

The Wavell School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116448
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	326397
Inspection dates	10–11 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Anne Wellham HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	853
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Anthony Camfield
Headteacher	Miss Amanda Rowley
Date of previous school inspection	7–8 June 2006
School address	Lynchford Road Farnborough GU14 6BH
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors. The inspectors visited 23 lessons, four tutor sessions and two assemblies. They held meetings with governors, staff, students and parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at documents including its development plan, departments' self-evaluation, analyses of students' progress and attainment, and the questionnaires completed by 212 parents.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- students' progress in lessons and how well teaching and assessment help students to learn
- the achievement of different groups of students
- the impact of opportunities for student leadership on achievement and well-being.

Information about the school

The Wavell School is a smaller-than-average, oversubscribed comprehensive school. Most students are of White British heritage, with around one sixth from minority ethnic groups, mainly Nepalese. The number of students whose first language is not English is similar to the national average. The number of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Around one third of students are from military families, none of whom are eligible for free school meals. The students from military families also cause movement in and out of the school at times other than is usual. This means that by the end of Year 11 up to a quarter of the year group may have joined the school after the start of Year 7. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is similar to the national average. The school has had specialist designation in technology since 2002 and is the leading school for the diploma in information technology in the local 14–19 Consortium. It was awarded Investors in Careers Award in 2006 and Enhanced Healthy School status in 2007.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

1

Capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

The Wavell School is an outstanding school. Building and creating meaningful partnerships with parental focus groups, local colleges and employers and outside agencies is a key feature of the school's success. Students, staff and parents share a common purpose and are proud to be part of the school community. Wavell students show a keenness and commitment to succeed in all aspects of school life and make the most of the many opportunities to extend and improve their learning, as shown by their good attendance and behaviour. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about their child's education, summed up in the comment from one parent: 'My view of The Wavell School is that there is a very dedicated team of staff from the headteacher down who hold the best interests of the child at the heart of everything they do.' The school manages and supports the needs of a constantly changing school population and their families extremely well so that all students thrive in a well-ordered, purposeful community where they value and respect each other's differences. The school ethos instils a sense of purpose and self-belief which underpins students' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Students achieve well in their academic studies because of the exceptionally high levels of care and support for all individuals and groups, and the outstanding curriculum, which is highly personalised to meet their needs. They achieve standards that are above the national average and make good progress from their starting points. The school has a strong commitment to ensuring that every student has an equal chance to learn and works hard to eradicate any differences in achievement between groups of students. For example, effective action has been taken to improve the achievement of middle-ability girls and students who have experienced disruption to their education, and the gap is reducing rapidly. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language make good and often excellent progress because of the well-targeted support and guidance they receive.

Teaching is typically good. The most skilful teachers inspire and challenge students and engage in high-quality dialogue in lessons, which allow all students in their classes to make excellent progress. They carefully assess what students are capable of achieving based on what they already know and what steps they need to take to further their learning. However, this excellent practice is not yet applied consistently across the school.

The school is extremely well led. The inspiring headteacher is supported by a team of committed and enthusiastic senior leaders and they have a shared vision which secures continuous improvement. Since the last inspection rigorous self-evaluation has led to improvements to the curriculum, leadership and management and partnerships that make an excellent contribution to students' good and often exceptional achievement and well-being. These strengths underpin the school's outstanding capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Embed assessment practices in teaching and learning so that all teachers
 - extend the use of high-quality dialogue with students, so that teaching becomes more interactive
 - mark work thoroughly with meaningful feedback
 - use assessment to inform their planning and evaluate their teaching.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

In the majority of lessons observed the quality of learning was good and students made good progress. The vast majority of students are well behaved, keen to engage and respond enthusiastically to stimulating teaching that contributes to their good and sometimes outstanding progress. The very positive relationships that exist between students and their teachers and other adults create a respectful and relaxed atmosphere in which to learn. On the rare occasions when teaching is uninspiring students lose motivation and concentration and behaviour is less good.

Students enjoy coming to school and they thrive in a community where they feel exceptionally safe, well cared for and supported. The school is highly successful in promoting the values of respect and responsibility and in encouraging all students to get involved. Very large numbers of students participate in and benefit from student leadership opportunities and this makes a valuable contribution to reviewing and evaluating provision. Good examples are their involvement in monitoring the new catering contract and the review to appraise the moral purpose of the school.

Attendance, judged satisfactory at the time of the last inspection, is now good. The school has been very effective in improving the persistent poor attendance of a small minority of students and is working hard to change the attitude of some parents who take family holidays during term time. The introduction of a broader curriculum in partnership with local colleges has also improved the motivation and attendance of students who were at risk of becoming disaffected.

In 2008 the school achieved its highest ever results in GCSE examinations. They have risen to above the national average and the school's data on current attainment shows that they are set to rise further in 2009. There has been a considerable increase in the numbers of students achieving the higher grades at GCSE and the school has been successful in reducing the variation in achievement between subjects and different groups of students that existed at the time of the last

inspection. Students following vocational courses achieve well.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	2
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	2
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	1
How well do pupils behave?	1
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	1
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	1
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	1

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good overall with many strengths. Information and communication technology as a tool to support and extend learning is used well by most teachers. Where there is exceptional teaching students make outstanding progress. In these lessons students are actively involved, challenged to think for themselves and encouraged to take risks with their learning. The most effective teachers take into account what students are capable of achieving and what they have already learnt to plan activities that extend their knowledge, skills and understanding in a subject. The best teaching is supported by constructive feedback through the use of meaningful dialogue in lessons or detailed marking of work. In lessons where there are limited opportunities for students to discuss their learning with each other or the teacher, students make less progress.

Since the last inspection there have been considerable improvements made to the curriculum. The excellent personal, social, citizenship and health education programme combined with high-quality religious education provision, including the introduction of a GCSE course in ethics and philosophy taken by all students, help them understand how to live in a cohesive community. This is enhanced by an extensive programme of extra-curricular activities and community projects that provide many opportunities for students from different backgrounds and of different ages to interact and work together. An excellent example is the very popular and enjoyable 'Rock Challenge' attended by over 100 students each year.

The school's specialist status has enriched the curriculum through sharing good

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

practice across subjects and across other schools and by providing opportunities to work with local industry and businesses. High-quality guidance informs students of their future options and prepares them very well for employment, training or further education.

Levels of support and care for students are especially well targeted and help students to recognise and understand factors that affect their physical and mental health and emotional well-being. The school knows and understands the needs of individual students and their families extremely well. For example, the induction programme for students who join the school at other than usual times during the year is exemplary and the support for looked after children and those with additional needs is exceptional.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership and management, including student leadership is very effective. Very cohesive partnerships with parents, other providers and external services and the local and wider communities have contributed to sustained improvements in student achievement and well-being and in promoting community cohesion.

The headteacher inspires a strong belief in the school's success, which is shared by staff, parents and students. Constructive self-evaluation at all levels provides the school with an accurate appraisal of its effectiveness and identifies relevant priorities for improvement. For example, sophisticated tracking and analysis of the performance of different groups of students identifies where the school needs to intervene to provide additional support and where new teaching strategies need to be developed to improve learning.

A commitment to ensuring the safety of students, shared by governors, parents and staff, is embedded in all aspects of school life. Systems to assure quality and assess risk are excellent. A good example is the recent landscaping project that has made considerable improvements to the security of the site and the safety of students coming to and from school. The school actively monitors and amends their register for children at risk or those who are causing concern and collaborative working with external agencies is exemplary.

The governing body provides committed and enthusiastic support. Governors are well informed and actively engaged in school life. They understand and take their responsibilities very seriously and challenge vigorously to make sure that the school's actions have a positive impact on students' learning and well-being.

Highly positive relationships have been established with all groups of parents and carers, particularly with the Nepalese and military communities. The school actively encourages parental involvement through focus groups and partnership surveys. Their views, opinions and feedback are used to refine structures and develop new systems, such as improving communication through 'ParentMail' which is proving very popular with parents.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

Of parents who responded to the questionnaire and the group who spoke to an HMI, the overwhelming majority were very positive about all aspects of the school. Inspectors fully endorse their views. A very small number of parents had concerns about the quality of learning in some lessons.

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Wavell School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. If a parent has more than one child at the school, we ask them to record an answer against all the questions, for each of their children.

The inspection team received 212 completed questionnaires. In total, there are 733 parents and carers registered at the school.

	Always	Most of the time	Occasionally	Never
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	132	71	7	2

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

Common terminology used by inspectors

- Attainment:** the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
- Progress:** the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
- Achievement:** the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, training or development. This may refer to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, and understanding or desired attributes. Attributes include qualities or personal competencies which are important to the development of the pupil; for example personal, social, cultural, emotional or health.
- Capacity to improve:** the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
- Leadership and management:** the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.



23 June 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of The Wavell School, Farnborough, GU14 6BH

Thank you for the very polite and friendly welcome you gave us when we came to your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you and your teachers, visiting your lessons and looking at your work. Nearly everyone we talked to told us that your school is excellent. The inspectors agree. We were very impressed with the respect that you show each other and with your good behaviour. The very happy and positive atmosphere in the school helps you to learn and we were pleased to see so many of you enjoying your lessons.

As well as helping you to achieve good results in examinations and make good progress, the school encourages you to have high aspirations for the future. The school works hard to make sure that you have opportunities to study a range of subjects at different levels and to take responsibility for leading different activities. Competitions such as 'Rock Challenge' help you learn valuable skills for your future life as well as being great fun and a chance to show how talented you are. The headteacher and senior staff lead your school exceptionally well and all the staff and governors are committed to providing you with the highest levels of care and support and to keeping you safe. Everyone, including your parents and carers, works together to make sure that you get the best education possible. Although there are so many excellent things about your school, there is always room for improvement. We have asked the school to make sure that all the teachers use different ways to assess how well you are learning by:

- marking your work thoroughly and providing feedback that you understand
- discussing your learning with you during lessons
- taking account of how much you know and understand when planning lessons so that all the activities focus on your learning.

We wish you all at Wavell a happy and successful future.

Yours faithfully

Anne Wellham
Her Majesty's Inspector

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