

Wynstones School

Church Lane, Whaddon, Gloucester, Gloucestershire GL4 0UF

Inspection dates

26–28 March 2019

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Early years provision	Inadequate
Sixth form provision	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- The trustees and managers have not ensured that the independent school standards (ISS) have been met in full.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective. Statutory guidance and the school's policies have not been implemented fully.
- Managers have not monitored the quality of teaching, learning and assessment closely enough, including in the kindergarten. Consequently, teachers' expectations are too low and pupils do not make sufficient progress.
- Teachers do not plan learning effectively to meet the needs of pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do not receive the support they need to prepare them well for their studies in the upper school.
- Pupils, especially the most able, make slow progress during their time at the school and do not reach the standards they are capable of.
- Until recently, staff have lacked the leadership and support that is needed to improve pupils' outcomes.
- Teaching assistants have not had the training they need to support learning well and manage pupils' behaviour effectively.
- Too many pupils do not attend school on a regular basis. Although attendance is improving, it is still below the national average.
- The careers education and guidance for pupils, including students in the sixth form, is limited.

The school has the following strengths

- Trustees have recognised the lack of leadership and have made appointments to overcome this.
- Managers are acting swiftly to address weaknesses in safeguarding practices.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. They have a good awareness of the world around them.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership, management and governance of the school by ensuring that:
 - the arrangements to keep pupils safe fully meets the latest guidance issued by the Secretary of State
 - there is a clear management structure in place where the individual roles and responsibilities of leaders and managers are defined precisely
 - there is sufficient leadership capacity beyond the senior management team to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school
 - staff at all levels are held tightly to account for their work and the progress pupils make
 - the curriculum is implemented effectively so that pupils make strong progress throughout their time at the school
 - systems for assessing, monitoring and evaluating the progress pupils make across the curriculum are robust
 - teachers receive the training they need to raise their expectations, assess pupils' attainment accurately and use this to plan learning effectively
 - the role of teaching assistants is developed so that they support pupils' learning and behaviour more effectively
 - concerns and complaints are handled in accordance with the published policy and in good time.
- Strengthen the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - teachers improve their subject knowledge so that they plan learning to meet pupils' needs more closely, taking into account pupils' prior knowledge and their additional needs
 - teachers use their assessment of pupils' knowledge and understanding to ensure that pupils are clear about how to improve their work and make strong progress
 - teachers plan learning so that pupils with SEND and the most able pupils develop their knowledge, understanding and skills sufficiently
 - pupils' English and mathematics skills are developed throughout their learning
 - the quality of teaching in the kindergarten classes is consistently of the highest quality.
- Improve pupils' personal development and behaviour by:
 - working with pupils and their families to emphasise the importance of attending school regularly to raise pupils' attendance further
 - engaging pupils in their learning fully, particularly in the lower school
 - ensuring that there are consistently high expectations of pupils' attitudes towards their learning
 - ensuring that staff in the early years support children's development more effectively.

- Improve pupils' progress across the school to ensure that they reach the standards that they are capable of, particularly the most able.
- The school must meet the ISS and the early years foundation stage statutory requirements, as set out in the annex of this report.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- The trustees and managers have failed to ensure that the ISS are met in full. They have not ensured that the quality of teaching and learning is of an acceptable standard. Nor have they assured themselves that the arrangements to keep pupils safe are robust enough.
- In recent months, trustees have taken demonstrable action to address the many weaknesses. The school education manager is new in post and the principal's appointment is currently being confirmed. The other managers have had too many responsibilities to ensure that the school provides a good quality of education and effective child protection arrangements.
- Trustees and managers have begun to introduce accountability arrangements for managers and staff members. They have prioritised actions and resources to ensure that the necessary structures are in place to tackle the shortcomings, particularly relating to improving the safeguarding culture. To date, there has been insufficient attention to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Roles and responsibilities in the management structure are not yet clearly defined. Insufficient capacity at middle leadership level means that there is too little oversight of the quality of teaching and learning. Consequently, there is too much variation and inconsistency in the quality of education and teachers' planning to enable pupils to make good progress.
- Managers are accurate in their evaluation of the weaknesses in the quality of teaching and learning. Staff appraisal is currently being introduced to identify the subject knowledge and educational training that staff need. However, this is recent work and it is too early to see any impact.
- Managers' systems for assessing, monitoring and evaluating the progress pupils make across subjects lack rigour. As a result, managers do not have a secure understanding of pupils' performance.
- The teaching of geography and history is weak in the lower school. This means that pupils do not have the contextual knowledge they need to deepen their understanding. Furthermore, teaching staff have not ensured that the curriculum is sufficiently challenging for many pupils, particularly the most able.
- The special needs coordinators provide much-needed strength to this aspect of the school's work. They use their own knowledge and that of specialists to ensure that there are clear plans in place for teachers to refer to when planning learning. However, they do not monitor how well teachers adapt and modify learning in classes to support pupils with SEND.
- Managers have reviewed and revised all the required policies in recent weeks. Although they now meet requirements, their implementation is not yet consistent across the school.
- The school's complaints procedure meets the requirements of the ISS. There are few complaints since the previous education inspection on file. These show that managers and trustees do not always follow the procedure tightly. A few parents and carers expressed concerns about the way in which complaints are handled.

- Managers have ensured that the annual reports to parents about pupils' progress, the admissions register and attendance registers meet requirements.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their understanding of British values are well planned for throughout the curriculum. For example, in biology, pupils explore topical issues such as selective breeding and antibiotic resistance. Visits to the law courts in Gloucester contribute to pupils' understanding of British institutions.

Governance

- The trust board has not ensured that the school provides an acceptable quality of education and keeps pupils safe.
- Trustees are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They acted swiftly following the inspection of the boarding provision in November 2018. They remedied the significant shortcomings in leadership and management, including by appointing a school education manager and principal. They are committed to ensuring that the school provides a good quality of education and are continuing to work to improve the child protection arrangements.
- Trustees' understanding of procedures does not reflect the school's practice in some areas. For example, trustees are clear about the arrangements for checking that volunteers are suitable to work in the school and are trained. However, volunteers do not have the range of checks that trustees expect. Many volunteers have not had the safeguarding training that the school's policy requires.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- Procedures for the recruitment of staff, trustees and volunteers do not meet the requirements set out in the latest guidance issued by the Secretary of State. Managers and trustees were alerted to this during the inspection of the boarding provision in November 2018. Since then, a well-being group has been established and is swiftly tackling historical weaknesses in welfare and safeguarding practices. There is much work still to do. Not all the required checks for staff members and trustees have been carried out.
- Safeguarding records remain incomplete. Although the quality of referrals and other records has improved in recent months, staff do not include the level of detail that is needed.
- The school updated the safeguarding policy in February 2019. This meets the requirements set out in 'Keeping children safe in education', 2018. It is published on the school's website. However, it is not fully implemented and so safeguarding across the school is not yet effective.
- Risk assessments are in place for the premises, educational visits and for some pupils who have specific needs. These meet the requirements of the standards. They are suitably detailed and revised regularly.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- In 'main lesson' and many subjects, teachers' expectations are too low. In a range of subjects, teachers do not give sufficient regard to what pupils already know, understand and can do. Consequently, they do not plan learning to meet the academic needs of learners.
- Too many teachers do not demonstrate the subject knowledge or understanding needed to build pupils' knowledge and understanding. For example, this is the case in English language teaching. Many teachers give insufficient thought to the planning of learning. Too often, lessons are planned around the tasks to be completed rather than the concept to be learned.
- Many teachers, particularly in the lower school, do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to explain their mathematical thinking or solve problems. Pupils' work and observations of learning show that teachers do not model concepts adequately. Consequently, pupils make errors that often go unchecked. Many pupils have significant gaps in their knowledge and understanding.
- Some of the learning planned does not have a sufficiently clear purpose and teachers' instructions often lack precision. As a result, much time is lost as pupils try to understand what is to be done. In many classes, pupils 'switch off'. Pupils commented to inspectors that they find much of the work too easy and they are not sufficiently challenged. Teachers do not demand the highest quality of pupils' work or insist on the greatest levels of precision.
- Teachers do not have a secure understanding of how to plan, teach and assess pupils' understanding of phonics. Although managers have a scheme of work for literacy, which includes the teaching of phonics, phonics is not taught consistently well.
- Teachers do not use assessments effectively when planning learning. The quality of feedback that teachers give pupils is highly variable. Too often, teachers do not plan learning that tackles common misconceptions and addresses the deficiencies in pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- Teachers give insufficient attention to pupils who have missed learning or who are falling behind in their work. As a result, these pupils do not make the rapid progress they need to catch up with their classmates.
- Teaching assistants are not used effectively to support learning and pupils' behaviour.
- Where teachers plan learning to take account of pupils' SEND, particularly for those pupils who receive additional support, teaching is helping pupils to make strong progress. However, this is not the case for the majority of pupils with SEND. They are not supported well in their academic studies in class.
- Pupils show confidence and have high self-esteem. Pupils engage well in their eurythmy lessons and create and perform musical pieces competently.
- In craft lessons, teachers show a strong understanding of how to plan learning over time. They discuss with pupils what they need to know and be able to do. Consequently, pupils make strong progress in their design and construction skills.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- Managers' failings to ensure that all the necessary checks and training are in place for staff and volunteers mean that they cannot assure themselves that individuals are suitable to work with pupils. Therefore, pupils' welfare is at risk.
- The provision for careers advice and guidance does not meet the requirements set out in the ISS. There is no provision for pupils in classes VI or VII (Years 7 and 8) and relatively little in Class VIII (Year 9).
- Pupils feel valued by staff and other pupils as individuals. Pupils celebrate their differences and show respect for one another.
- Staff have planned the personal, social and health education curriculum carefully. Pupils study a range of topics, including sex and relationship education. Pupils have a clear understanding about the risks they may face when they are online.
- Teachers and leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Older pupils can describe and compare different religions.
- In some areas, such as crafts and art, pupils show determination and commitment to produce high-quality items. Pupils also show confidence in their music and drama productions. These aspects of the school's work are valued highly by parents.
- Managers recently established a student council. This gives pupils the opportunity to talk freely about what is going well and aspects that they feel need to be improved.
- All pupils who spoke with inspectors could identify adults they would talk to when they are not happy. They commented that bullying is rare and it is dealt with well when it does occur.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils' attitudes towards their learning are variable. Generally, where the quality of teaching is not strong, pupils do not focus on their learning.
- Incidents of significantly poor behaviour are infrequent. However, when pupils misbehave, this is not always managed well by teachers.
- Managers introduced a new approach to behaviour management earlier this year. This is helping pupils to understand the consequences of their actions and their impact on other members of the school community. Consequently, the number of instances of poor behaviour is reducing.
- There have been no fixed-term or permanent exclusions in recent years.
- Attendance has been low in recent years. Although it is improving, it remains below the level seen typically nationally. Too many pupils are absent from school on a regular basis. Persistent absence is significantly higher than the level seen nationally, although it is reducing. This term, leaders have bought in specialist support to help them work with parents to improve pupils' attendance. This work is supporting some pupils to attend more regularly.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Standards across the school are too low. Many pupils, particularly in the lower school, do not make the progress of which they are capable. Many pupils are working several years behind where they should be. As a result, they do not have the firm foundation on which to build in their studies through the upper school.
- Attainment at the end of Class X (Year 11) has declined slightly in recent years. The number of pupils gaining the highest grades has fallen and the average grade has also declined. Nevertheless, the levels of attainment are in line with national figures.
- The most able pupils are not suitably challenged in their learning and so do not make the progress they should.
- In mathematics, pupils lack fluency in their work. Younger pupils do not have the basic understanding of some fundamental mathematical concepts, such as units of length and measurement. This impedes their ability to estimate. Older pupils do not use efficient methods, and many are slow when performing calculations.
- Across the school, pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar are weak. This detracts from the quality of their writing.
- The progress pupils make in phonics and reading during their years in the lower school is poor. This is because teaching is not sufficiently demanding.
- Pupils' workbooks show much incomplete work and little evidence that pupils are catching up. Consequently, some pupils miss critical parts of learning.
- Pupils with SEND who receive additional, specialist support make rapid progress. However, this is a small proportion of the pupils with SEND. For the majority, class teaching does not take their needs into consideration sufficiently. Therefore, most pupils with SEND do not make good progress.

Early years provision

Inadequate

- The arrangements to keep children in the kindergarten safe are not effective. Volunteers have not had the training that is required, particularly relating to keeping children safe. The other welfare requirements of the early years foundation stage are met. Consequently, managers and trustees cannot assure themselves that children are safe in the kindergarten.
- The quality of teaching in the kindergarten is variable. Managers do not check the quality of the provision sufficiently. In addition, there is a lack of leadership to drive improvement. Throughout the early years, there is inconsistency in the quality of the provision between classes. In some, adults engage well with children and support them to make progress with their social and personal development. However, in other classes they do not. As a result, the progress children make is inconsistent.
- The transition arrangements between the kindergarten and Class I (Year 2) are not strong. Children are not well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- The observations staff make of children's progress and stages of development are overly descriptive and do not set out their next steps of learning effectively. Teaching staff do

not use assessment information well enough to plan teaching that supports children to make good progress.

- Staff in the early years are committed and enthusiastic about early education. Consequently, they seek guidance and support to enhance the early years setting. For example, managers have secured the support from a specialist adviser from the Steiner Waldorf community to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Parents who spoke with inspectors or responded to Parent View are happy with the quality of the provision.

Sixth form provision

Inadequate

- As with the rest of the school, the arrangements to keep students safe do not meet the statutory requirements.
- Some teachers do not routinely plan learning that builds on what students already know. For some students, the level of challenge is not sufficient to ensure that they achieve as well as they should. Others do not receive the support they need when they struggle.
- Students' work demonstrates that they often lack the breadth of understanding that is needed in order to reach the highest grades.
- Careers guidance in the sixth form is limited. Students appreciate the support they are given when applying to university. However, their awareness of the range of careers and different pathways is limited.
- The sixth form currently has a small number of students in the final year of study (Class XII) with a larger group in Class XI (Year 12). The curriculum offer for this small sixth form is wide. Students generally follow A-level courses, including English literature, biology and philosophy. Some students also complete the extended project qualification.
- The sixth form is inclusive. Students celebrate different lifestyle choices and show respect for each other. Students benefit from strong relationships with staff in the sixth form. Students trust their guardian and feel able to discuss personal and academic matters with them.
- Most students secure the grades they need to continue to university.

School details

Unique reference number	115793
DfE registration number	916/6031
Inspection number	10094395

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent boarding school
Age range of pupils	3 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	317
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	21
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Wynstones Limited
Chair	Ted Yates
School education manager	Paul Tallentine
Annual fees (day pupils)	£6,732–£9,828
Telephone number	01452 429220
Website	www.wynstones.com
Email address	reception@wynstones.com
Date of previous inspection	6–7 February 2007

Information about this school

- Wynstones School is an independent boarding school located on the outskirts of Gloucester. It is operated by Wynstones Limited. The school opened in 1937 and follows the Steiner Waldorf principles of education.
- The school is registered for 312 pupils aged three to 19 years. There are currently 317 pupils on the roll. This includes five pupils who are visiting from other European countries for up to three months. Pupils are taught in mixed classes throughout the school.

- Approximately a quarter of the pupils have SEND. Two pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The trustees are in the process of confirming the appointment of a principal. He has been working with the school for ten weeks as an adviser. The school education manager took up post in January 2019.
- The trustee board of Wynstones Limited is the proprietor. A significant number of trustees have been appointed since the previous standard inspection in November 2017.
- The school aims to provide a balanced education that develops pupils' social development and their understanding and appreciation of the world around them. The school follows the Steiner Waldorf curriculum.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school was last inspected by Ofsted in 2007 when it was judged to be good. Since 2007, the school has been inspected by the Schools Inspection Service (SIS). The last full standard inspection was conducted by SIS on 28–30 November 2017. The school's effectiveness was judged to be good.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was conducted at the request of the Secretary of State. The Department for Education commissioned Ofsted to carry out this standard inspection earlier in the cycle than previously planned.
- Inspectors held meetings with the principal designate, managers and staff with specific responsibilities. The lead inspector held a meeting with seven trustees and spoke with representatives of the local authority by telephone.
- Inspectors observed learning in classes across a range of subjects and 'main lesson', most of which were conducted jointly with managers. Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of pupils' work.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including minutes of trustees' meetings, improvement plans, pupils' attainment information and details regarding pupils with SEND. They also considered a range of documentation in relation to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance. In addition, the inspectors undertook checks of the premises.
- Discussions were held with pupils throughout the inspection and formally in groups.
- Inspectors took account of 163 responses to Parent View and 30 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire. Inspectors also considered the content of 25 letters and emails received.
- The boarding provision was not part of this inspection. The boarding provision was last inspected by Ofsted on 28–30 November 2018, when it was found to be inadequate.

Inspection team

Iain Freeland, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Catherine Leahy

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school must meet the following independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if-
 - 2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in subparagraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively; and
 - 2(1)(b) the written policy, plans and schemes of work-
 - 2(1)(b)(i) take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan.
- 2(2) For the purposes of paragraph (2)(1)(a), the matters are-
 - 2(2)(e) for pupils receiving secondary education, access to accurate, up-to-date careers guidance that-
 - 2(2)(e)(ii) enables them to make informed choices about a broad range of career options; and
 - 2(2)(e)(iii) helps to encourage them to fulfil their potential;
 - 2(2)(f) where the school has pupils below compulsory school age, a programme of activities which is appropriate to their educational needs in relation to personal, social, emotional and physical development and communication and language skills.
- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school-
 - 3(a) enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught;
 - 3(b) fosters in pupils self-motivation, the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to think and learn for themselves;
 - 3(c) involves well-planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time;
 - 3(d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons;

- 3(e) demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught;
- 3(g) demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress.
- 4 The standard in this paragraph is met where the proprietor ensures that a framework for pupil performance to be evaluated, by reference to the school's own aims as provided to parents or national norms, or to both, is in place.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 7(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
 - 7(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 18(2) The standard in this paragraph is met if-
 - 18(2)(c) the proprietor carries out appropriate checks to confirm in respect of each such person-
 - 18(2)(c)(iii) the person's right to work in the United Kingdom; and
 - 18(2)(e) in the case of any person for whom, by reason of that person living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, obtaining such a certificate is not sufficient to establish the person's suitability to work in a school, such further checks are made as the proprietor considers appropriate, having regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State; and
 - 20(6) The standard in this paragraph is met in relation to an individual ('MB'), not being the Chair of the school, who is a member of a body of persons corporate or unincorporate named as the proprietor of the school in the register or in an application to enter the school in the register, if-
 - 20(6)(b) subject to sub-paragraphs (7) to (8), the Chair of the school makes the following checks relating to MB-
 - 20(6)(b)(ii) checks confirming MB's identity and MB's right to work in the United Kingdom; and
 - 20(6)(b)(iii) where, by reason of MB's living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, obtaining an enhanced criminal record certificate is not sufficient to establish MB's

suitability to work in a school, such further checks as the Chair of the school considers appropriate, having regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State;

- 20(6)(c) subject to sub-paragraph (8), where the Secretary of State makes a request for an enhanced criminal record check relating to MB countersigned by the Secretary of State to be made, such a check is made.
- 21(3) The information referred to in this sub-paragraph is-
 - 21(3)(a) in relation to each member of staff ('S') appointed on or after 1st May 2007, whether-
 - 21(3)(a)(vii) a check of S's right to work in the United Kingdom was made; and
 - 21(3)(a)(viii) checks were made pursuant to paragraph 18(2)(e),
- 21(6) The information referred to in this sub-paragraph is, in relation to each member ('MB') of a body of persons named as the proprietor appointed on or after 1st May 2007, whether the checks referred to in paragraph 20(6)(b) were made, the date they were made and the date on which the resulting certificate was obtained.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school-
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
 - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

The school must meet the following requirements of the statutory framework for the early years foundation stage

Safeguarding and welfare requirements: paragraphs 3.2, 3.4, 3.6, 3.7 and 3.9

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