



Waddesdon Church of England School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number 110534
 LEA Buckinghamshire LEA
 Inspection number 288707
 Inspection dates 19 September 2006
 Reporting inspector Mr Russell Jordan (HMI)

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

Type of School	other secondary	School address	School Lane,Waddesdon
School category	voluntary aided		Aylesbury HP18 0LQ
Age range of pupils	11-19	Telephone number	01296 651382
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Fax number	01296 658453
Number on roll	956	Chair of Governors	Mrs Janet Plotkin
Number on roll (6th form)	234	Headteacher	Mr Alan Armstrong
Appropriate authority	The governing body		
Date of previous school inspection	19 November 2001		

Age group	Inspection Date(s)	Inspection No.
11-19	19 September 2006	288707

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Waddesdon Church of England School is a secondary modern school in an area where the highest attaining one third of primary school pupils are allocated places at grammar schools. The attainment of students on entry to Waddesdon is broadly average. The vast majority of students are white British with small numbers from a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds. The number of students known to be eligible for free school meals is low. There are a growing proportion of students with learning difficulties and disabilities. Waddesdon has a larger than average sixth form. Waddesdon was awarded specialist visual arts college status in 2003 and became a Leading Edge Partnership school in 2004.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Waddesdon Church of England School is an outstanding school where students achievement is excellent. The school aims to nurture and educate students in a Christian environment, in order that they may achieve their potential and be valuable members of society. Outstanding leadership and management ensure that the school delivers these aims very successfully. Leaders set a clear direction for the school that is well understood by teachers, students and their parents. The excellent self-evaluation is based on rigorous monitoring so that the leadership team has a clear vision of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. This leads to effective action to rectify weaknesses and raise achievement. The record of the leadership team in tackling the issues identified at the last inspection, in improving the provision and in raising achievement all show that this school is very well placed to continue improving.

The assessment and monitoring of students' progress is a key strength of the school. This is because teachers consider both the students' personal development and their academic development across the range of subjects together at every level in the school. The process is systematic and rigorously applied. This nurturing and challenging approach is valued by both students and their parents. As one parent wrote, 'it is an extremely happy school that motivates all children to reach the best of their ability'.

The outstanding care of students is another key strength of the school and is firmly underpinned by the school's Christian values. Almost all parents and students are quick to praise the school in this respect.

The outstanding flexible curriculum meets the academic and personal development needs of all learners very well, whether they are gifted and talented or requiring a more vocational and applied or work related approach.

The school has very successfully managed the growing proportion of students with learning difficulties and disabilities and helps them to make very good progress.

Good teaching ensures that students find the work challenging. Teachers' expectations are high and students respond. There is some very good and detailed marking and assessment feedback, so that students know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. However, the standard of this is inconsistent across the school.

The school leadership has ensured that Visual Arts College status has had a very significant impact throughout the school in promoting students' achievement and in its relationships with the community and partner schools. The increase in information and communication technology (ICT) facilities has promoted visual learning styles and developed students' ICT skills throughout the school. Students have carried through their enthusiasm from their experiences in visual arts, such as digital photography, into their other subjects and have gained very significant personal development from their work in the community.

As a result of these key factors of the school's provision, standards in the main school are exceptionally high and all students make very good progress to the end of Key Stage 4.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The school is rightly proud of its inclusive approach to sixth form entry and encourages students, whatever their prior attainment, to have high expectations. The flexible curriculum meets the needs of all students very well. The high standard of care, guidance and support result in almost all students in the sixth form staying on to complete their studies. Leaders have worked hard to close the gap in achievement between boys and girls and to raise standards. Progress is good overall but there is too much variability between subjects. Teachers do not yet sufficiently encourage independent learning. Leaders are aware of and can tackle these issues which still prevent the sixth form from matching the outstanding record of the main school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Spread the better practice in teaching and learning more effectively, including 'Assessment for Learning'.
- Develop more independent learning in the sixth form in order to continue to raise achievement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils' achievement is outstanding and standards are exceptionally high. Most students enter the school with standards that are at the national average and all make very good progress to the end of Key Stage 4. The proportion of students achieving 5 or more A*- C grades at GCSE has risen steadily since the time of the previous inspection and is well above the national average. The proportion of students gaining A*-C in both English and mathematics is equally high.

The growing proportion of students with learning difficulties and disabilities make very good progress.

In the sixth form, results have improved and are now above average. In 2006 just over half the students gained A level grades at A or B. Progress is good overall, particularly in advanced vocational certificates, but there is too much variability between subjects.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Students' personal development and well-being are outstanding in both the main school and in the sixth form. Most students expressed the view that they were happy to come to school where they feel safe and well cared for. Their attendance is good. The attitudes and behaviour of students are excellent. The school is a strong community based on an ethos of respect. Students understand and value the system of rewards and sanctions as being essential to maintaining that community.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent, because of the school's effective provision. An example is the way in which Christian ethos and values are transmitted to students through whole-school, daily assemblies.

Links with the community are very strong. A large proportion of sixth form students take part in community service work, for example. Students develop very strong skills in literacy, numeracy, and information and communications technology. These equip students very well for their future economic well-being together with the experiences gained through the outstanding citizenship and personal, social and health education curriculum.

Quality of provision.

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are generally good in both the main school and in the sixth form. Teachers plan work that takes into account the different ways students learn and ensure that work is challenging, whatever the students' abilities. Teachers' expectations are high and students respond. Teachers use technology well to support learning. Relationships between teachers and students are strong and built on mutual respect. There is some very good and detailed marking and assessment feedback, especially in English, so that students know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. However, the standard of this is inconsistent across the school. Sixth form teaching and learning styles do not yet sufficiently encourage independent learning necessary to raise achievement still further.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding because it is flexible and meets the needs of students in both the main school and the sixth form very well. Leaders design the curriculum at Key Stages 3 and 4 from the starting point of the assessment of the students' personal development and academic achievement. Early assessment in Year 7 enables appropriately challenging targets to be set. Key Stage 3 is condensed into two years for all students. The three years working at Key Stage 4 enable the school to cater more fully for both gifted and talented students and those students who require a more vocational and applied approach, including a personalised work related programme for some students. Gifted and talented students are able to take appropriate GCSE subjects in year 10 so that they are able to embark on extension courses in year 11, such as separate science subjects or AS level modules.

In the sixth form there is a rich and diverse mix of qualifications including AS and A levels, and advanced vocationally orientated courses. Students may follow various combinations of these, and approximately one third follow a combination of A level and Advanced Vocational Certificate courses. The North Bucks Partnership enables Waddesdon and partner schools to offer a wider range of subjects where group sizes would not otherwise be viable. The induction programme equips students for sixth form study very well. A very good general studies programme for all sixth form students includes modules on study skills and university applications.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The quality of care, guidance and support for students in both the school overall and in the sixth form are outstanding. Almost all parents and students are quick to praise the school in this respect. The school is welcoming and has a harmonious atmosphere.

The school liaises closely with a range of support services to ensure all students have excellent care and guidance. There is a very systematic approach to the identification of students with learning difficulties and disabilities and the learning support team enables students to make outstanding progress. As one parent writes, 'the learning support team has been excellent in their support and care'.

Students are involved in setting targets and most know what level they are working at and how to improve the quality of their work. Teachers are quick to act on fluctuations in students' behaviour or application to their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding in the school overall and good in the sixth form. Leaders set a clear direction for the school that is well understood by teachers, students and parents, and the wider school community.

Governors support the school very well. They are well informed of developments and achievements and successfully hold the school to account for the standards and ethos of the school.

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Annex A to the inspection report

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?	1	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	NA	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

¹ 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.

All white boxes must be completed. The grey boxes are used wherever the inspection team has sufficient evidence to come to a secure judgement.

Annex A to the inspection report

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 behaviour of learners	1	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	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 learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interest of learners?	1	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

Annex A to the inspection report

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
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 to the inspection report

Letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection.

29 September 2006



Dear Students

Waddesdon Church of England School
School Lane
Waddesdon
Aylesbury
HP18 0LQ

I am writing to share with you the main judgements that we made when we came to inspect your school in September. Many of you spoke to us and told us about what you are learning and about the school in general. We want to thank you for welcoming us so well and for sharing with us your views and experiences so openly.

Your attendance is good. Your behaviour and attitudes are excellent in lessons and around the school. Please do keep it up. You told us you are happy to come to school. You told us you feel safe and value the support you get from your tutors to help you do the best you can.

We think your school is outstanding. We think that the way in which your tutors monitor your progress, so that you know how well you are doing and how to improve is especially good. We think the way your courses are organised is excellent. Your results are very good and you all make very good progress, but we think you can do even better. The leadership team is already aware of this and is working on things to help, and we have asked them to make sure that:

- all the marking of your work and the feedback you get on how to improve it should all be as good as the best you get at the moment
- teachers should enable sixth form students to learn more independently and as a result to do even better and make better progress.

We enjoyed the time we spent at your school and thank you once again for your warm welcome. We look forward to following the progress of the school.

With best wishes

Russell Jordan
Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools