

Wellfield Business and Enterprise College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119723
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	313407
Inspection dates	9–10 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Sue Harrison 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 (total)	390
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr William Evans
Headteacher	Mr Piers Tolson
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2005
School address	Yewlands Drive Leyland Lancashire PR25 2TP
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school; numbers on roll have fallen in recent years due to reduced numbers in primary schools. The school serves a mixed catchment area. The number of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. Most students are from White British backgrounds. The school was designated as a specialist college for business and enterprise in 2005. It opened a training hairdressing salon on its site in 2007 in conjunction with a local college. Wellfield has been designated as an extended school which provides services outside school hours to students, parents and the community. A Surestart Children's Centre opened on the site in 2008.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Wellfield is a good school because of the leadership's determined and effective action to drive up standards. This is achieved by ensuring the school offers a curriculum that matches students' needs and has a rigorous focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Students' achievement is good. Results in GCSE examinations show continuous improvement in recent years and students make good progress in the majority of subjects. The school is aware that in a minority of subjects, including science, students' achievement is not as good. There has been some recent improvement in the standard of work in science and progress is generally satisfactory.

There are pockets of excellence in teaching across a number of subjects and overall, teaching and learning are good. In these lessons, teachers work well with students to assess their progress and help them to understand what they need to do to improve further. In a minority of lessons, teaching is not as well planned or delivered. This sometimes leads to a deterioration in students' behaviour, though behaviour is generally good in lessons and around the school. Curriculum development is very effective in meeting the needs of a wide range of student interests and abilities. The school has used its specialist resources well to enhance the curriculum and to improve teaching and learning across the whole school. Effective partnership work enables it to provide good specialist resources for vocational courses. Care, guidance and support and the personal development of students are good. Students' views are taken seriously by managers and governors, and students contribute well to the local community as well as within the school. They develop confidence and team skills, which prepare them well for employment or further education when they leave the school.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and senior leaders are rigorous in their analysis of the school's strengths and areas for further improvement. They set challenging targets for the school. There is an ongoing programme to develop the leadership skills of middle managers. Whilst there are excellent examples of leadership in some subject areas, this is not yet the case across all areas and there is scope to increase the spread of good practice. Governors support the school well. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school and the impact it has on the lives of their children. The school offers good value for money. It has taken effective action to address issues identified at the last inspection, although it recognises there is scope for further improvement in attendance.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the progress made by students in science.
- Further improve levels of attendance.
- Develop further the leadership skills of some middle managers and the spread of best practice in teaching, learning and assessment across all subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Students' achievement is good from below average starting points. The standard of their work is average overall and above average in some subjects. GCSE examination results have shown marked improvement in recent years. Unvalidated data for 2008 show 40% of students gained 5 or more GCSEs at grades A*-C, including English and mathematics. By the end of Year 11, students make good progress in the majority of subjects in the context of their previous

attainment. Students make very good progress in the school's specialist subjects, particularly in information and communication technology (ICT) and business studies. Students following courses leading to qualifications below Level 2, such as construction and hairdressing, achieve very well. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress throughout their time at the school. The school identified underachievement by boys in some subjects and actions put in place to address this are proving successful.

Examination results in science have been lower than in the other core subjects in recent years. Action is being taken to address this and the unvalidated GCSE results for 2008 show some improvement. In science lessons observed by inspectors most students were making satisfactory progress and occasionally progress was good. The school is also taking action to address the variability in recent years of results in national tests at the end of Key Stage 3. The effective systems for tracking and monitoring progress at Key Stage 4 are being implemented successfully in Years 7-9.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students' personal development and well-being are good. Students are happy, treat each other with respect, and generally behave well in lessons and around the school. Wellfield is a very caring community and students feel part of a big family. Students say that bullying is not a frequent occurrence but, if it does happen, it is dealt with swiftly and they appreciate the help and support available. As a result, students feel safe in school and act responsibly. Students recognise the importance of keeping fit and healthy. They participate in a broad range of activities and sports. They know about healthy eating and are pleased that the school offers healthy snacks in the vending machine and at lunch time. However, not all students choose healthy options; for example, some bring cans of fizzy drinks to school. The student council is a very active and influential team. It participates in all aspects of school life, including interviewing staff and taking part in governing body meetings. Recently it surveyed what students like and dislike in lessons and these views have contributed to improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. Most students enjoy school. Attendance is improving, though it is still slightly below the national average. Students' preparation for work and adult life is good.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The majority of teaching and learning is good. Some lessons are outstanding; this applies to the specialist subjects in particular though there are outstanding lessons in other subjects as well. Students benefit from detailed planning to ensure these lessons engage their interest and teachers use a range of methods and resources that help them to learn effectively. Regular assessment is an integral part of these lessons to ensure learning has taken place before the teacher moves on. This also helps students to understand their level of progress and what they need to do to improve further. There is some excellent use of ICT inside and outside the classroom to support learning. Although the school is working hard to spread good practice, a minority of teaching and learning is less successful. These lessons are not as well planned or delivered and this sometimes leads to a deterioration in students' behaviour. In the majority

of lessons, students behave very well and are enthusiastic learners. Marking of student work is satisfactory.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is well planned to meet students' varying aspirations and capabilities. Good provision is made for Key Stage 3 students who need extra time for literacy and for those who wish to study a second language. Students in Key Stage 4 have access to a good range of accredited academic, applied and vocational courses, a number of which are provided jointly with local colleges. Construction and motor vehicle repair reflect links with prominent local industries. A specialist hairdressing and beauty centre attracts a high number of students.

As befits the specialist status, there is a good take up of courses in business and ICT. Enterprise days and work experience are an integral part of the curriculum and students have good access to careers advice. A comprehensive personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme promotes students' personal development. The contribution of individual subjects to the teaching of citizenship is variable and this is not monitored sufficiently.

An exciting development is the school's virtual learning environment 'Moodle', which enables students to access curriculum resources outside the school day and to submit homework and receive feedback electronically before the next lesson. A good range of extra-curricular activities contributes enormously to students' enjoyment and capacity to make a positive contribution to the community. Frequent visits to universities, museums, theatres, religious centres and industrial sites widen students' horizons and enhance their learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care, guidance and support is good, and there are some outstanding features. The commitment of the staff to offer care and support to individual students is exemplary. Parents and students say the staff are very approachable and give willingly of their time. Students' overall academic progress is tracked effectively. There are examples of excellent guidance to students which involves them well in assessing their own work and that of their peers. However, this good practice is not yet consistent across all departments.

Systems to support welfare guidance are good. Teachers and support staff work well together with a range of other agencies to provide a coordinated response to the needs of students and families. For example, the work of the on-site counsellor is regarded as a supportive and valuable service by students, staff and families alike. The needs of vulnerable students are well met. Exclusion rates are low and declining as a result of effective intervention strategies and a relevant curriculum. There is good support for students to complete homework, including morning, lunchtime and after school homework clubs. There is increasingly good use of email to inform parents about homework. Guidance and support for students at all transition points are excellent. Parents appreciate how quickly their children settle at Wellfield and students say the information they receive about post-16 provision is particularly helpful.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is well led and managed. The senior leadership team demonstrates sharp awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses and a strong drive for continuous improvement. There is intensive monitoring of teaching and learning, which is having a beneficial impact on the quality of lesson planning and delivery. This, together with challenging target setting, is successfully driving up standards.

The specialist college status is well managed and is having a positive impact across the whole school. Examples of this include the increasingly effective use of ICT within teaching and learning and the use of data to set targets and monitor the progress of individual students. The school is working hard to develop the leadership skills of middle managers; there is excellent practice in some areas, but this is not yet fully effective across the whole school.

The promotion of equality of opportunity is good. Examples of the impact of this include the improved achievement of boys and the good rate of progress of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school promotes community cohesion well and is seen as a focal point within the local community. This is exemplified by its close links with primary schools and community access to sports and business facilities and the Children's Centre. Students develop their understanding of groups underrepresented in the local community and other nationalities through assemblies, lessons and tutorials. The views of parents, students and other stakeholders are taken seriously by the school and acted upon. For example, they have influenced curriculum development to ensure students have access to a range of courses that meet their needs and help them to progress successfully into employment or further education and training.

Governors know and support the school well, constructively challenging senior and middle managers. They have worked well with the senior team to deal with issues identified in the previous inspection and ensure the school's finances are managed carefully and efficiently. Governors carry out their legal responsibilities effectively. The school is compliant with requirements to ensure child protection measures are in place and there is regular training and updating for staff.

The leadership of the school demonstrates good capacity and determination to bring about further improvements.

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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	2

The quality of provision

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

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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
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**

13 October 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Wellfield Business and Enterprise College, Lancashire, PR25 2TP

As you know, your school has recently been inspected. Thank you for giving us your views of the school during the inspection. I am writing to tell you about our findings.

We think that Wellfield is a good school. You enjoy most of your lessons and you take part in a wide range of additional activities. You are making good progress in most subjects and examination results at the end of Year 11 have improved substantially in recent years. Students have achieved particularly well in some of the school's specialist subjects. We were very impressed by your involvement in school life and your confidence in expressing your views about everything from uniform to what helps you to learn. We think the increasing use of 'Moodle' to support your learning is really interesting and effective. You told us that you feel well supported by staff and your parents told us that they were pleased by the way the school helps students to settle in and make progress. We think the school offers you a really interesting choice of subjects and you told us you receive good guidance to help you make decisions about options and what to do when you leave school. We found that most of you enjoy school and are polite and well behaved. A few lessons are disrupted by poor behaviour. Attendance is improving but some students miss too many lessons.

We think the school is well led and managed, and that the headteacher understands what the school does well and what it can do to improve further. We have asked him in particular to:

- improve the standard of work and the progress you make in science
- continue to improve attendance
- ensure the best practice in teaching, learning and assessing your work is spread across all subjects.

May I take this opportunity to wish you all the best in your future career.

Sue Harrison

Her Majesty's Inspector