

Wildern School

Wildern Lane, Hedge End, Southampton, SO30 4EJ

Inspection dates

21–22 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	N/A
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The governing body, the headteacher and senior leaders expect all students to do as well as they possibly can in both their academic and personal development. These high expectations have been very effectively shared with, and embraced by, all the staff working in the school.
- Examination results attained by Year 11 students have been well above the national average for a number of years. The progress made by students between Years 7 and 11 is outstanding.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding. Teachers are highly skilled, enthusiastic and ambitious practitioners. Lessons are packed with a range of interesting activities and no time is wasted.
- Teachers know students well and carefully adapt work so that it matches the level at which they are working. However, just occasionally, activities are not closely matched to the learning needs of low-attaining students. As a result, this very small group of students makes good rather than outstanding progress.
- Students are proud of their school and talk very positively about the range of opportunities it provides for them. Their behaviour in lessons and around the school site is exemplary. Students rightly feel very safe in school and very well cared for.
- Senior staff and members of the governing body undertake regular checks on all aspects of school life. As a result, they have a clear and accurate picture of the quality of teaching and students' achievement. They take effective action to address any areas of concern.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 46 lessons, taught by 46 teachers, of which five were joint observations with members of staff.
- An inspector made a number of short visits to lessons with a senior leader to focus specifically on the support for disabled students and those with special educational needs.
- Meetings were held with students, the Chair of the Governing Body and three other governors, school staff, including the headteacher, senior and middle leaders. A telephone conversation was held with an independent external adviser to the school.
- Inspectors took account of the 66 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) that were received by the end of the inspection.
- Inspectors reviewed the 151 staff questionnaires returned during the inspection.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work, including students’ books, and looked at a range of documents, including the school’s evaluation of how well it is doing, improvement plan, records related to the behaviour and safety of students, attendance, and assessment data.

Inspection team

Peter Sanderson, Lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Chris Corp	Additional Inspector
Gordon Jackson	Additional Inspector
Karen Roche	Additional Inspector
Sylvie Trevena	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Wildern School is a larger-than-average secondary school.
- The school became an academy converter in April 2011. When its predecessor school, also called Wildern School, was last inspected by Ofsted in December 2008, it was judged to be outstanding.
- The school has specialist status in performing arts and system leadership.
- The school was designated as a teaching school in July 2011.
- Nearly all students are White British. The proportion of students whose first language is not English is well below average.
- The proportion of students identified with special educational needs and supported through school action is below average.
- The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well below average.
- The proportion of students who are known to be eligible for additional government funding, known as the pupil premium, is well below the national average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress by the end of Key Stage 4.
- Around 40 students in Key Stage 4 attend courses offered by Southampton City College on one day each week.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the progress made by the very small proportion of students who enter the school with low levels of attainment from good to outstanding, by ensuring that all teachers' lesson planning and practice to help these students learn are outstanding.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- The attainment of students at the end of Year 11 has been well above the national average for a number of years. For example, the proportion of students attaining five or more A* to C GCSE grades including English and mathematics and the proportion attaining the English Baccalaureate qualification are both well above the national average.
- Outstanding teaching combines with students' enthusiasm for learning to promote outstanding progress over time. The high quality of teaching across the school ensures that there are only minor variations in progress between subjects.
- Students' attainment is well above the national average in English and mathematics; however, the proportion of students attaining the higher A* and A grades in mathematics is above that in English. This is because the school enters some more-able students for English GCSE examinations at the end of Year 10 so that these students can start advanced level (AS) English in Year 11. The school has rightly identified that this practice is having an impact on the proportion of higher GCSE grades attained in English and plans to cease this practice from September 2013.
- Students use and develop their reading, writing, communication and mathematics skills extremely well in a range of subjects. Many opportunities provided for students to work in pairs and groups develop their speaking and listening skills exceptionally well.
- Very effective use is made of the facilities and expertise at Southampton City College to provide a small proportion of Key Stage 4 students with vocational courses that are well matched to their learning needs and interests. There is good communication and liaison between the college and school and students make very good progress on the courses they follow.
- The additional funding received by the school for the very small proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium has been spent very effectively on a range of in-class support and out-of-classroom interventions. These support their learning extremely well. Their overall level of attainment at the end of Year 11, which the government measures by average point scores, is below that of other students in the school but above that for similar students nationally.
- Year 11 examination results over the past two years indicate that the very small proportion of students who joined the school with low levels of attainment made good rather than outstanding progress between Years 7 and 11. The school is taking effective action to address this issue and school tracking data and inspection evidence indicate that the progress of this group of students is accelerating.
- Teachers are careful to ensure that disabled students and those with special educational needs are fully involved and engaged in learning and given high-quality support in lessons. Staff know students well and adapt what these students study to maximise their learning. As a result, this group of students makes excellent progress.
- The proportion of students leaving school and entering employment, education or training is well above the national average.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Consistently high-quality teaching promotes excellent progress across the school. Much of the teaching is outstanding. Teachers are enthusiastic about teaching their subject and devise interesting and imaginative activities to keep students fully engaged in learning.
- Teachers' knowledge of their subject and of examination requirements is excellent. This is used very effectively, not only to plan lessons that aid students' learning of key ideas and concepts but also to prepare students very well for examinations.
- Warm, constructive relationships pervade classrooms. Students show great respect for each other and very willingly and constructively engage in the numerous opportunities they are provided with for paired, group and independent work. Students show a strong desire to learn

and teachers successfully satisfy this.

- The effective use of assessment data to set challenging targets ensures that the expectations of students' progress are very high. Teachers generally use this data to good effect to set work at an appropriately challenging level for all students. However, very occasionally activities are not closely enough matched to the learning needs of low-attaining students.
- Students know their targets and how well they are doing in relation to them. Their work is marked regularly with high quality feedback given to them. As a result, they are clear about what they have to do to improve their learning.
- Teachers make very effective use of questioning to check and develop students' learning. Students are encouraged to answer questions in detail, promoting their deeper understanding.
- Students spoken to during the inspection were grateful to those teachers who gave up their time to provide a wide range of revision classes and clinics. They judged this support had a very positive impact on their learning.
- Social and moral development is promoted extremely well through well-structured group work and opportunities for students to discuss their own ideas. For example, in a Year 10 English lesson, moral issues in the play *An Inspector Calls* were enthusiastically discussed and considered by students. Group discussions in a Year 8 religious education lesson which considered whether God exists also made a strong contribution to students' spiritual development.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Students' outstanding behaviour makes a very positive contribution to the school and contributes strongly to a harmonious and welcoming community.
- Students are extremely polite and well behaved around the school, particularly when walking down some rather narrow corridors in some of the school buildings. Students arrive punctually at the start of the school day and to the start of lessons.
- The management of students' behaviour is consistent and very effective. As a result, students' behaviour in lessons is exemplary and makes a very positive contribution to their outstanding achievement. Students are very keen to learn and respond very positively to the excellent teaching they receive.
- Students stated that they enjoyed school and felt extremely safe. This is reflected in their above average levels of attendance. Virtually all parents and carers responding on Parent View judged that their children were safe in school.
- Parents and carers, staff and students are all positive about behaviour. Students report that bullying of any kind is very rare and dealt with thoroughly if any hints of such behaviour appear. Students are aware of the different forms bullying may take and understand how this may affect them.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The ambition and commitment of the headteacher to ensuring that all students reach their full potential is shared by her capable, committed team of leaders and managers. All staff are committed to this vision, with all 151 staff returning questionnaires reporting that they were proud to be a member of staff at the school.
- The ambition of leaders is reflected in the challenging targets set for students. Comprehensive checks on students' progress through analysing assessment information enable all staff to keep a close eye on how each student is progressing towards these targets. Any student identified as beginning to fall behind is provided with additional help.
- Systems for monitoring the performance of subjects are excellent and all leaders are held accountable for students' achievement. This helps ensure there is little variation in achievement between subjects.

- Discrimination in any form is not tolerated and this is evident in the courtesy and respect that both staff and students demonstrate for each other.
- The quality of teaching is robustly and accurately monitored. A broad range of training opportunities are in place to help staff improve their skills. This includes working with and observing outstanding practitioners. The correct decisions are made about teachers' movement up the salary scale on the basis of their performance.
- Accurate evaluation of how well the school is doing is used well by governors and senior leaders to define priorities for improvement planning.
- The school's curriculum meets students' needs very well. A broad range of academic courses is available to students in Key Stage 4. This is enhanced by a limited range of vocational courses that are well tailored to meet individual student needs. An excellent range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities makes an extremely positive contribution to students' sporting, social and cultural development.
- Students enjoy many opportunities in their lessons to reflect on spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues. This is enhanced through whole-school activities, such as Digging Deeper Days, and the role of the school as a Rights Respecting School. These positively contribute to students' outstanding social, moral, cultural and spiritual development.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is well informed, knows what is happening in the school and how well it is doing in relation to similar schools. The governors have a good grasp of available performance data. They ask challenging questions of the headteacher and senior staff and hold the school to account for teaching quality and students' achievement. Information on the quality of teaching is shared with governors so they can link this to managing teachers' performance and pay progression. They are proactively involved in school through links with specific subjects. A resource sub-committee meets regularly to ensure that funds are allocated and used properly to support teaching and learning. Governors are fully aware of the pupil premium and how it is being used to aid those students' learning, with well-targeted additional help and learning opportunities. Their understanding of data enables them to determine the impact this funding has on students' progress and consequently governors make sure that these students achieve very well. The governing body ensures that the school fulfils its statutory responsibilities in relation to safeguarding. The backgrounds of all staff appointed are fully checked, and staff are trained appropriately to keep students safe and free from harm. Governors ensure that they keep their skills and knowledge up to date through appropriate training.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	136654
Local authority	N/A
Inspection number	395525

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,872
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Glenda Lane
Headteacher	Marie Louise Litton
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01489 783473
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