

Wollaston School

Irchester Road, Wollaston, Wellingborough, NN29 7PH

Inspection dates 27–28 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students make very good progress in English and mathematics. The proportion of students gaining five GCSEs at A* - C grades is well above the national average.
- Senior leaders encourage all teachers to use information gathered on computers to see which students need extra help and to judge how well they are teaching.
- Students feel safe. There is a good system of rewards for good behaviour and work. The number of incidents recorded has reduced and is now low.
- The school leadership team is now complete and students are making better progress than last year.
- Teachers keep students interested by using lively activities. They encourage students to aim high.
- School leaders have increased the choice of subjects and examinations that students can take. Students now have a better chance of success.
- The sixth form is good. The management of the sixth form has improved. Students' good progress is checked regularly and help is quickly put in place for those who need it.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Students do not have the opportunity to learn by themselves often enough.
- Occasionally, students are not stretched by making them think harder about their learning.
- Teachers do not share good practice as often as they could.
- Sometimes leaders do not pick up a slowing in students' progress quickly enough.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 44 lessons.
- The inspection team met staff, students, governors and a representative from the local authority.
- A range of documents were looked at, including the school’s self evaluation, safeguarding documents, policies and the minutes of governors’ meetings.
- Inspectors looked at how well students achieve. They looked at students’ books and heard some of them read.
- Inspectors took account of the 88 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). The view of one additional parent was sent to the school.

Inspection team

John Hucker, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Richard Hartley	Additional Inspector
John Greevy	Additional Inspector
Wendy Davies	Additional Inspector
Sumeya Bhikhu	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Wollaston is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- Nearly all students are White British.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium is about half the national average. The pupil premium is funding provided to support students known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is much lower than average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- Almost all students are educated on-site. This includes the Minett Construction course and the Level Two vehicle maintenance and repair course underwritten by the Institute of the Motor Industry.
- Students have access to a course in fish husbandry off-site for part of the school week. Students also attend courses to meet their pastoral needs at the Rushmere Academy and through the local authority's hospital and outreach programme.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching so that more is outstanding by:
 - giving students more opportunities to take responsibility, including learning by themselves
 - taking more opportunities to stretch students by making them think harder about their learning.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - identifying students who need help more quickly so that managers can put support in place straight away
 - sharing best practice between staff more quickly.
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Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Results in English and mathematics at GCSE are consistently good. By the age of 16, students are well equipped in the basic skills for the next step in their lives. The proportion of students achieving five GCSEs with grades of 'C' and above, including English and mathematics, is higher than the national average.
- In any subjects where the results were not good in 2012, such as geography, the school has shown that students are making better progress this year throughout the school. This is due to steps taken by senior leaders, including finding good new teachers.
- Results for the EBACC (GCSE results for English, mathematics, science, a language and a humanities subject) and for the students' best 8 subjects are lower than average. The school has put new choices in place for students at the end of Year 9 and progress towards these two measures is already much better.
- Students achieved better results at AS Level and are making better progress throughout the sixth form than in the recent past. The new system of checking how well they are doing quickly flags up students who need support. Such students get one-to-one support straight away to keep them on track.
- Students entitled to free school meals are making better progress than in the past. They are still not doing as well as other students, but this gap is closing. In English, the average difference in results was two years. In mathematics, it was one year. Students who are looked after by the local authority make progress in line with or better than other students.
- Those students entitled to the Year 7 catch-up premium have benefited from the extra support and made better progress than other students.
- A large proportion of students are entered for GCSE in mathematics early. Although results are above the national average at every grade, including A*.
- Students at school action and school action plus made less progress as a group than other students in English and mathematics. This was because the school was unable to keep some of the students attending regularly. Some are not taught at the school and do not follow the same courses. Those with a statement of special educational needs make better progress than other students because they have high quality special help.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers are good at making learning interesting by using different ways of working. In a single science lesson students learnt from text books, the whiteboard, teacher explanation and questioning, small-group discussion and a group project. Students have the opportunity to be active in their learning. They show what they have learnt through, for example, talk, design, role-play, essays and shorter question-and-answer sessions.
- In most cases, students are given work at the right level of difficulty. To do this, students have different tasks or may be expected to get different results from the same task. In the same class, most students make progress at the right rate for them. However, occasionally, work is

not demanding enough to stretch students and to make them think hard.

- All students are encouraged to aim high in their learning. There are rewards for doing their best. They know what level they have reached in each subject and what they have to achieve to get to the next one.
- Teachers are good at judging when a student or group of students are struggling in a lesson. They give help quickly. They ask questions to help students work problems out for themselves. They give students good advice when talking to them.
- Students who are taught by providers other than the school are well taught and looked after. They make good progress.
- Some marking of books is outstanding. Teachers make it clear to students what they must do to improve. Students have a chance to respond and teachers check the progress that the student makes. This is not true for all teachers. This best practice has not been shared effectively.
- While sometimes books and internet sources are made available so that students are encouraged to find things out for themselves, this does not happen often enough.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students say that they like school and that they feel safe and cared for. As one student said, 'All the students' strengths and weaknesses are recognised and it's easy to be the best you can be.'
 - Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Students want to learn. Students are polite and courteous to adults and to each other. The system in place for dealing with poor behaviour is effective and trusted by the students, so that learning is rarely interrupted. The number of times the behaviour of individuals is very poor continues to drop and the school has fewer fixed-term exclusions than average.
 - Students say that bullying is rare. When it is reported, it is dealt with effectively. The students know about different kinds of bullying, including cyber-bullying and feel well-prepared to deal with it.
 - Students enjoy their lessons. They like knowing how successful they are and how to get better. They enjoy the chance to have open discussions about difficult topics in ethics and philosophy. This gave students confidence when in discussions with inspectors.
 - Students like being able to make suggestions through the school council, but are ready for more opportunities to influence change. While the school council gives some students a measure of responsibility, those in Years 7-11 do not have enough say about what they learn, how they contribute to the community or in matters for which the governors have responsibility. However, sixth-form students play a vibrant role in these things.
 - Most parents have confidence in the school and the way it deals with behaviour. The school uses lots of ways to keep parents informed, but not all parents are fully up to date with the latest improvements that have been made.
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The leadership and management are good

- The school leadership team is now at full strength and has brought in many changes to improve results for the students. New people have been employed to lead or help lead those subjects where students had poor results at GCSE and A Level. Students are already making better progress as a result.
 - The policy for improving student behaviour has been successful. The number of occasions where students have been excluded from school for a fixed time has dropped and is below average. The behaviour log shows a more general drop in poor behaviour.
 - Students benefit from a course in ethics and philosophy throughout the school. They speak with enthusiasm about experiences that help their understanding of multicultural United Kingdom. This supports their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness.
 - There are more courses available for students in Years 10-13. This broadening of subjects and examination courses has allowed more students to enjoy their learning and make good progress. Where students' learning at other centres was not good enough, courses and facilities have been located at the school.
 - The school provides very good advice to students as they prepare for the world of work or the next stage of learning. This is true from advice on GCSE choices at Year 9 to where to go to university in Year 13.
 - School leaders have responded effectively to previous inspection reports. Mathematics results have risen, the quality of teaching has improved and more students are achieving high grades. More work-related courses are on offer and the sixth form is better led.
 - There is an extensive system for checking how well students are doing but it has not been fine-tuned enough to give senior leaders a clear up-to-date picture of the progress students are making. In the past, students performance has slowed before it has been picked up and tackled.
 - School leaders and teachers with extra responsibilities do not make sure that good practice by teachers spreads quickly. This includes the quality of questioning and of marking.
 - The school has accepted students in need of a great deal of support. They have acted in the best interests of the individuals in line with the school's promotion of equal opportunities.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Finances have been carefully controlled to allow a new science block to be built in the summer. This will provide better facilities for the students and make it easier to attract the best science teachers. Governors have approved the use of the pupil premium to subsidise experiences that eligible students might otherwise miss, extra small group and one-to-one teaching and preparation for exams. Governors know that these students are making better progress and are catching up the other students. Governors are involved in school life and keep up to date with training. They are leading the way in preparing for change as governors leave. This is beginning to happen at all levels of management. Governors know where there are strengths and weaknesses in teaching. They closely check rewards for good teaching and how the school tackles any weaker teaching. They keep track of how teachers' professional development is supported. They know how well students achieve compared to all schools nationally.
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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	122059
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	402077

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1398
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	205
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anthony Cochrane
Headteacher	Michael Browne
Date of previous school inspection	13 January 2010
Telephone number	01933 663501
Fax number	01933 664364
Email address	office@wollaston-school.net

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