

# Wyvern School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113958
<b>Local Authority</b>	Dorset
<b>Inspection number</b>	325913
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 September 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Michael Farrell

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	80
Sixth form	10
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	4
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Anne Kenwood
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sue Hoxey
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 October 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Dorchester Road Weymouth DT3 5AL
<b>Telephone number</b>	01305 817917
<b>Fax number</b>	01305 770965

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<b>Age group</b>	2–19
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

Wyvern School educates children and young people with profound or severe learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorder, and in recent years the needs of pupils have tended to be more complex. All pupils have statements of special educational needs. Pupils come from south and east Dorset. In September 2006, the school moved to a new building, sharing a mainstream campus with a primary and a secondary school. There are twice as many boys as girls and almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. It has awards for Financial Management Standard in Schools, Investors in People, Healthy Schools, National Autistic Society accreditation, and in September 2008 acquired specialist school status for cognition and learning.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Wyvern is a good school which has developed outstanding partnerships with others including the local college, mainstream schools, other services and the local community. It is excellent in encouraging its community to work together. Parents appreciate what the school offers, saying it is 'a wonderful environment' and that 'children are treated with respect and kindness'. Although pupils' standards are well below those of others of the same age because of their special educational needs, they make good progress and achieve well. After making a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), they continue to progress well right through to the sixth form.

In their personal development too they make good progress. There is a strong sense of trust and respect in the school. Relationships are good, pupils feel safe and know the importance of a healthy lifestyle. They enjoy their schooling as indicated in their good attendance and good behaviour. Good quality experiences of the world of work enable pupils to make good progress in developing workplace and life skills. Behaviour is good because staff encourage it well through their example and through their sensitivity to pupils' changing needs. Pupils are very well cared for within a calm and supportive ethos and procedures for child protection are strong. Routines for assessing pupils' progress are well established and challenging targets for their development are set. Assessments are not always sufficiently detailed. This limits the effective use of assessments of learning, development and behaviour to push standards higher.

Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. On occasions assessment is not fully effective in informing teaching and learning. Lessons start very punctually and time is used well. Teachers, teaching assistants and therapists work closely together for the benefit of pupils. The methods of teaching meet pupils' needs well, for example for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder there is a highly structured approach to learning and managing behaviour. Communication is encouraged well through suitable aids, close working with the speech and language therapists, and the sensitivity of staff to pupils' efforts to communicate.

The good curriculum is well planned to meet the changing needs of the pupils. There are many opportunities to use the community, for example day visits to places of interest and residential trips. Shared social and curriculum experiences with the mainstream schools that share the campus greatly enhance provision. The innovative use of role play and video techniques creating a realistic background, for example in history and religious education lessons, enhances learning well.

The strong leadership and management in the school and the close teamwork of staff contribute to its strong sense of direction. Governors support and challenge the school well. It evaluates itself well and systems to manage the performance of staff work effectively. It contributes excellently to social and community cohesion in its very strong links with other schools, college, work places, the local church and its use of the community. However, the school's analyses of its data on pupils' progress is not always as rigorous as it should be in identifying areas for further improvement and this sometimes limits its ability to drive standards even higher. In recent years, the school has coped very well with considerable changes including in the complexity of the needs of its pupils and a change of building. At the same time it has maintained good provision and good outcomes for pupils. Given this and the passionate commitment of staff to do even better, the school has a good capacity to improve.

## **Effectiveness of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 2**

The good sixth form provision is well led by enthusiastic staff who are always looking for ways to improve further and provide a clear sense of direction. Pupils make good progress and gain suitable accreditation. The school has extended the range of accreditation offered and is taking steps to provide further accreditation of life skills and leisure achievements, making full use of its excellent links with other providers. The curriculum is enhanced by work experience in a variety of welcoming and interesting venues. Pupils' personal and social development is good. They understand the importance of healthy eating and exercise, know the names of the charities they help and why the help is needed, and gain skills that help them understand money and budgeting, for example preparing and selling meals in a local church. Pupils enjoy school and care for the school environment, one stating emphatically, 'We do not like dropping litter.' Teaching and learning are good because teachers are enthusiastic, the pace of lessons is brisk and there is good use of humour adding to the enjoyment of lessons to which pupils respond well. Pupils with autistic spectrum disorder respond very well to the specialist rooms and facilities such as those used for cooking. Teachers and teaching assistants work closely together, providing good models of cooperation. The care of pupils and the support they receive for their learning and development are good. However, the assessment of skills, such as day-to-day use of literacy and numeracy, is not as precise as it could be. This restricts the identification and targeting of areas where standards need to be raised further.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

In the good EYFS provision, all children progress well. They enjoy their activities including looking carefully at and following a colourful object and talking about the pictures in a book. They behave well because their behaviour is well managed and staff are sensitive to any changes in their interests and moods. Children are helped to learn and develop well because adults know them very well and make careful observations about what they can do. They match the activities well to what the children can learn. Staff work closely together and foster good relationships with parents. Children's welfare is well promoted as staff help children keep safe in the calm yet stimulating environment, and manage their behaviour well. In this well led and managed and smooth running provision, the hard-working staff know children's many strengths and where they can improve further. Staff are enthusiastic and ambitious for the children. Child protection procedures are strong. The provision is well equipped and safe. The outdoor play area is used well although the range of learning opportunities is limited.

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

- Improve the detail and accuracy of assessment for academic achievement, personal development and behaviour, and use this to further improve pupils' progress.
- Ensure consistency in the rigorous analysis of whole school data to show more precisely where provision can be improved.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Achievement is good. Progress is good at all key stages including the EYFS and sixth form. Good progress is made by pupils with different types of learning difficulties and/or disabilities,

and boys and girls do equally well. Children who are looked after by the local authority make good progress in relation to their starting points. Pupils make strong progress in communication because provision is well tuned to their needs and includes the support of therapists and communication aids, including symbols, which are well used. Accreditation for older pupils in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form has been extended and is well matched to their needs so that they achieve well. There are advanced plans to extend this further, particularly in life skills and leisure accreditation.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils make good gains in their self-esteem within the very supportive atmosphere that the school provides. Relationships are good because pupils respond well to the atmosphere of trust that has been successfully established within the school between staff and pupils and between pupils themselves, including pupils from the mainstream schools sharing the campus. Pupils make good gains in their awareness of other cultures through the innovative provision of role play and the use of video. Pupils know about healthy eating and the importance of exercise because this is a strong thread of the curriculum. They feel safe because they trust the adults in the school and some are beginning to understand how they can keep safe themselves. Their enjoyment is very clear in lessons and pupils' attendance is good. Because behaviour is well managed by staff, pupils learn increasingly to control their own behaviour. Pupils contribute well to the school community through the school council, and to the wider community through raising money for charities. They gain good experiences of the local community through lessons, and of the wider community through residential trips. They make good progress in developing literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology skills.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good in all key stages and for pupils with different learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Relationships between staff and pupils and among pupils are very positive. Staff, including teachers, teaching assistants and therapists, work closely together. Good routines for assessing pupils are in place, including the use of annotated photographic evidence. Staff know pupils and their learning and pastoral needs very well. Lessons benefit from specialist classrooms and facilities, and staff make full use of these. Lessons start very punctually and maintain a good pace. In most lessons, pupils are fully engaged in activities that fully meet their needs with a good mix of strategies deployed, for example learning through the use of different senses. On occasion the lack of detail in assessment methods restricts the usefulness of assessment to inform teaching and learning to enhance individual progress further.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

Curriculum planning and development are good and successfully meeting the changing needs of pupils who are coming to the school. New schemes of work in literacy and numeracy are enabling staff to plan right through from the EYFS to the sixth form, helping ensure continuity in pupils' work. The balance of subjects in Key Stage 4 has improved, with the introduction of a two-year programme matched to different forms of accreditation. The curriculum is

appropriately tailored to pupils' needs and abilities and includes exciting experiences such as day visits to places of interest and residential trips for older pupils. There are some opportunities for pupils to attend clubs at lunchtimes and after school, and parents appreciate the additional opportunities to attend activities during the summer holidays. The curriculum is greatly enhanced by links with the mainstream schools on the campus, allowing opportunities for shared social and work experiences, which enhance personal development well, including the development of workplace and life skills. The innovative use of recorded role play makes a very strong contribution to many subjects through engaging pupils' interest and enhancing their enjoyment. Some aspects of current curriculum development, including giving more emphasis to personal, social, health and citizenship education throughout the curriculum, are not yet fully embedded to yield their maximum benefit.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Care is particularly strong with safeguarding and child protection procedures securely in place. Behaviour management is a high priority and staff are well trained to resolve any incidents without conflict. Pupils with autistic spectrum disorder are very well supported. Outside agencies are very well used. Pupils with physical difficulties are also very well supported to participate in activities as fully as possible, and pupils with medical needs are very well supervised. Staff know pupils' individual needs well and shape activities accordingly. Safety is a high priority and activities including trips are assessed for hazards beforehand. Play is very well promoted, for example by the range of activities available at playtime. Target cards are increasingly effective in helping pupils understand how they can improve. Targets for learning and personal development are set, but the assessment of pupils' progress is not always sufficiently detailed. This limits the reliability of assessments of learning, development and behaviour and constrains the precision with which the school is able to use this information to drive standards higher.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Strong leadership and management have created a clear sense of direction and a motivated staff who work well together as a team. Suitable and well considered observations of teaching are effectively used to improve teaching and learning. The school's self-evaluation is good. Planning accurately identifies areas that need to be improved and appropriate steps that need to be taken. However, on occasions data analysis is not fully effective in identifying exactly where further improvements can be made. Equal opportunities are promoted well, as reflected in the improved consistency of teaching and learning across the key stages. The school contributes excellently to community cohesion in its very strong links with other schools, college, work places, the local church and its use of the community. Members of the governing body are deeply committed to the school and both challenge and support it well. The school has planned carefully to achieve specialist status, which was gained some days before the inspection took place, and is well set to drive this forward.

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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?	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2	
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2	
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2	
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2	
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2	
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2	

## Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	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	2	
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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?	2	2

## 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 eliminated	2	
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	

## Annex B

### Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

26 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Wyvern School, Weymouth, DT3 5AL

It was good to meet you when my colleague and I inspected your school.

Thank you for being so kind and helpful to us.

We found many good things about your school. You try hard and do well in your work and in your personal development. You behave well and care for each other. Your lessons are good and you enjoy them. The school is well led and staff are always trying to do better. The links with other schools and other people who help you are excellent. All of these things together make your school a good one.

There are a couple of things that the school can do even better so I have asked the staff to:

- make sure when they assess how well you are doing, that they are looking at what you are doing more carefully
- make sure information about your progress is looked at very carefully so the school can do even better.

I am sure you will keep working hard and I wish you well for your future.

Yours sincerely

Michael Farrell Lead inspector