

# Wadham School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123893
<b>Local Authority</b>	Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	301350
<b>Inspection dates</b>	19–20 June 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jacqueline White HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	13–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	643
6th form	85
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Vacant Position
<b>Headteacher</b>	David Derbyshire
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 October 2005
<b>School address</b>	Mount Pleasant Yeovil Road Crewkerne TA18 7NT
<b>Telephone number</b>	01460 270123
<b>Fax number</b>	01460 270124

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<b>Age group</b>	13–18
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## Introduction

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

## Description of the school

This small 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. The school has achieved specialist status in business and enterprise. Most students are of White British heritage and a very small minority speaks a language other than English as their first language. The number of students with learning difficulties and disabilities is well below average, as is the number with a statement of special educational needs. Very few students are eligible for free school meals.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Wadham School provides a satisfactory, and improving, standard of education because outcomes for students are evaluated carefully and there is constant endeavour to raise achievement. Consequently, in accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Satisfactory personal development ensures most students mature as responsible citizens with a commitment to improving the community of the school. Relationships are generally positive; behaviour is satisfactory and sometimes good. Attendance has improved significantly and is now broadly in line with the national average. Students are well looked after and supported. They receive good academic guidance and most are clear about what they must do to improve their work. The good curriculum offers students a range of courses that has been extended to provide greater flexibility and choice. This is helping to motivate students and provide pathways to further education, training, and employment. Specialist status in business and enterprise is leading to some positive curricular developments.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Good systems for monitoring have raised the quality and teachers are continuously challenged to improve their practice. However, a small amount of teaching is still not good enough. Some lessons are over directed by teachers and do not sufficiently engage students or enable them to gain the skills to become independent learners. Students' performance is tracked within subject areas and across the curriculum, but the use of assessment within lessons is not yet consistently good. Where underachievement is identified, effective strategies are put in place to recover performance and ensure students meet their increasingly challenging targets. Standards in the school are rising and achievement is now satisfactory because students are making better progress from their starting points.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall but strongest at senior level. The headteacher provides clear and decisive leadership. His steadfast belief in a better future has been central to overcoming the challenges faced by the school. He is well supported by an ebullient and talented senior team. Some key strengths now characterise the school, which has an accurate view of its performance based on secure evidence. Effective teamwork, including that of the governors, has created good capacity for improvement. Governors and senior leaders know the school well and identify appropriate priorities and strategies for development. They have rightly focused on developing leadership at all levels in order to drive up achievement and standards.

## Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

### Grade: 2

The efficiency and effectiveness of the sixth form are good. Most students are recruited from Year 11. They make good progress to reach above average standards. Many go on to higher education. The drop out rate is low and attendance is good. Sixth formers are good role models for younger students and are making an important contribution to developing positive attitudes to learning throughout the school.

The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have good knowledge and enthusiasm for their subjects. Students are keen to learn. Strong relationships underpin good care, guidance and support. Students receive regular, detailed feedback about their personal development and

academic progress. The good curriculum is being developed and the choice of courses available is being appropriately extended in collaboration with other providers.

Leadership and management are good. The newly appointed director of learning has a clear vision for developing the sixth form and a secure grasp of strengths and areas for development.

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

- Ensure students achieve as well as they can in all subjects by raising the quality of all teaching to that of the best.
- Develop leadership at all levels, but particularly subject leadership.
- Increase students' motivation to learn by developing the skills that will enable them to think for themselves and learn more independently.

A small proportion of the 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**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Students join the school in Year 9 with standards that are broadly average. Whilst standards remained below average at the end of Year 11 in 2006, students' performance improved significantly. The school has begun to reverse the steep decline in standards that occurred between 2004 and 2005.

Students' progress is tracked regularly and systematically. Underachievement is detected early and effective intervention strategies are used to ensure students succeed in meeting their increasingly challenging targets. Assessment information indicates that Year 11 students are on track to meet a target for the number achieving five A\* to C GCSE grades that will bring standards closer to the national average. Year 10 students are also on track to achieve a target that will bring the school back in line with the current national average.

Progress in most lessons is at least satisfactory and in many it is good. Students from different backgrounds and groups achieve as well as each other, including students with learning difficulties and disabilities. Overall, students' achievement is satisfactory.

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

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

The personal development and well-being of students are satisfactory. In lessons where teaching is good or better, attitudes are positive but in other lessons students are not so eager to learn or work hard. Overall, behaviour is satisfactory and exclusions continue to fall. Students say bullying is rare and if it does occur it is dealt with swiftly, so that they feel safe in school. All elements of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are satisfactory, although students' awareness of our multicultural society is limited. Students respond well to the school's emphasis on healthy lifestyles. Many take regular exercise and most approve of the choices in lunchtime food. When given the opportunity, they take responsibility enthusiastically, as when interviewing staff for teaching posts in the school. Students appreciate the chance, through the student council, to express a point of view and know that the school will listen to their

concerns. Sixth form students make a valued contribution to the delivery of the personal, social and health education (PSHE) in Year 9. Older students say good opportunities for work experience and helpful careers advice prepare them well for the future. However, some students' numeracy and literacy skills are insufficiently developed by the time they leave school.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Teaching has improved as it has become more focused on how students learn best. Planning is generally clear with appropriate objectives. In some subjects students are now encouraged to work and learn in more varied ways. This keeps students interested, helps those who learn better by seeing and doing than by listening, and gives individuals more chance to express their own ideas. Computers and interactive whiteboards are beginning to be used more widely to present material and demonstrate key ideas visually. More teachers are using assessment techniques to evaluate learning in lessons, but this good practice is not yet shared by everyone. In particular, the ends of lessons are not always well organised. This wastes an opportunity to revisit the main ideas and for students to assess their own progress.

In a small number of lessons students make slow progress. These lessons fail to engage students in their learning and give few opportunities for them to understand how to be successful, independent learners.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

The good curriculum meets the needs of learners well. Year 9 are offered drama and an additional language as well as all the required subjects. The range and suitability of courses on offer at Key Stage 4 are good because the school works in partnership with several providers of work-related courses. Choice and flexibility have been increased. Students entering Year 10 next term can choose an academic or a level 1 vocational route. Some students have secured places on the Young Apprentice scheme and others have a personalised mix of work experience, vocational and academic courses.

A wide variety of after school clubs and activities enriches the curriculum and develops students' talents, aptitudes and interests beyond the classroom. There is a good range of sporting and musical activities out of school hours which are popular and involve large numbers of students. Many students compete for places on the teams representing the school in public speaking, outward bound activities and cookery. The school has a limited range of visits and visitors, but has organised some ambitious historical trips to China and other countries.

## Care, guidance and support

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

The quality of care, guidance and support is good. Students say staff are approachable and willing to give time to dealing with personal or academic problems. Safeguarding procedures are well documented and meet requirements. Child protection arrangements are robust.

The school tracks students' progress carefully and supports students effectively if there are any concerns. Most students know how well they are achieving in the various subjects and what they need to do to improve. The 'return to learning unit' and teaching assistants in the classroom offer good support to students with learning difficulties and disabilities. Their needs are reviewed frequently in conjunction with family members and, where necessary, outside agencies. Students are well supported in making decisions about the next stage of their education, training or employment.

## Leadership and management

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher and senior team provide good leadership. They give clear direction to the work of the school and have developed a shared vision for success amongst staff and students. The new management structure is focusing leaders at all levels on learning and their accountability for students' achievement. The school has made good progress since its previous inspection because senior leaders play an effective role in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. Good monitoring systems link well to the improvement planning process to ensure the right priorities are identified.

Most subject teams evaluate their work well. However, the school is aware that this is not always the case and that sharing the characteristics of good subject leadership is a key to improving the consistency of teaching and thus eradicating the variation in students' performance across subjects. There are high expectations of all staff supported by an appropriately tailored programme of training.

Governors know the school well and hold it to account for its performance. They play a strategic role in development and take an active part in monitoring the school improvement plan.

Improvement since the last inspection is good. Students' achievement has improved significantly; the proportion of good teaching is increasing, leadership is strongly focused on students' progress, and the developing curriculum is increasingly responsive to the needs of students and the wider community. The school is now well placed to continue improving. It knows where it is going and it knows how to get there.

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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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</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	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	2
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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	2
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	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	
The behaviour of learners	3	
The attendance of learners	3	
How well learners enjoy their education	3	
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

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

21 June 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Wadham School, Crewkerne TA18 7NT

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you and appreciated your openness and cooperation. This letter summarises the findings of our inspection. Your parents or carers will have a copy of the full report should you wish to read it.

Your school no longer requires special measures. It is providing a satisfactory, and improving, standard of education. Senior leadership is strong and focused on ensuring that everyone can achieve their best. Test and examination results are getting better, along with your attendance. Well done and please note the connection between successful learning and going to school every day! Staff have worked successfully to get the curriculum right for you. There are some good opportunities and you are now able to choose from a wider range of courses. Your school is a caring and supportive place. You told us staff are approachable and take time to deal with any personal or academic problems you may have. You appreciate this and most of you behave well. You are growing in confidence and starting to believe that you can help to make the school even better.

The most important thing to concentrate on now is helping you to learn and make good progress in every lesson. We have asked staff to:

- raise the quality of teaching further and make sure you achieve as well as you can in all subjects
- develop leadership skills at all levels (including yours) but particularly subject leadership
- focus on helping you all to be keen and independent learners.

Everyone wants Wadham to keep on improving. We think if you believe in yourselves and have the confidence to aim high you will do just that.

With very best wishes for the future,

Jacqueline White Her Majesty's Inspector