaviour is improving but remains inadequate overall.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Following a period of staffing turbulence, the headteacher and governors have been successful in recruiting new staff. This, together with the restructuring of existing staff means that the school has satisfactory capacity to improve further. Another important factor is that the school knows what needs to improve and has sound plans to bring about improvement.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the climate for learning by eradicating the unsatisfactory behaviour of a significant minority of students, particularly boys.
- Improve the proportion of students gaining five or more A\* to C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics.
- Continue to make strenuous efforts to minimise disruption to learning through staff absence.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory. Students join Year 7 with below average standards and their literacy skills are weak. National test results in Year 9, although below average in 2006, represented adequate progress over three years in English, mathematics and science. Over the last three years, there has been a rising trend in science and mathematics. In English, there was a considerable dip in 2005 but results improved in 2006. Current standards are below average overall. Some students' weaknesses in reading and writing slow their progress in several areas of study. The school exceeded its specialist targets for mathematics in 2005 and 2006.

Standards at the end of Year 11 are below average. GCSE results have risen considerably over the last three years in response to a variety of successful initiatives designed to improve attainment. In 2006, they represented adequate achievement over five years of study. Although they were below average overall and did not meet the school's challenging specialist college targets, they were largely as would be expected from the nature of the annual intake to Year 7. However, the proportion of students with five or more GCSE results in the range A\* to C including English and mathematics is still not high enough. In 2006, all Year 11 students were awarded at least one GCSE pass grade. This is a very creditable result and better than the national average. The school's current assessments and standards seen by the inspectors indicate that the upward trend in standards has been maintained. Specialist status has enabled students to develop a good level of competence with computers.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 3

Students' personal development is satisfactory overall. Most students say they enjoy school life. They have developed a satisfactory awareness of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues.

Attendance is satisfactory because the school has introduced a range of effective strategies to promote it. Students say they have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and safe and appreciate the healthy eating options offered by the recently introduced sandwich bar. The majority of students form good relationships with staff and each other.

Although there is a school council, some students said they felt they were not listened to sufficiently by staff. This was a sentiment shared by some parents and confirmed by the inspectors. Students have a sound awareness of their role in the school and wider community. They take part in fund-raising activities and enjoy taking responsibility in the school and wider community. Their awareness of the world of work is raised by well-organised work experience.

The behaviour of a significant minority remains a concern, as it was at the time of the previous inspection, and is still unsatisfactory. Some students, parents and staff are concerned about the misbehaviour and poor attitudes to learning in some classes. Behaviour is often too boisterous outside the classroom and leads to unacceptable levels of litter and vandalism. Misbehaviour occurs in some lessons when the systems for managing behaviour are not used consistently. Nevertheless, instances of serious misconduct have reduced and most lessons proceed purposefully because students in them behave and cooperate well.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. There are examples of good teaching, but the overall quality is not yet resulting in consistently good learning for all students. Coaching and classroom observation by senior staff have led to an improvement in planning well-structured tasks and in developing a range of teaching methods. The effective use of ICT, a brisk pace and good questioning ensure that students generally make satisfactory, and sometimes good, progress. Good subject knowledge and positive relationships support students well in the next step of their learning. Generally, students are attentive, work independently and value the teacher's input. Teaching assistants effectively support students in basic skills, but low levels of literacy hinder the progress of some students. In the satisfactory lessons, the pace is too pedestrian and the school's behaviour policy is inconsistently applied. On occasions, learning has been hindered by staff absence and by the unsatisfactory behaviour of some students, particularly boys.

Most students know their target level or grade. However, the application and use of levels, particularly at Key Stage 3 in humanities subjects, requires adjustment to ensure that assessment information is accurate and used effectively. Marking of students' work is satisfactory but some is insufficiently helpful to enable students to improve their work.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory with some good features. Statutory requirements are met. The school provides a good and expanding range of vocational courses which are well suited to students' needs. The new facilities in the Centre for Vocational Excellence, which are shared with other schools, allow students to learn practical skills in an adult atmosphere. Students' ICT skills are developed well and they all have the opportunity to gain an ICT qualification at Key Stage 4. Students' basic skills in literacy and numeracy are developed satisfactorily.

The curriculum is reviewed regularly and good plans are in place to develop the Key Stage 3 curriculum so it better meets students' needs. The personal, social and health education programme contributes well to students' adoption of healthy and safe lifestyles and ensures that they are informed about future career and further education opportunities. The extra curricular programme contributes positively to learners' enjoyment and achievement.

Participation rates are enhanced by the school providing a late bus to enable students to get home after attending these activities.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

The quality of care, guidance and support is good. Child protection procedures are in place and the school works very well with multidisciplinary teams to support students who are at risk. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those in the unit for students with physical disabilities are given good support by teachers and teaching assistants. A number of students who are disaffected with school have considerable support to continue in education. Alternative lessons help them with their personal, academic and behavioural problems. The

enthusiastic and dedicated professionals who deliver these programmes are already having a positive impact by reducing the number of students sent home for misbehaving.

The system of setting students' targets is working satisfactorily and enabling teachers to identify underachievement. The recent revision of the year leaders' role has led to closer links between the students' academic attainment and their personal and emotional needs. All procedures for safeguarding students are in place.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher and senior team monitor teaching and learning well. They know the strengths and weaknesses of the school and have a clear agenda for improvement. The school now recognises the need to ensure that staff efforts are tightly and successfully focused on a smaller number of key initiatives, such as improving behaviour. The school has made satisfactory progress in addressing the issues from the previous inspection. Although behaviour remains a concern, it is now beginning to improve and good strategies are in place to engage students in learning and further reduce inadequate behaviour. Governance is satisfactory; governors are knowledgeable and supportive of the school. Resources are deployed appropriately and leaders are active in pursuing extra funds, which enhance students' learning opportunities. Links with other schools and professionals are good but the school recognises the need to improve communications with parents, and the inspection team agree. This is because a number of parents expressed a lack of confidence in the school because they feel that their concerns are not dealt with promptly or efficiently enough. The school has experienced a period of staffing turbulence, which has affected students' learning, especially in Years 7 to 9. The headteacher and governors have successfully ensured that the school will be fully staffed from September. Nevertheless, there are still concerns about the impact of staff absences on students' learning.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### 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>	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	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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	3

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	4
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
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>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
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	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

9 June 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Wellfield Community School Specialist Maths and Computing College, County Durham, TS28 5AX

We recently visited your school in order to find out how well you are doing and how well your school is supporting you. We really appreciated the way in which you made us welcome and would particularly like to thank those of you who spoke with us. We were impressed by your honesty and openness when expressing your views and we enjoyed our discussions with you.

What we have said about your school in the inspection report.

- Yours is a satisfactory and improving school.
- Your achievement and personal development are satisfactory.
- The care, guidance and support you receive are good.
- Teaching and learning and the leadership and management of your school are satisfactory.

What we have asked your school to do now.

- Improve the unsatisfactory behaviour of a significant minority of students, particularly boys.
- Improve the proportion of students gaining five or more A\* to C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics.
- Try to ensure you have fewer changes of teacher than has happened in some subjects recently.

You can help your school to improve further by behaving well, in and out of lessons, and working with your teachers to achieve the best you can.

Best wishes

Mrs A. Wallis

Lead inspector