

Wyedean School and 6th Form Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115766
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	312061
Inspection dates	1–2 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Andrew Harrett HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	1210
6th form	346
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Walsh
Headteacher	Clive Pemberton
Date of previous school inspection	1 January 2004
School address	Beachley Road Sedbury Chepstow NP16 7AA
Telephone number	01291 625346
Fax number	01291 624251

Age group	11-18
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

This is a larger than average school in which the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly lower than average. The school has achieved Investor in People status and the Healthy Schools award. Wyedean has specialist status in mathematics and computing.

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 in which the personal development and well-being of the pupils and arrangements for their care, guidance and support are outstanding. It is a popular school in which the community has confidence. The attitude of the majority of parents is summed up by the comment of one who said, 'I am proud that my child attends Wyedean School.' Standards throughout the school are above average and pupils' achievement is good. The high standards and good rates of progress across the school are sustained by the quality of teaching and learning, which is good throughout the school and in some cases outstanding. However, some lessons do not provide the most able pupils with sufficient challenge and pace. The good curriculum provides pupils with a broad and balanced range of options and opportunities for enrichment. A recent review of the curriculum has resulted in further opportunities for vocational pathways and more flexibility. In one of the specialist subjects, information and communication technology, standards and achievement are good across the school with some outstanding features. Standards and achievement are satisfactory overall in the other specialist subject, mathematics, but they were not as strong in 2007 as in other subjects at GCSE and in the sixth form. Pupils have excellent relationships with one another and with the adults in school. The school is a harmonious family in which everyone is valued. One pupil said, 'This is a really friendly school. All the teachers help us. You can always talk to them as they're very approachable.' Students thoroughly enjoy coming to Wyedean. Their attendance is well above average. Pupils feel very safe and secure and are confident that any occasional incidents of bullying will be dealt with swiftly and effectively. Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. The quality of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, permeating all aspects of provision. Good examination results, experience of the world of work and the many opportunities for taking responsibility ensure that preparation for adult life is good. The quality of care, guidance and support is an outstanding feature of the school, underpinning good academic progress and excellent personal development and wellbeing. The pastoral system is highly accessible and provides many effective routes of support for all. Strong systems are in place for the detailed tracking and monitoring of pupils' progress. Pupils know and understand their targets for improvement. However, marking in Years 7 to 11 is inconsistent and does not always make clear to the pupils what they should do to improve their work. Students in the sixth form receive a good education and make an outstanding contribution to the life of the school. Standards are above average and achievement is good. Pupils organise and run many activities throughout the school, both social and academic. They teach holiday Spanish, and even ballroom dancing to their peers. Most pupils in Year 11 continue their education in the sixth form where they are joined by a growing number from other schools. The majority stay on for two years and many go into higher education. Specialist status in mathematics and computing has led to significant improvements in the equipment available in the school for teaching and learning. Both subjects have played an important part in the development of strategies across the school to use these resources to best effect. Consequently, they have had a good effect on the quality of teaching and learning. The school has developed good links with local community organisations and businesses. Its programme of classes for adults in the community is popular and effective. Good leadership and management ensure standards remain high. The school knows its strengths and areas for development well. The headteacher provides strong and clear leadership and has gained the respect of the whole school community. Parents and pupils speak highly of his commitment to their welfare. Teachers feel that there is a sense of vision, energy and purpose in planning for the future. As one parent commented, 'The

leadership team does not rest on its laurels, but actively and constantly strives for improvement.' The capacity for further improvement is good.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

Students in the sixth form quite rightly say they receive a good education at Wyedean. They make good progress because lessons are well taught and provide challenge, although they do not move on as well in mathematics as in other subjects. Teachers are knowledgeable and set very clear targets for their students. Work is assessed well, with very helpful comments made in marking. Targets are regularly set for individuals and parents are kept well informed through guidance and advice sessions. The school is very sensitive to the needs of its students and is rapidly developing the curriculum to meet them. For instance, vocational examinations run alongside academic courses in physical education and there are plans to extend this level of choice to other subjects. Some gifted students study Open University courses to augment their A-level qualifications. Students' personal development is outstanding. They show a mature and caring approach to each other and are frequently closely involved in the support and care of younger pupils. They make an outstanding contribution to the life of the main school including mentoring, coaching and leadership.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement in mathematics at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form.
- Ensure that marking points out how pupils can improve their work in Years 7 to 11.
- Make sure that lessons always provide the more able pupils with sufficient challenge and pace.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Standards throughout the school are consistently above average and the pupils make good progress in their learning. The school sets the pupils challenging targets which they generally meet and this contributes well to their good achievement. At Key Stage 3, standards are above average in English, mathematics and science. In the national tests in 2007, more pupils than in previous years attained the highest levels and the pupils made good progress in their learning. Although standards dipped in GCSE examinations in 2007 compared with the previous year, they remained above average and the pupils made good progress in their learning. Standards in the sixth form are above average and achievement is good. However, standards and progress in 2007 were not as good in mathematics as in other subjects at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The school is characterised by excellent relationships. Pupils and staff readily give their time for the benefit of all. The pupil voice is strong with pupils having confidence in their ability to achieve change through a well structured school council. The pupils are polite, empathetic and ready to take on responsibility. The impact of Healthy Schools status is an outstanding feature.

It is thoroughly embedded in the culture of the school with pupils enthusiastically embracing the healthy choices on offer in the canteen and the physical education opportunities and initiatives, such as 'Commit to get fit'. Pupils make an exceptionally strong contribution to the local community through charity fund raising, organising events and participation in community activities, such as working with the fire service. Examples of pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are found in the excellent responses to a visit by Year 11 boys to a mosque and a multicultural nursery, cross-curricular multicultural awareness work in some subjects and the input of the local parish worker. Pupils adopt safe practices very well within lessons and around the school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Teachers know the pupils well and as a result are able to plan lessons that engage and motivate them. The positive relationships between teachers and pupils mean that good progress is made in the majority of lessons. Behaviour in lessons is good and pupils relate well to each other. Teachers make effective use of technology to enhance pupils' learning and have a detailed knowledge of the subjects they teach. Because of this, they can match their questions well to the abilities and needs of different pupils and build on the understanding pupils already have. Questioning techniques are a particular strength, with questions probing understanding and leading the pupils to reflect on their progress well. During lessons pupils know what they will be learning and that teachers' expectations of them are high. Parents are kept well informed of the pupils' progress and are involved effectively in target setting and review. The school is successful in supporting learners with additional needs and uses teaching assistants well in this role. There is a comprehensive programme for intervention when pupils need extra assistance or guidance in order to achieve their potential. Despite this, more able pupils are not always challenged to think independently in lessons and sometimes the pace of learning is too slow for them.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The curriculum has recently been developed to incorporate much more choice and flexibility. This is the first stage of a major and ambitious review that aims to more effectively promote enjoyment of learning and develop pupils as confident individuals and responsible citizens. The changes this year have improved access to workrelated learning and vocational education. Good links with other institutions broaden the range of opportunities for pupils which in turn improves their motivation and willingness to learn. The school is successful in responding to the needs of individuals and offers appropriate and tailored pathways for them. Citizenship is now taught as a separate subject and also permeates the whole curriculum. As a result, pupils learn how to contribute effectively to the community and are developing skills such as in financial management and adopting safe practices. The school library is a good resource that is used well for promoting pupils' literacy. An impressive range of extra-curricular opportunities is greatly enjoyed by pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Procedures for care, guidance and support are rigorous and have an excellent impact on the pupils' progress, safety and well-being. The school meets the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities well. Staff work very well with external agencies to support pupils, including those at risk of disaffection for whom individual timetables are devised. Gifted and talented pupils are supported well by a range of challenging enrichment activities, including a residential summer school, although the focus on the needs of the more able across subject areas is less consistent. Pupils are very positive about the guidance given when choosing their options. Academic mentoring meetings are attended by parents and pupils. The very high participation demonstrates the success of these days as a tool for progress. Although many features of academic guidance are strong, there are missed opportunities to guide pupils through marking in Years 7 to 11. Health and safety procedures are clear and fully in place and all staff know and understand the arrangements for child protection.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Leadership and management across the school are characterised by enthusiasm and a determination to improve the already good standards across the school. Procedures for monitoring and evaluation are accurate and lead to good strategic planning. The headteacher is ably supported by a senior team that works together effectively and fulfils their individual responsibilities well. A particularly good feature of recent developments has been the greater involvement of middle leaders in monitoring provision and raising standards. Consequently, heads of department have a clear sense of the importance of their role in school improvement. They have benefited from training to enable them to make accurate judgements about the work in their areas and take responsibility for improving provision with growing confidence and effectiveness. Since the last inspection, there is more monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning, involving staff throughout the school. Teachers reflect on their practice and help each other to identify strengths and areas to develop further. Pupils' views are also sought about ways to make lessons even better. The school's determination to modernise and improve its curriculum, taking account of the views of stakeholders and planning strategically to implement change, is a good example of its ability to recognise priorities and follow through with well founded initiatives. The governing body provides a good level of challenge and support. It works well to maintain the balance between sustaining the school's traditions and supporting initiatives to prepare young people for their future lives in the modern world. The confidence that the community has in this school is firmly rooted in the good quality of its leadership and management, which continues to improve provision.

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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 ¹ 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	1	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1	1
The attendance of learners	1	2
The behaviour of learners	2	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	1
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?	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

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	2
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2	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	2	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	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	

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

5 November 2007 Dear Pupils and students Inspection of Wyedean School and Sixth Form Centre, Chepstow, NP16 7AA Thank you all very much for the welcome that you gave us recently when we inspected your school. Your willingness to share your views with us helped us considerably and your politeness was much appreciated. Many of you told us that you think that Wyedean is a good school. We agree. You reach high standards and make good progress in your learning. The school is well led and managed by the headteacher, who is given good support by other staff and governors. Everyone works very effectively together to look after your personal development and safety. Good teaching, a broad and improving range of subjects, and lots of activities, which you participate in enthusiastically, all ensure that you do well and keep happy. Your attendance is excellent and you make a big difference to the school community through the school council. The careful attention that the school gives to looking after your welfare and helping you to develop as responsible young people is outstanding. Even in good schools, there are things that could be even better. Results in mathematics at GCSE and in the sixth form need to improve, bringing them in line with other subjects. Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding, but the more able of you are not always fully stretched in lessons. Sometimes marking does not give you enough advice on how to improve your work in Years 7 to 11. It was a real pleasure to discuss the school with you and your views contributed to our findings. Thanks for your contribution. Yours faithfully Andrew Harrett HMI

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