

The Warriner School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123230
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	292617
Inspection dates	13–14 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Nigel Fletcher HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	1119
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Brian Allsopp
Headteacher	Mr Nick Hindmarsh
Date of previous school inspection	30 January 2001
School address	Banbury Road Bloxham Banbury OX15 4LJ
Telephone number	01295 720777
Fax number	01295 721676

Age group	11–16
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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

The Warriner School is a comprehensive school of slightly larger than average size. The majority of its students are from the local rural community, with most of the remainder from Banbury. The proportions of students from minority ethnic groups and of students who have English as an additional language are below average. Students' attainment on entry to the school is slightly higher than in most schools. In 2003 the school was awarded specialist status in technology. Also in 2003 it acquired Investors in People status, and the International School award, both of which were re-awarded in 2006. The school runs a farm which supports learning across the school and provides an alternative positive experience for at-risk students from other local schools. The headteacher was appointed in April 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The Warriner School is a good school with many outstanding features. Notable amongst these are the range of academic and vocational courses and the enrichment activities available across the school. The curriculum meets the needs of students well and there are excellent opportunities for additional sporting, cultural and personal development activities. Students reach standards that are generally above those found nationally, and this represents good progress in their learning. The high quality of the senior management team, supported by an excellent governing body, is a key reason for the school's success. There is a clear vision for the future of the school which is shared and supported by all staff. Senior leaders have an excellent understanding of how the school is doing and the means by which it can improve further to ensure that all students reach their full potential. Although leadership by middle managers is good overall, it is inconsistent across subjects.

The personal development of students is good and, in some aspects, outstanding. This results largely from the outstanding care, guidance and support that they receive throughout the school. Parents report favourably on the progress and growing confidence of their children. One parent commented, 'Since my son started at The Warriner he has come on in leaps and bounds both educationally and personally'. Students enjoy their education and behave well around the school. They feel safe and are confident about the good care and support they receive from staff. Consequently, attendance is higher than average.

Teaching is good overall, but in a few lessons insufficient attention is given to individual needs and homework policies are not adhered to consistently. The specialist status in technology is having a good impact on improving learning across the school, although the accommodation for some specialist work requires refurbishment. The school has made good improvements since the last inspection. It recognises that there are still improvements to make, but well-developed plans are in place and it has an excellent capacity to continue to improve. It manages its low level of funding extremely well and provides very good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teaching and learning by paying consistent attention to individual needs and ensuring that homework is set and marked consistently.
- Support the development of middle managers in the effective monitoring of the quality of their areas of work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Students achieve well and attain standards that are above the national average. They enter the school in Year 7 with attainment that is slightly above the national average. In Years 7 to 9, students make satisfactory progress. Although their performance in mathematics and science is good, having improved consistently over the last three years, progress in English is just satisfactory. In Years 10 and 11 most students make better progress overall than is expected of them.

Performance by the end of Year 11 improved markedly over the last three years with students now making good progress. Overall, girls make better progress than boys, although those with high ability do not perform as well their peers. GCSE results are significantly above the national

average, representing good progress compared with similar schools. Girls reach higher standards than boys, but the school is effectively closing the gap that is seen nationally. Achievement of the higher levels at GCSE is good, as is the proportion of students gaining five or more passes at grades A* to G. All students pass at least one GCSE at grade A* to G.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development and well-being of students are good and contribute well to their achievement. Students behave well around the school and enjoy good relationships with adults and their peers. They enjoy their education, are proud of their school and there is a harmonious sense of community. Instances of bullying are rare and are dealt with quickly and effectively. Attendance is above the national average and there are good procedures to engage disaffected and other vulnerable children.

Students are highly motivated and make well-informed and mature decisions. They have excellent knowledge about healthy lifestyles and there are good opportunities for them to learn about staying safe, both through the curriculum and extra-curricular activities. Students take a wide role in the life of the school and they are enthusiastic about their roles as 'listeners', prefects and buddies. Students' moral and social development is outstanding. They have good social skills and make many positive contributions to the local community through the school's extensive enrichment programme. Spiritual and cultural development is good. There is excellent development of workplace and other skills and the school farm makes an outstanding contribution to students' personal development.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good, with lessons ranging from satisfactory to outstanding. The school is making good progress in improving the quality of teaching through clear guidance, regular monitoring linked to training activities, and accurate judgements on the quality of classroom practice.

Warm working relationships are reflected in the positive learning environment throughout the school. Students respond positively to well paced and challenging activities in many lessons. In a successful science lesson, for example, teaching of high level concepts was supported effectively by the use of information and communication technology (ICT). Good humour and active involvement added to students' enjoyment. However, in some lessons, students are not given sufficient opportunities to develop their independent learning skills. Students are very appreciative of the exceptionally high subject knowledge and expertise of the teachers. Students are quick to say that 'teachers are always willing to help if we have any difficulties with our work'. Teachers plan structured lessons effectively, but the learning outcomes are not always made clear to students. This results in a few lessons where students engage in work less readily because activities are not matched to their needs and poor behaviour by a minority occasionally disrupts the learning of others.

Tracking of students' assessment and progress is outstanding. This ensures that students know at what levels they are working. However, homework setting and marking are not consistent so that some students do not know what they need to do to make further progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum at The Warriner School is outstanding. Since the last inspection, the school has implemented a broad range of learning opportunities and courses which cater very well for the interests, aspirations and needs of students. Students can gain qualifications in such subjects as statistics, citizenship, and religious and moral studies, and in various vocational subjects such as law, engineering, and rural science. An enhanced programme is provided for students with high ability, including early entry to some GCSE subjects and many enrichment activities.

The curriculum is further enhanced by a rich and diverse range of extra-curricular activities for which there is great demand. Most students of all abilities participate with enthusiasm and dedication. This makes a valuable contribution to their personal development. There are ample opportunities for trips and visits, with funding support to ensure equality of opportunity. For example, there are regular exchanges and visits to a variety of European countries and to America. The school identifies early those students who are at risk of becoming disaffected. A personalised curriculum and 'applied learning pathway' are provided, which build on highly successful links with local colleges and employers.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support for students are outstanding. Parents are confident that their children are safe and well cared for, and speak highly of the support the school provides. There are very effective systems and procedures to ensure early intervention and support where required. Links with outside agencies are excellent ensuring further specialist help for students if necessary. Student mentors and 'listeners' provide effective and valued support for young and vulnerable students to gain confidence in school.

Academic monitoring is well embedded across the school and support for students with additional learning needs is of high quality. The school provides a wide range of strategies to engage those who may be at risk of becoming disaffected, including a highly effective and respected emotional literacy programme.

Liaison with the local primary schools is outstanding. Students' academic and social needs are well understood when they enter the school and the successful vertical-tutoring system allows them to 'feel at home quickly and easily'. Good arrangements exist to support students when they leave school and there is very effective careers advice throughout the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The new headteacher has a very clear sense of direction and has high expectations for the school's further development. He is given excellent support from senior staff who play a very effective role in school improvement. Through rigorous evaluation the leadership team has an accurate view of the effectiveness of the school's provision and what is required to improve. However, although leadership by middle managers is good overall, it is variable across subjects. Comprehensive department reviews contribute well to school evaluation and strategies are in place for the further development of the areas where shortcomings have been identified. The capacity to improve further is excellent.

Staff development is valued and used effectively to improve the quality of teaching and the quality of management. The farm is managed exceptionally well and contributes strongly to the personal development of students. Specialist technology status has led to significant improvements in ICT resources and students have much better access to computers to assist with their learning.

School governance is outstanding. Governors work as 'critical friends' and set a strategic direction which has the academic and personal development, as well as the welfare, of students at its core. Staff deployment and the financial planning and management of resources are efficient and effective. The low level of funding is very well managed and longer term strategic planning, supported by focused budgetary projections, is of high quality. Although recent building projects are having a positive impact, the accommodation for some specialist work, particularly in design and technology, requires refurbishment.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
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	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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.

Annex A

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	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

26 June 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of The Warriner School, Banbury, OX15 4LJ

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you, talking to your teachers and other staff and visiting lessons. Many of you and your parents told us how the good relationships between you and the staff meant that you enjoyed school and felt that you were progressing well.

You told us that your school provided a good education. We fully agree with this view and are satisfied that the school leaders have a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school has many strengths and we were particularly impressed by:

- the way the school is led by senior staff and the commitment of its staff
- the courses and other activities that the school provides to ensure that you have the best opportunities to make good progress both academically and socially
- the way the school looks after you, and the support it provides for those students having difficulties in learning
- and particularly your attitude to learning and healthy living, and the way you treat each other with respect.

To make your school even better we have recommended that it:

- continues to improve the quality of some of the teaching and learning by ensuring that policies are followed more consistently, for example, with setting and marking homework which is a concern of some of your parents
- provides support for some middle managers so that their leadership skills are as good as the best managers.

The senior staff and governors know what needs to be done to improve the school and have plans to do it. We believe that if you behave well and work hard in lessons, and help the school put these plans in place, then standards will rise further. On behalf of the inspection team, thank you for making our visit so enjoyable and we wish you every success for the future.

Nigel Fletcher HMI Lead Inspector