

Wyedean School and Sixth Form Centre

Beachley Road, Sedbury, Chepstow, Gwent, NP16 7AA

Inspection dates

8–9 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Students' achievement is inadequate because too many students do not make enough progress, especially in English.
- Students who had previously achieved highly do not do as well as they should.
- The wide gaps in achievement between different groups of students are not closing quickly enough.
- Teaching is not strong enough across the school to ensure that students make faster progress and make up lost ground. Teachers often expect too little of their students; teachers' marking and their use of questions are not always good enough.
- Students lose attention and become passive because activities in some lessons do too little to motivate their interest or to excite them in their learning.
- Students who need additional help are not identified quickly enough or given the extra help that they need.
- Leaders and governors have not done enough to tackle the significant weaknesses in teaching and students' progress.
- Leaders have not closed the wide gap between the achievement of students supported through the pupil premium and others in the school.
- There is not a clear and simple system to check students' progress that is used and understood by all. The information the school does collect is not used well enough to identify students who are falling behind.
- Good practice in areas where standards are higher has not been effectively shared to raise standards in other areas across the school.
- The sixth form requires improvement. Achievement and the quality of teaching are too variable.

The school has the following strengths

- Students behave well in lessons and around the school, feel very safe and bullying is rare.
- Students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is very well promoted.
- Leaders, the governing body and staff are determined to make improvements and have high ambitions for students and for the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 41 lessons or parts of lessons, including 11 that were seen together with senior leaders.
- Inspectors listened to students read and visited classrooms with senior staff to look at how well disabled students and those who have special educational needs were learning. Inspectors also visited lessons with senior staff to look at students' progress in mathematics, English, science, humanities and at learning in a wide range of other subjects.
- Discussions were held with senior and middle leaders, staff, five members of the governing body and groups of students.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at its self-evaluation and planning documents, external evaluations of its work and examples of students' work.
- Inspectors took note of the 117 responses from parents on the online questionnaire (Parent View). Parents' and students' responses to the school's own recent surveys were considered.

Inspection team

Michael Merchant, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Svetlana Bajic-Raymond	Additional Inspector
Justine Hocking	Additional Inspector
Paul Jacobs	Additional Inspector
Wendy Delf	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Information about this school

- Wyedean School and Sixth Form Centre converted to become an academy school in September 2011. When its predecessor school, of the same name, was previously inspected by Ofsted in May 2010, it was judged to be good.
- The school is larger in size than the average-sized secondary school.
- The very large majority of students are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of students that are known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding from the government for groups of students including looked after children, those belonging to families with a parent serving in the armed services and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is below average. There is currently a very small number of students who are in the care of the local authority or from other groups eligible for such support.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is broadly average, as is the proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- A small number of students spend some of their time studying work-related courses at Nash College and Severn Vale Equestrian Centre.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' progress and attainment.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is good or better in all subjects to ensure that all groups of students make at least good progress between the ages of 11 and 16, by making sure that:
 - teachers always expect the very best from all students
 - the tasks teachers set in lessons are at the right level to get the best out of all students, especially the most able
 - questioning builds on students' responses so that it probes and extends thinking
 - feedback to students in teachers' marking ensures that they know how to improve their work and that students act upon the teachers' suggestions
 - all lessons motivate and enthuse students and encourage high levels of attentiveness.
- Raise achievement, especially in English, and narrow the gap in achievement between those supported from the pupil premium and other students, by:
 - rigorously checking students' performance to identify underachievement at an early stage
 - rapidly giving support to those students who are in danger of underachieving
 - improving the support provided to disabled students and those who have special educational needs, both in class and when students are withdrawn for extra help.
- Strengthen the way in which all leaders ensure consistently good achievement, including in the sixth form, by:
 - developing a clear and simple system for tracking students' progress that is understood by all staff and enables leaders and governors to easily check the progress of different groups of

students

- checking relentlessly that teaching is good enough to lead to good progress and accurately identifying where improvements are needed
 - sharing good practice so that students do as well in all subjects as they do in the best
 - making sure that subject leaders take more direct responsibility for improving the quality of teaching and in holding teams to account for the progress of the students in their subjects.
- Ensure that governors are more active in monitoring the school and checking that agreed actions are effective in improving the quality of teaching and closing the gaps in achievement.

Ofsted will make recommendations on governance to the authority responsible for the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Achievement is inadequate because too many students have not made sufficient progress given their starting points at the age of 11. Achievement is particularly low in English and the 2012 GCSE results in this subject placed the school in the bottom 3% of schools nationally on a measure of how well the students had improved since Key Stage 2.
- Although GCSE results showed some improvement in students' rates of progress in 2013, too many students did not make the progress they should have. This is particularly the case for those students who had previously attained highly at the end of Key Stage 2. Only small numbers of these students gained the grades of which they were capable.
- GCSE results show little sign of improvement since the academy opened.
- Progress in lessons is too variable and students' learning is not fast enough to make up for the lost ground of previous years.
- The achievement of students eligible for support from pupil premium funding is inadequate. There has been a significant gap between the attainment and progress of this group and others in the school for a number of years. For instance, in the 2012 GCSE examinations, those students known to be eligible for free school meals and those in the care of the local authority gained two grades lower than other students in English and a grade and a half lower in mathematics.
- Only 8% of students in Year 11 in 2012 who were known to be eligible for free school meals or in the care of the local authority made enough progress in English, and in mathematics just over a third did so. The school's tracking of progress shows that the gap is not closing fast enough between these students and others in Year 11. This is because the additional funding the school receives for these students is not used effectively.
- The progress of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is also inadequate. In many classes, students supported through school action or through school action plus do not do as well as they should because their individual needs are not always met in lessons.
- Although students do better in the sixth form than in the rest of the school, there is a mixed picture, and there is a wide variation in progress being made across the sixth form courses. Therefore, achievement requires improvement in the sixth form.
- The school has, correctly, decided to no longer enter students early for mathematics at GCSE level. The more able have not benefited from this policy. The grades of a small number of higher ability students have been limited to a C because once they have finished the GCSE course they use the time to improve or catch up in other subjects.
- The small number of students who follow more practical subjects off site gain experience in a range of subjects which is helping them acquire the necessary social and practical skills to gain suitable employment or further training.
- Most students are making adequate gains in their communication and literacy skills. Regular reading for pleasure is encouraged across the school and some students are keen readers by the age of 16.
- The school makes adequate use of funding received through the Year 7 catch-up programme (extra money from the government to support those students who attained below expected levels in English and mathematics in Year 6). Through additional support, such students make the expected gains in acquiring number, reading and writing skills.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Teaching is inadequate because it is not helping students to make up for previous underachievement or to make sufficient progress in their subjects. In too many lessons teaching requires improvement or is inadequate.

- Consequently, many students are not making sufficient progress in their learning between the ages of 11 and 16. This is especially the case for those supported by the pupil premium, those who need extra help and those who had previously attained highly. This is partly because tasks set in lessons are not always at the right level to get the best out of students.
- Although senior leaders monitor the quality of teaching regularly and a comprehensive programme of training to meet teachers' professional development needs is in place, many weaknesses in teaching remain. Too much teaching does not challenge or motivate pupils or secure good learning or progress.
- The pace of learning is too slow in too many lessons and the work set does not challenge students or gain their attention. Too often, teachers accept mediocre work or superficial answers from students.
- The weakest teaching is slow and uninteresting and includes undemanding activities. This results in some students sitting idly or chatting and interrupting the learning of others. Often the work set does not challenge students enough to gain the higher grades because it is too easy for them.
- Although, in some classes, teachers take care to check that students have understood an idea by asking individuals precise and often quite probing questions that encourage them to think deeply, this is not always the case. Many teachers still rely on volunteers putting up their hands rather than targeting questions to individual students. This makes it easy for some students not to participate in question-and-answer sessions.
- Teachers' marking across the school lacks consistency. Across many subjects, the teachers' written comments do not always show students what they have to do to improve their work or they do not follow up to make sure that students have acted on suggestions for improvement.
- Too few lessons excite students to learn at a quicker pace. Often, students sit listening for too long without being actively involved and teachers sometimes do the thinking and the problem solving for the students.
- Where teaching is good, teachers have strong and very confident relationships with their class and they use this effectively to provoke students to think for themselves and give clear and full responses. As a result of this lively teaching, students become interested in the lesson and work with energy and enthusiasm. This was clearly seen in an outstanding Year 11 business studies lesson where the teacher's strong use of precise questions motivated students to work extremely well in groups to collaborate and share ideas on business plans.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Students' attitudes to learning vary with the quality of teaching the students receive. In the best lessons students work well and are fully engaged with their work. However when teaching is weaker, students are often passive, and show little enthusiasm for their work. Here, learning is sometimes interrupted by inattentive and silly behaviour.
- Students feel safe in school and have a good understanding of how they can contribute to their own and each other's safety. They trust in all the adults to help them if they have difficulties, either in their work or personally.
- Students understand about how to deal with risks they might face and understand issues relating to substance abuse and the dangers associated with using the internet.
- Students have a good understanding of bullying and its different forms. They say that it is rare and students and parents and carers say that offensive behaviour, such as name calling, cyber bullying or bullying based on gender or sexual orientation, is dealt with quickly and effectively.
- Students generally behave courteously and most are polite and considerate around the school. School records show that poor behaviour is infrequent and there have been very few exclusions in recent years.
- Most students enjoy school, which is reflected in the attendance rate which is above the national average.

The leadership and management are inadequate

- Leadership and management are inadequate because school leaders have not done enough to make sure that improvements to teaching and the progress of students, particularly in English, have been fast enough since the academy opened.
- Leaders have not been active enough in checking on those groups of students who could be doing better, particularly those supported by the pupil premium, those who need additional help and higher attaining students.
- Despite the great determination of the headteacher and his senior colleagues and their passionate commitment to make the school successful, students' achievement is too low and is not rising quickly enough.
- The school does not have an accurate picture of the levels students are working at in all subjects as they move through the school. It uses a system for monitoring the progress of students that is fragmented and hard to access. There is too little checking on the accuracy of these assessments. This process makes it difficult to identify those students that are falling behind. In addition, the data that the school collects are not used effectively to hold all teachers to account for the progress of the students in their classes.
- Senior leaders undertake regular lesson observations, but this process has lacked rigour because their judgements have not always been sufficiently focused on improving the progress of all groups of students.
- A significant proportion of teaching remains not good enough to help students make faster progress and to make up for the lost ground of previous years. Not all subject leaders are effective at tackling this, for example by following up lesson observations to make sure that teachers have acted on advice they have been given.
- In the past teachers have not always had sufficiently rigorous targets for how well their students achieve to ensure that they are fully accountable for the progress their students make. Management decisions about teachers' movements up the salary scale are now more rigorous and there are clearer links between teachers' performance and pay rises.
- School leaders have not fully evaluated the effectiveness of the support provided for disabled students and those who have special educational needs. Leaders are not fully checking whether the deployment of additional adults in classrooms is providing the best support for these students.
- The school has not used its pupil premium funding as well as it should have to provide the right additional help for the designated students who are at risk of underachieving. Some of the money funds teaching assistants and additional resources for these students, but too much of the expenditure is not being used directly to help the students who require the most support to help them improve.
- The leadership of the sixth form requires improvement as there is too much variation between subjects and teaching is not consistently good over time. Too many students enter the sixth form in Year 12 and embark on courses that are not well suited to their needs and aspirations. Consequently, a higher-than-average proportion of students are not successful on their chosen course and do not progress on to Year 13.
- The curriculum supports students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development very well through the wide range of opportunities for students to extend their education outside of classes. In particular, strong links with the local community as well as internationally are very well promoted. This is a significant strength of the school and does much to support students' personal development.
- Arrangements for ensuring that students stay safe meet requirements.
- The school actively tackles discrimination, but its commitment to equality of opportunity is not translated into practice because too many students are not achieving well enough and there are big gaps in the progress different groups make.
- Weak progress in making sure that all groups of students do as well as they should and that

teaching gets better year on year mean the school leaders have not demonstrated the capacity to improve.

- Inspectors strongly recommend that the academy should not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors have studied the published performance information on the school and are aware of how the school compares with other schools. They know about the quality of teaching in the school and where performance is less strong. They have a good knowledge of how teachers' performance is managed, sign off pay awards for staff who meet their targets and are aware of where underperformance has been tackled. Although governors know what the pupil premium is being spent on, they have not been rigorous enough in questioning school leaders about the impact of this spending on the progress of these students. They attend training regularly to develop their skills and have good information about how well the school is doing. They use this to confidently question and challenge senior and subject leaders, especially on the discrepancy between the school's evaluation of its teaching and the progress that students have made. However, they have not pursued this challenge with sufficient rigour to ensure that teaching is good enough to ensure that all groups of students make the progress they should.

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	137382
Inspection number	426858

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
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	1,145
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	300
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Shirley Lightbound
Headteacher	Clive Pemberton
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01291 625350
Fax number	01291 624251
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