

Wyvern Technology College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116429
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	357964
Inspection dates	14–15 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Caroline McKee

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The registered childcare provision, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1330
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Danny Stupple
Headteacher	Mr Alan Newton
Date of previous school inspection	17–18 October 2007
School address	Botley Road Fair Oak Eastleigh SO50 7AN
Telephone number	02380692679
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Registered childcare provision	Wyvern Nursery
Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision	79
Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision	31 October 2007

Age group	11–16
Inspection date(s)	14–15 September 2010
Inspection number	357964

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. Thirty-seven lessons or parts of lessons were seen and 37 teachers were observed. Meetings were held with students, staff and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the college's work and looked at the development plan, student assessment records, minutes of governing body meetings, monitoring of teaching records and department reviews. They also inspected the onsite childcare provision. Inspectors evaluated the responses from 589 parental questionnaires and responses from students and staff.

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

- what the school has done to address the underachievement of middle-ability students, particularly in English, and how successful this has been
- how successful the school has been in improving the quality of teaching, as identified in its self-evaluation
- how middle leaders contribute to whole-college improvement.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average mixed community comprehensive college. The college is a specialist school in technology with a second specialism of humanities and holds Leading Edge status. The college is popular and over subscribed. It serves the eastern suburbs of the Hampshire town of Eastleigh plus some neighbouring villages. The large majority of students are White British. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is low. The proportion of students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average, as is the number for whom English is a second language. Levels of deprivation are well below the national average. The college holds several awards including Investors in People and Silver Artsmark, the college also runs a nursery on site.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is an outstanding college. It is led by an inspirational headteacher who is supported by an exceptional team of senior leaders, teaching and support staff, governors and students who share his vision and commitment. Self-evaluation is embedded at every level and is based on secure data, which results in accurate appraisal of provision at a senior level, the setting of challenging targets and the introduction of appropriate plans for future development.

The college provides an outstanding, innovative and flexible curriculum that changes to meet the individual needs of the students and is reflective of their environment and aspirations. Students are very well prepared with the skills needed for the 21st century. They are articulate, versatile and enthusiastic young adults who have a thirst for learning. The college has shown its outstanding capacity for sustained improvement in a number of ways including:

- the way that the college has supported and closely monitored teaching in science, leading to examination results that doubled to come in line with those of other subjects in 2010
- the quick response to students' requests, such as altering the timetable so that those following college-based courses offsite did not have catch-up work to do as a result of their absence.

Attainment is high. The college's predictions for external examinations for 2011 alongside current assessment data and other inspection evidence indicate that students are on track to meet challenging GCSE targets. Good and often outstanding progress in lessons supports these predictions, although the college recognises the need to develop the use of data to closely monitor the students' progress in English so that their rates of learning stay on target. Students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same good progress as others because of the outstanding programmes on offer to them and they are very well supported by specialist staff and other students. The college has accurately identified ways to improve the quality of teaching to outstanding. There are currently lessons where students are guided and encouraged to be risk-takers, learning from their mistakes, discussing problems and seeking answers for themselves. Particularly good examples of dynamic learning are seen in music and technology lessons. The tasks are well designed to meet the differing range of abilities. However, a few teachers do not use assessment data as effectively as others to match tasks to the different abilities of the students. In these instances some students become less engaged and their progress slows.

The college is at the hub of a large community and works extremely effectively with its outstanding Nursery, other schools, colleges, agencies and larger national institutions to create an ethos that is caring yet aspirational for all. It values each person as an individual, ensuring that all students who have even the most challenging of circumstances leave college with a qualification. The students enjoy the wide range of responsibilities extended to them and have particularly valued being involved in creating the student charter for tackling bullying. One student said 'They really care about what we think'. Students' behaviour in lessons and around the college is exemplary. They are very well informed on their choices and talk enthusiastically of their next steps in employment or education. They have an excellent understanding of health and their own safety. The Nursery setting is highly effective and planning indicates real strengths for the Early Years Foundation Stage within community provision. Overall its effectiveness is outstanding.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Establish more consistency in the effective use of data, particularly in English, so that:
 - all students are consistently challenged to the level of their ability in lessons
 - rigorous monitoring of data, particularly by middle leaders, helps to inform quick intervention if students are falling below the rate of progress expected.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

The students arrive in Year 7 with standards that are above average. They make good progress overall and by Year 11 reach high standards in English, mathematics, science and the specialist subjects of technology and humanities. Progress in English has accelerated, with middle-ability students now making good progress over recent years and some students in Year 11 now make outstanding progress in lessons. The best progress is seen in lessons where students drive their own learning, discussing and challenging each other to explore in greater depth, reason through their responses and are prepared to take risks without fear of ridicule. Some particularly good examples were seen in history and science where students were highly motivated and stimulated and rapidly improved their subject skills and knowledge. There is particularly good use of interactive whiteboards by both teachers and students to further students' learning. There is little difference between the performance of boys and girls.

The technology and humanities specialisms make an excellent contribution to students' achievement, personal development and enjoyment of college life, as well as benefiting students in other schools locally. Students are fully engaged in learning and are excited about the subjects, as well as understanding how to gain the higher grades. In addition the college fosters skills that result in students who are good communicators, show tolerance to the problems of others and suggest solutions to overcome issues that arise.

Students have a very mature attitude to health issues and making healthy choices.

They are well informed and the school has put in place some innovative and imaginative programmes to target those at highest risk of making unwise choices. Participation in sporting activities is very high.

Behaviour in lessons is a key factor in the students’ learning. They are friendly, attentive and excel in discussion and group activities when given the opportunity. Around the school they are sensible and show consideration for others and welcome visitors. They recognise that bullying can sometimes occur but are rightly proud of their own charter designed to tackle this issue.

From Year 7 onwards, students have an extremely wide range of opportunities to take on responsibility and contribute to the school and wider community. Just two examples include training to become a peer supporter or being selected to be part of the student voice group. Their contribution in the local and wider communities, such as a school in Africa, results in students developing empathy for those less fortunate than themselves and helps them to understand different roles in life. Attendance is high and has improved consistently over the last three years as a result of thorough systems and guidance for individuals.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils’ behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

The school accurately evaluates the quality of teaching and learning as good. The best lessons have pace, experimentation, excitement of discovery, and tasks that are accessible and engage students who, in turn, can articulate ideas fluently and with confidence.

Students know the levels and grades at which they are working and appreciate the quality and regularity of the marking and the willingness of the staff to give

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

additional time after school if necessary. Teachers are skilful in creating opportunities for peer- and self-assessment. Many use the available performance data to plan and vary tasks to meet differing abilities within the class, but this is not always the case.

Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and there is a mutual respect between teachers and students in all lessons. There is good deployment of very skilled teaching assistants who support all students’ individual needs, especially those who have behavioural difficulties, enabling them to access the curriculum to great effect.

The curriculum is flexible and innovative, seeking to meet the needs of all students. The two-year Key Stage 3 enables a greater depth and variety of curriculum to be covered at Key Stage 4. The college has been instrumental in course design, working with other institutions, and this has led to them becoming a Leading Edge School. Performing arts subjects add a strong dimension to the students’ personal development, giving them many opportunities to perform and to develop self-esteem and confidence. Intervention is a strong feature to ensure that students who are struggling with mainstream education can be supported in the college’s behaviour modification programme, giving them a chance to reflect on their behaviour. Students display very high levels of trust in the adults around them. Every student is known as an individual and the excellent links to external agencies complement a coherent, integrated approach to developing the whole person.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: 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?

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school which is shared, supported and implemented by staff, governors and students. A collegiate approach to making decisions and raising standards results in high morale among the school community. Searching self-evaluation and monitoring are very effective in holding people to account, enabling the school to maintain and improve the outstanding features from the previous inspection. Middle leaders in particular are clearly focused on improving progress and the school is keen to involve them more closely in using data effectively to inform interventions where students may be falling behind.

The governing body is highly effective and an essential part of the college’s development. Its members are frequent visitors and have a very well-informed understanding of the school’s strengths and weaknesses through their committee approach. They have informed debates and hold leaders to account when needed, ensuring action if required.

Procedures to ensure that students remain safe are outstanding. Records are

meticulous; all current safeguarding requirements are met and in many instances exceeded. The school is an outstanding example of how to draw a community together. It identifies areas for development, plans effectively to build on strengths, has a good understanding of its context, and actively promotes a deeper understanding of the religious, ethnic and socioeconomic characteristics of communities beyond the school. The school is central to the community and drives forward aspirations and self-belief. It also engages the students in working with other schools, both locally and internationally, in a way that has meaning and broadens their understanding of life beyond their immediate environment. It has plans to extend this to the national community and recognises that this will add a further dimension to the students' lives.

The college and all its community partners, including the Nursery, are a hub of learning in which a large number of young people from various backgrounds get along extremely well together. Discrimination is not tolerated. The promotion of equality and acknowledgement of diversity are evident throughout the work of the college and shine through in many ways.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Nursery provides excellent opportunities for independent learning and progress is outstanding. Babies have a high level of care and personal attention including appropriate accommodation for taking naps in the quiet areas. Children are very well settled and clearly enjoy being in the Nursery. All children show that they feel safe and are able to respond to their individual key workers if any issues arise. They make independent choices about activities and the older ones show that they can sustain concentration and play together imaginatively and well. Children understand the importance of washing their hands and they enjoy the healthy snacks and meals provided by the school. A real strength is in the positive contribution made by the children. They love clearing up to the accompaniment of songs from the musical 'Mary Poppins'.

Very careful planning both for the Nursery and younger children who will attend the before- and after-school clubs ensures that their needs are met exceptionally well. The Nursery environment is colourful and welcoming and staff and resources are deployed well. New computers enhance opportunities for the development of early information and communication technology skills. Children can choose from a wide range of indoor and outdoor activities. Music is a strength as are all aspects of imaginative and creative play. The outdoor area is used well and children particularly enjoy digging in the garden and painting on a large brick wall. Staff are well qualified and experienced and key workers ensure that assessment is regular and shared with parents and carers.

The Nursery manager, the community manager and the governors provide excellent leadership and there is a strong capacity for the further improvement of provision for Early Years Foundation Stage children. Safeguarding is very thorough, particularly in the rigour of procedures regarding visitors, risk assessments and ensuring the emotional and physical well-being of children. There is a real emphasis on self-evaluation and on involving parents and children in this process. Parents praise the quality of communication. Partnerships with the onsite schools and the wider community are a real strength. Nursery resources are used well in helping children gain an early understanding of our culturally diverse society, although there is scope for the better use of role play areas in promoting this.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Responses were received from nearly half of the families at the college. The overwhelming majority were supportive and appreciative of the college. Almost all felt happy with their children’s safety and experience at the college and felt that leadership was strong and only a very few had any concerns. These were mainly about incidences of poor behaviour, or concern with how the school had been slow to respond to parent and carer emails, phone calls or letters. The college recognises the need to tackle the perception of behaviour and how it is managed, and the speed in which it responds to parents and carers. The inspection team talked to many students in depth about behaviour, but found that only a very few felt it was an issue, and if there was a problem it was dealt with successfully.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Wyvern Technology College to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 589 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1330 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	179	30	367	62	35	6	6	1
The school keeps my child safe	202	34	371	63	10	2	2	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	199	34	348	59	32	5	4	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	198	34	322	55	51	9	7	1
The teaching is good at this school	178	30	369	63	29	5	3	1
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	145	25	338	57	81	14	8	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	107	18	371	63	79	13	6	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	168	29	370	63	28	5	3	1
The school meets my child’s particular needs	161	27	362	61	42	7	6	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	144	24	353	60	57	10	10	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	121	21	355	60	72	12	12	2
The school is led and managed effectively	167	28	374	63	30	5	5	1
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	229	39	318	54	29	5	4	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

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.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
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.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring term 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



16 September 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Wyvern Technology College, Fair Oak, SO50 7AN

Thank you very much for welcoming us to your college. We judge it to be outstanding. We enjoyed talking to you and observing your lessons and work. We particularly enjoyed seeing how well you are developing as independent learners and how you contribute to discussions and tasks and how prepared you are to experiment and take risks. The outstanding care and guidance that the staff provide for you ensure that you develop your personal attributes exceptionally well. You take the many opportunities offered to be part of your local and wider communities, effectively contributing to local initiatives. As one of you said, 'I feel proud to have been asked to be in the student voice group. We make a difference'. We were impressed with how well you think about your health and the choices you make to ensure your own safety. You reach standards that are high, particularly in English, science and mathematics, although students in the past did not achieve as well as they could have in English. The college was quick to tackle the reasons for underachievement last year and, as a result, progress in lessons is now at least good for all groups of students.

Your headteacher is an outstanding leader and he has an exceptionally good team around him who care about your future. The leadership team knows the strengths of the school well and have an outstanding capacity to continue to improve. The curriculum provides you with excellent opportunities to gain the qualifications and skills needed for your future lives and provides you with an extensive range of clubs and activities that you tell us you enjoy enormously. We judged the teaching to be good and the college already knows that this is an area for further improvement. In order for this to happen we worked with the leadership team to decide on the best way to do this and agreed that:

- teachers will use data more effectively to give you a broader range of tasks to meet your individual needs, particularly in English
- heads of department will use this information to check your progress and step in quickly with help if you don't seem to be doing well enough.

We would ask you also to use your performance data to help improve your progress and further challenge yourselves.

Yours sincerely

Caroline McKee
Lead inspector

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