

St Wilfrid's School

Independent School

Inspection Report

DCSF Registration Number	878/6004
Unique Reference Number	113567
Inspection number	329574
Inspection dates	16 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Andrew Redpath HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

This was a light touch inspection (LTI) which focussed principally on the quality of education provided by the school; its provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and the improvements the school has made since its last inspection.

Information about the school

St Wilfrid's School is a co-educational day school for pupils aged between 5 and 16 years. It occupies extended Georgian and Victorian buildings close to the centre of Exeter. Currently, there are 100 pupils attending all of whom have their places privately funded. The school was established in 1780 by Anglican nuns and seeks to maintain a Christian ethos. It is currently in the ownership of a private company, St Wilfrid's School. It was last inspected in March 2005. The school aims to provide 'a happy, secure and stimulating environment in which all pupils achieve a positive self-image by experiencing success, accepting responsibility and by recognising and respecting the needs of others'.

Evaluation of the school

St Wilfrid's school provides a good quality of education which is characterised by an extremely caring ethos. Pupils are keen to learn and their behaviour is outstanding. Good teaching enables pupils to make good progress. The school is particularly successful in ensuring pupils gain high grades in a wide range of GCSE subjects which represents excellent achievement. Parents are overwhelmingly pleased with the school's provision. Thoughtful leadership has enabled the school to tackle successfully the areas for improvement identified by the last inspection. The use of assessment information to check pupils' progress has been very effective in improving the school's performance. The school meets all the regulations.

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is good. In accordance with its aims, the school provides a stimulating curriculum which includes all subjects of the National Curriculum. An extremely good range of GCSE courses is offered for pupils to study in Years 10 and 11. Excellent use is made of community facilities, including those at a local college, university and sports centre, to provide physical education. There is an appropriate balance between subjects and the inclusion of personal, social and moral education (PSME), citizenship and cookery ensures pupils receive a broad education. A good range of additional clubs take place both in school time and after

school, which enrich the curriculum. The school organises an annual residential trip for Year 7 pupils and day trips to places of interest, such as London. Pupils enjoy these excursions and some report they would like the school to organise more. In response to parental views the school has recently extended its provision for music.

Planning is in place for all subjects. The composition of primary classes has changed recently and some include pupils from more than one year group. The school is aware of areas which need adapting and is currently extending its curriculum planning to ensure all pupils receive activities which are entirely appropriate for their age. Pupils with a learning difficulty and/or disability receive a high level of appropriate support and have their needs met fully. Appropriate careers advice is provided by the school. Good arrangements are in place for pupils to choose their options at the end of Year 9 and to help them transfer between the primary and secondary departments.

The quality of teaching and assessment ranges from satisfactory to outstanding and is good overall. Excellent relationships between teachers and pupils are evident in lessons across the school. As a result a pleasant and purposeful atmosphere prevails in which pupils feel confident to ask questions. Teachers generally have a firm grasp of their subject and are able to use this to set high expectations for learning. Lessons progress at a brisk pace and a good variety of activities is provided. For example, a stimulating mathematics lesson was observed where pupils demonstrated the measurement of angles to the rest of the class and at the end of the session discussed what they had learned. Planning is usually good, particularly for examination subjects based on course modules. Occasionally, the focus is too much on the task pupils are completing, rather than what they are learning and activities are not matched closely to the abilities of all pupils in the class.

The school conducts regular assessments and uses this information very effectively to check each pupil's progress and to set challenging targets for improvement. Given their starting points pupils make good progress. Primary pupils achieve well, particularly in English, whilst older pupils are extremely successful in gaining a large number of high grade GCSE passes each year.

The school has in place arrangements for monitoring teaching, although lesson observations are sometimes informal and do not take place often enough to share best practice effectively.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Pupils' personal development is good. They enjoy coming to school and get along very well with each other. St Wilfrid's provides a relaxed and friendly environment which enables pupils to feel accepted, some of whom have not succeeded in their previous schools. As one pupil stated, 'I have improved a lot since I came to this school'. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding both in lessons and around the school. They are polite and courteous towards visitors and display very positive attitudes to their work.

Pupils' spiritual awareness is promoted through reflection time in assemblies and visits to the local church. Their self-confidence is developed by participation in activities such as drama and the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. Pupils have a secure understanding of 'right' and 'wrong'. Moral issues are discussed in assemblies and in the PSME curriculum. Effort and achievement are recognised through assemblies, house 'credits' and merit badges. Also, appropriate conduct is reinforced by staff providing good role models and treating pupils with respect.

The last inspection suggested that pupils of primary age needed to be provided with greater opportunities to take responsibility. The school has tackled this successfully by enabling pupils to work as class monitors, and by making sure pupils take responsibility for their books and equipment in lessons. Some older pupils feel they would like a more formal arrangement for channelling their views and the school is restructuring the school council to address this. Pupils make a positive contribution to the wider community by raising money for various charities, for example Cancer Research and Children in Need. Preparation for students' future economic well-being is good. All students leave with excellent qualifications in mathematics and English and a good working knowledge of information communication technology. Older pupils also benefit from a range of work experience placements which they arrange themselves according to their particular interests.

Individual rights and responsibilities and the role of public institutions and services are taught through the citizenship curriculum. This is supported by relevant visits, for example to the Houses of Parliament. The school has a strong Christian emphasis in keeping with its aims and pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of other faiths and cultures in modern Britain. Visits to some different religious and cultural establishments do take place, although this is not set out in a comprehensive programme. The school has plans to develop this area of the curriculum.

Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety

Provision for safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety is outstanding. The friendly and very caring ethos ensures pupils feel safe and valued. Pupils report there is no bullying and that the small class groups afford teachers time to discuss any individual problems or concerns. In the words of one pupil, 'Teachers listen to you and know how to help you'. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are robust. A clear policy is in place and staff have received recent training. Thorough checks are completed prior to the appointment of new staff to ensure that they are suitable to work with children. Detailed health and safety policies and risk assessments are in place, which cover all aspects of the school's work. Fire drills are held regularly and fire-fighting equipment checked by a specialist company.

Pupils learn about keeping safe and leading a healthy lifestyle through the PSME and food technology curricula. The need for healthy eating is taught in cookery lessons to both primary and secondary age pupils. A thorough programme of PSME includes topics such as drug awareness and keeping safe. Pupils take regular exercise through attendance at a local sports centre, by going swimming, or when they

participate in the school's sporting clubs, for example surfing, orienteering and dancing. Primary pupils also complete short warm up 'activate' physical exercises each morning.

The school has a plan for increasing access for disabled users which meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005.

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following point for development:

- strengthen arrangements for monitoring teaching and learning so that best practice can be shared more effectively across the school.

Inspection Judgement Recording Form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education		✓		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		✓		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		✓		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		✓		

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		✓		
The behaviour of pupils	✓			

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils	✓			
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School details

Name of school	St Wilfrid's School		
DCSF number	878/6004		
Unique reference number	113567		
Type of school	Coeducational day school		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1780		
Age range of pupils	5-16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 57	Girls: 43	Total: 100
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 0	Girls: 1	Total: 1
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£5106 - £7059		
Address of school	25-29 St David's Hill Exeter Devon EX4 4DA		
Telephone number	01392 276171		
Fax number	01392 438666		
Email address	office@stwilfrids.devon.sch.uk		
Headteacher	Mrs Macdonald-Dent		
Proprietor	St Wilfrid's School (Exeter) Ltd		
Reporting inspector	Andrew Redpath HMI		
Dates of inspection	16 September 2008		