

# Wootton Bassett School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	126455
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wiltshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	315555
<b>Inspection date</b>	8 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Christopher Russell 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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	1521
6th form	249
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Malcolm Wilford
<b>Headteacher</b>	Christopher Montacute
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 March 2004
<b>School address</b>	Lime Kiln Wootton Bassett Swindon SN4 7HD
<b>Telephone number</b>	01793 841900
<b>Fax number</b>	01793 841969

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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: how much progress students are making; teaching and learning; aspects of the curriculum; how well the school cares for, guides and supports students and the impact of this on their personal development and wellbeing; aspects of leadership and management. Evidence was collected from: visits to lessons; national assessment data and the school's own records and analyses; curriculum, monitoring and planning documents; observation of lessons and the school at work; discussions with staff and students; 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, as given in its selfevaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

## Description of the school

Wootton Bassett School is a larger than average-sized comprehensive school serving Wootton Bassett and an area near to Swindon. Levels of social and economic deprivation in the local area are low. The school is popular. The very large majority of students are of White British heritage. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The school is a specialist technology college.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Wootton Bassett School provides a good standard of education. Some aspects of the school's work are outstanding. The school's provision for care, guidance and support has improved in recent years and is now outstanding. Students feel very well supported by the school, both academically and pastorally. This nurturing environment helps ensure that students' personal development and well-being, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are outstanding. Students have an excellent understanding of how to live a safe and healthy lifestyle. Their outstanding preparation for future economic well-being is very well supported by the school's work as a specialist technology college. Students are also helped to play a significant role in the school and local community. When the school was inspected in 2004, students' behaviour and attitudes were judged to be satisfactory. Leaders were asked to review and improve the school's procedures for managing behaviour. Students' behaviour and attitudes to learning are now good, and improving. Students behave well in lessons and around the site. They feel safe and report that incidents of bullying are rare. Achievement and standards are good. Results have risen in recent years. Students generally enter the school with average standards. Standards at the end of Year 11 are above average, representing good progress. Students make greater progress at Key Stage 4. The proportion of students attaining five or more higher grades including English and mathematics is particularly high. While never being less than satisfactory, the progress made by students in English at Key Stage 3 has fallen in recent years. The school is taking well-considered and rigorous action to secure improvement. As a result, students are beginning to make greater progress. Students are well taught. Most lessons are at least good and some are outstanding. Lessons are characterised by good relationships between teachers and students, effective classroom management and a positive ethos for learning. There is some inconsistency in the quality of teaching and learning across the school and a small minority of lessons are satisfactory rather than good. Less effective lessons lack variety. As a result, students are rather passive and their enjoyment of learning is reduced. In a very few lessons, this can lead to some minor misbehaviour. The curriculum is good and improving. Students at Key Stage 4 have access to a good range of courses. There are wide opportunities to take vocational courses linked to the school's specialist status. A small number of students follow work-related courses at the local college; this helps to ensure that they are well motivated and able to achieve well. The school is also gradually making changes to the Key Stage 3 curriculum to raise achievement further. These changes have already helped to improve students' transition from primary school. The school offers a broad range of activities outside lessons. Students enjoy these opportunities and they make a very positive contribution to their personal development. The headteacher has a strong, clear vision and has successfully established a very positive ethos in the school. Senior leaders form a strong and effective team. The school has recently made changes to the way in which departments evaluate their performance and plan for the future. Excellent systems and processes are now in place. While still quite new, they are already leading to greater rigour in departmental evaluation and planning. Heads of department were closely involved in the development of the new systems. As a result, they fit the school's requirements very closely. Comprehensive systems are also in place to monitor the quality of lessons. Lesson observations carried out by senior leaders result in clear judgements about quality and sharply focused areas for improvement. Observations carried out by middle leaders are of more variable quality, and strengths and areas for improvement are sometimes less clear. Senior leaders recognise this and further training is being provided to improve practice further. Senior leaders have a thorough understanding of

the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have acted decisively to address issues raised in previous inspection reports. Appropriate action is being taken to support further improvement and the school is well placed to improve in the future. The school's work as a specialist college has played a major role in its development and improvement.

## **Effectiveness of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 2**

Students make good progress in the sixth form and attain very high standards in their work. They appreciate their very good relationships with teachers and the good quality teaching and support that they receive. The curriculum is good. A wide range of A-level subjects is offered, along with a small number of vocational courses. Students receive excellent care, guidance and support. The school works hard to treat each student as an individual. As a result, students' personal development is outstanding and they mature as confident, articulate young people. The sixth form is well managed and led, and the capacity for further improvement is good.

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

- extend the school's best practice in teaching and learning so that more lessons are of the highest quality
- raise students' achievement at Key Stage 3.



## 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?	1	1
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	1
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	
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	1	

### 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	2	
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	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	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	



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

11 November 2007 Dear Students Inspection of Wootton Bassett School, Swindon, SN4 7HD

Thank you for your help and for taking the time to talk to us during the recent inspection. I am writing to you to tell you about our main findings. We judged the school to be good with some outstanding features. We were very impressed by the way in which the school supports you. This helps to ensure that you develop very well as young people during your time in school. The atmosphere around the school is very positive and we found students to be confident, sensible and well behaved. The school also helps you to achieve well. Examination and test results are high. Students generally make more progress at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. We have asked the school to focus on helping you to achieve even more at Key Stage 3. You are taught well and the vast majority of lessons are at least good. Relationships between teachers and students are good and classrooms are positive learning environments. A few lessons are not so effective. In these lessons, teaching lacks variety. We have asked the school to work on this area, so that even more lessons are similar to the best. We felt that the school is well placed to continue improving over the coming years. The inspection team wish you well for the future. Yours faithfully Christopher Russell Her Majesty's Inspector



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Christopher Russell  
Her Majesty's Inspector