

# The Piggott School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	110079
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wokingham District Council
<b>Inspection number</b>	310200
<b>Inspection date</b>	26 September 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Wiola Hola HMI

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>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	1101
6th form	178
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Karen Walker (Vice-Chair)
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Hilary Winter
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 January 2004
<b>School address</b>	Twyford Road Wargrave Reading RG10 8DS
<b>Telephone number</b>	0118 940 2357
<b>Fax number</b>	0118 940 4892

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector. Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement and standards; teaching and learning; care, guidance and support and the impact of this on pupils' personal development and well-being; and aspects of leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from: the school's self-evaluation form (SEF); national published assessment data and the school's own assessment records; curriculum and planning documents; observation of the school at work; discussions with staff, students and a member of the governing body; and from the parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

## Description of the school

The school is larger than average. It has specialist status as a Language College and also a second specialism in Humanities. It has a rural setting but draws pupils from Reading town and beyond as well as from the local area. The school has a significant number of traveller pupils. The circumstances of pupils are generally more favourable than found nationally on average and the proportion eligible for free school meals is below average. Roughly 15% of pupils are from minority ethnic groups but they are not at an early stage of learning English. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is average but the percentage with statements of special educational needs is below average. Pupils' attainment on entry is above average overall.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school with outstanding features. Inspectors agree with a comment from one parent stating that the Piggott School has 'a major positive influence' in the lives of pupils. The care, guidance and support pupils receive are outstanding. This provision, as well as good teaching and learning, has contributed greatly to the rise in academic standards and to the way pupils' personal development, now excellent, has improved since the last inspection. Pupils are considerate and courteous. They want to learn and work hard. They are keen to contribute to the life of the school, local and wider community and, in particular, they readily play a part in dealing with any anxieties other pupils may have. Behaviour is good. Pupils and parents comment positively on this but also mention a few instances of poor behaviour. Pupils are full of praise for the way in which staff make themselves available at any time of the day to discuss problems and give extra help with academic work.

Pupils, and students in the sixth form, achieve well and reach standards that are above average overall. This is the case for all groups of pupils in the school because a very careful check is kept of the progress of each individual. Traveller children do well because of the encouragement and support they receive. The school acts quickly, providing the right intervention, if there are any signs of underachievement. The school has worked with determination to raise standards and a particular success is in the marked increase in the proportion of pupils gaining five or more GCSE grades A\*-C including English and mathematics from 2006 to 2007. Standards are exceptionally high in science in Years 7 to 9. The rate of pupils' progress in science in this key stage is in the top 10% of all schools nationally whereas for English and mathematics it is broadly average. Results in English show a marked improvement from 2006 to 2007 in the GCSE examinations but in the Year 9 tests, the proportion of pupils gaining above expected levels dropped to well below those for mathematics and science.

There are many positive features in teaching and learning. Lessons are planned well and activities are mostly very engaging and presented with good subject knowledge and enthusiasm. The pace of work is good but it occasionally slips and is slow. Relationships are positive. Teachers' skill in questioning pupils about how well they understand their work varies and some excellent practice exists. Feedback on written work is generally helpful but in some cases not frequent enough. Pupils and students are well aware of their targets for learning and can discuss these confidently. They work well together in lessons.

The curriculum is good and includes a wide range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities that pupils and students enjoy greatly. They particularly appreciate the many sporting activities offered and participation in them is high. Pupils and students also value the many opportunities they have for trips and visits, locally, nationally and internationally many of which come about through the school's specialist status. This status contributes greatly to enhancing the quality of the school's educational provision, in terms of the curriculum and facilities. The school is rightly seeking to develop the curriculum further so that the learning programmes are more closely matched to the needs of individuals.

Provision for ICT, raised as having some shortcomings in the previous inspection, has improved, but there is still more to do to develop assessment systems in this subject and to ensure that all pupils, particularly those in Years 10 and 11, are given opportunities to use ICT for learning right across the curriculum. Vocational provision in Years 10 to 13 exists but in a relatively limited form at present: improvements are planned.

Leadership and management are good and their impact is clear in the way the school has sustained above average standards and enhanced many aspects of its work. Some improvements have been made to the accommodation but more are required. The headteacher, new this September, and her senior team, are extremely clear about what the school does well and what it needs to do to improve further. The school has many excellent systems for self-evaluation, including those conducted by departments as well as for the school as a whole. There is scope for improving the way in which the school uses the outcomes of these accurate evaluations to give even greater impetus to the rate of improvement. Target setting is robust, includes a challenge but the level of this challenge can be higher, given the school's good capacity for further improvement as shown in its achievements since the last inspection, the good quality of existing work, and the commitment of staff and pupils.

## **Effectiveness of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 2**

Students achieve well and reach above average standards. Students appreciate the good teaching they receive and the encouragement they get to take responsibility for their own learning, to research and debate. They comment positively on teachers' good subject knowledge and teaching methods. Students' personal development is outstanding and they mature as confident, articulate young people. The curriculum is good with a wide range of A-level subjects offered but relatively few vocational options. The school is planning to extend the range of courses offered. Sixth form students participate well in sporting activities. The previous inspection report stated that students had criticisms about their accommodation and the extent to which their energies were harnessed to be more involved in the life of the school. Accommodation has been improved to some extent, in the library, for example, but it is still only just adequate. Involvement in the school and wider community is good and students contribute very willingly. Leadership and management are good. The care, guidance and support students receive is outstanding because the school works so effectively to treat each one as an individual, keeping a very close check on the progress being made, and on his or her well-being.

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

- Build on the work done so far in improving provision in ICT; improve systems for assessment and extend the use of ICT across the curriculum.
- Increase the proportion of lessons in which teaching and learning are at least good: strengthen further teachers' skills in questioning and other assessment strategies, and increasing the level of challenge to pupils and students wherever possible.
- Seek to improve further the quality of accommodation.

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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	School Overall	16-19
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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	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2

### Achievement and standards

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

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	2
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?	1	1

<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>	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
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	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

8 October 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of The Piggott School, Reading, RG10 8DS

Thank you for the welcome we received on our recent one-day visit to your school. We appreciate the conversations we had with some of you during lessons and at break times. We would like to tell you about our findings.

The school is good and has some outstanding features. The way in which it cares for you and supports you personally is excellent. It also keeps an extremely careful check on how well you are making progress in your studies. You told us how much you appreciate teachers' readiness to provide advice outside of lessons if you need it. The school is very successful in helping you to develop as mature, considerate and courteous young people willing to help each other and make an excellent contribution to your school community and in the wider world. Behaviour in the school is good, and instances of poor behaviour do occur but not often.

Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are conducted in interesting ways, in the main. Some teachers are very skilled in finding out how well you understand the work. You work hard and make good progress. The standards reached in the school, at all stages, are better than average and they are especially high in science in Years 7 to 9. Standards in the school are rising and the school is rightly proud of the improved GCSE results in 2007. The curriculum is good and includes a wide range of activities, trips and visits. You told us about the many sporting events and opportunities for travel abroad, often linked to the school's specialist status in Languages and Humanities. The school has improved its work in information and communication technology (ICT) but there is still more to do here. Some parts of the school are looking worn or are cramped and although some good improvements have been made, to the library, for example, more needs to be done.

Your new headteacher and her senior staff are extremely clear about what can be improved further. They, and other staff, lead and manage the school well. The school sets itself challenging targets and is ready to make these even higher because considerable talent exists in it. We have asked the school to make more lessons as good as the best, and to carry on improving ICT and the quality of the school's accommodation.

I wish you all the very best for your time at school and in the future,

Yours faithfully,

Wiola Hola

Her Majesty's Inspector