

St Wilfrid's School

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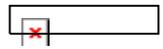
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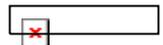
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Introduction and summary

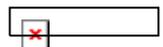


Purpose and scope of the inspection



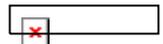
This inspection was carried out by the Office for Standards in Education under Section 163 of the Education Act 2002 in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school



St Wilfrid's School is an independent, non-selective, co-educational school, opened over 130 years ago. It is located in St David's parish, just on the edge of Exeter's city centre. There are currently 125 pupils aged 5 to 16 years, two of whom have statements of special educational need (SEN). The school aims to provide an education in which all the pupils 'achieve a positive self-image by experiencing success, accepting responsibility, and respecting the needs of others.'

Summary of main findings



St Wilfrid's School is a successful school that achieves its aims. It provides a good quality education through a well balanced curriculum and after-school clubs. The good teaching enables pupils to make good progress. It is a friendly and purposeful community where pupils are happy, work well and where standards of behaviour are high.

What the school does well

- it enables pupils to make good progress through good teaching;
- its curriculum is of good quality, broad and balanced, providing good choice at Key Stage 4;
- it is well led and benefits from good strategic management;
- it provides good specialist teaching for games and clubs.

What the school must do in order to comply with the regulations

The school meets all the regulations.

Next steps

Whilst not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- provide better guidance to pupils in the lower school on what they need to do to improve;
- meet its aims more fully by increasing the opportunities for junior pupils to take responsibility.

Compliance with the regulations for registration

1. The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of the curriculum

The curriculum is broad, well balanced and covers all the subjects of the National Curriculum. Time allocations for each subject are sensible and place an appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy, especially for the lower school pupils. Statements about the aim of each subject indicate

the school's secure understanding of the different contributions to learning which each subject makes. These aims are backed up with detailed plans for programmes of study which clearly and precisely show the content for each year group. The lower school operates a two-year rolling programme to ensure that pupils in the mixed-age classes cover new topics each year. The older junior pupils use some of the specialist rooms and staff for French, science, art, ICT and home economics, physical education (PE), swimming, gymnastics and games. The latter subjects, and gymnastics, are mostly taught off-site, and make use of good local facilities. Pupils' attainment is enhanced through access to the specialist teaching provided for all these subjects.

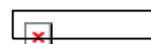
Citizenship and personal, social and health education (PSHE) are taught through several subjects, as well as through the relatively new programmes of study specifically for these areas of the curriculum. Careers education and advice is available to pupils from Year 7 onwards in the school and through the Connexions service.

For the lower school, detailed schemes of work are drawn from a variety of sources. Use is made of national guidance for literacy and numeracy, especially for planning work and identifying key objectives. Some use is made of web-based materials and guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority is used for some subjects such as religious education (RE), science, and design and technology.

The school's secondary-level curriculum is of generally good quality, and is broad and balanced. The Key Stage 4 curriculum, beside a core of English, mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT), PSHE and games, includes a wide range of options which enables pupils to develop their knowledge and skills, and to broaden their interests. All secondary subjects are supported by clearly expressed aims and appropriate schemes of work, which provide the basis for more detailed lesson planning. All the secondary lessons observed matched the planning outlined in the relevant schemes.

The curriculum is enriched through a variety of additional opportunities. Visits to exhibitions, museums, the local library, the theatre and places of interest provide first-hand, creative additional experiences for pupils of all ages. A 'club afternoon' takes place once a week offering a good choice of activities for pupils in the upper school, for whom residential trips are also arranged.

The quality of the teaching and assessment



The teaching in the school is good in both the senior and lower school. All the teaching observed was at least satisfactory and some was very good. The very good teaching engaged the pupils in what they were learning and encouraged them to apply intellectual effort. In the lower school, in these lessons, the learning intentions were clear and shared with the pupils. The skilful use of questioning gave pupils the opportunity to consider carefully and respond more thoughtfully. In some lessons, good language development and the opportunity for pupils to contribute more frequently was apparent in pupils' ability to articulate ideas and thoughts through complex sentences and well-structured explanations. Pupils made the best progress where the teacher had the highest expectations of the pupils' abilities. Some lessons though, could have more concisely expressed objectives with planned steps to a desired and measurable outcome.

At secondary level, good teaching enables pupils to make good progress. The lessons are often challenging and teachers provide pupils with the opportunity to develop skills with which to assess, and surmount the challenges and evaluate the progress they have made. Most of the lessons seen were carefully planned, and often taught, with panache by teachers who were confident and experts in their subjects. In Year 11 chemistry, good teaching enabled pupils to develop the skill and the confidence to experiment effectively, working individually or in pairs, on the catalytic cracking of liquid paraffin. A Year 7 English class discussed, with great maturity, the craft of the novelist in generating a credible atmosphere of unease in a supermarket queue. Pupils with SEN were fully

integrated into the work of the class with appropriate levels of challenging activity.

The school assesses pupils' progress carefully using a wide range of techniques and procedures. For example, there are formal tests and school examinations. At Key Stages 2 and 3 there are tests for ICT, numeracy and literacy, science, reasoning and reading. Most test results are rigorously analysed and used to place pupils in appropriate sets, to help to decide on the level of their work, and to ensure that pupils obtain an appropriate curriculum.

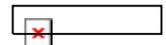
Although work is marked regularly and discussed with pupils in the lower school, insufficient guidance about how to improve is given to upper junior pupils, in particular, in written feedback. Teachers keep records about pupils' progress but do not make as much use of these as they could when planning lessons.

At secondary level, informal testing and assessment include some effective marking of class and homework, as well as more formal class tests. The senior management monitors and evaluates this systematically through workbook checks. There is a very useful and detailed analysis made each year of internal tests and of GCSE results.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils



Provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is good. There is a strong emphasis on individual responsibility, participation in community life, and the encouragement of good behaviour, alongside the development of pupils' self-confidence.

Assemblies provide opportunities for spiritual reflection and the development of personal awareness. Sometimes these are led by the local ministry team and sometimes by the pupils themselves. Local churches are regularly involved in the celebration of Christian festivals. Other faiths are considered through study modules and, while the school is predominantly Christian, tolerance and understanding of individual rights and beliefs are properly developed. The lower school link with Japanese pen-friends and the upper school studies of textile work from central America, exemplify ways in which pupils are introduced to other cultures.

Teachers promote pupils' self-esteem, self-discipline and the ability to mix freely and sensibly with other pupils and adults. Many opportunities are given for individual, partner and group work. From an early age, pupils learn to work with, and show respect for, other pupils. A clear rewards and sanctions policy promoting good attitudes to school life is applied consistently across the school. The PSHE programme makes a positive contribution to pupils' social development and their ability to discuss important issues about society and their place within it. There are good links with local public services such as the police.

Many opportunities are provided for pupils to take responsibility. There is a house system with elected captains and deputies. Prefects, elected by staff, help to monitor pupils' behaviour and lead fund-raising events. Each form has a captain and a form prefect helper. A newly-established school council with representatives from each of the upper school forms has clear parameters and good participation by pupils in its organisation. More could be done to provide pupils from the lower school with similar levels of responsibility.

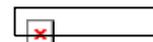
At secondary level all Key Stage 3 pupils have a timetabled period of personal, social and moral education each week which leads to an accredited examination at the end of Year 11. The

citizenship course also contains sections on social and moral responsibility. Elements of citizenship are studied in RE, PE, science, outdoor activities and in ICT. This work is reinforced by teaching in modern foreign languages, as well within clubs as exemplified by the Italian cookery club.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils



Provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils is good. The school takes the necessary steps to ensure that it is a safe place in which to work and learn. Pupils are supervised properly throughout the school day. School policies meet all the key requirements for pupils' welfare, health and safety, supported by very detailed risk assessments.

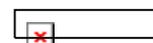
There is good provision for First Aid, with three qualified members of staff. There is an effective school behaviour policy. Anti-bullying policies are in place and pupils report that there is no bullying. There is an appropriate child protection policy in line with local authority arrangements. The school has written records of serious disciplinary offences and of the sanctions taken. Attendance and admission registers are in order.

The school has made good provision for fire safety. There is a well-prepared fire risk assessment. The fire drill book is up-to-date and contains evaluative comments on past fire drills. The school meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002 with a good plan up to 2005.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff

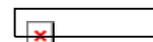


The school has worked very hard to ensure that it has appropriate procedures and so meets all the requirements for the suitability and checking of staff.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation



The school is housed in an historically-interesting building with modern extensions and much recent refurbishment. This provides suitable accommodation contained on one site, with a hard-surfaced

playing area and an area laid to grass.

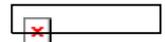
The buildings are generally in a good state of repair and the interior decoration is fresh and clean. During recent cold weather a couple of the rooms became rather stuffy with insufficient fresh air; there is a need to ensure that, after re-painting, windows are eased to that they can be readily opened. The classrooms are of an adequate size for the number of pupils and are appropriately furnished. There are good specialist facilities for art, science, home economics and ICT. The school hall is of an adequate size for assemblies, and it is also used for some lessons, as a dining hall and for extra-curricular activities. The rooms are kept clean and tidy with adequate resources accessible to pupils. Pupils in the lower school are encouraged from an early age to take responsibility for their own belongings and the general tidiness of their rooms.

There are a number of steps and narrow stairways in the school which are used sensibly by pupils, including during emergency evacuation practice. The orderly manner in which pupils move around the school demonstrates their respect for it.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

6. The quality of information for parents and other partners



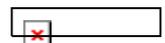
The quality of information for parents is good. Developing effective communication with parents is a priority of the school. All exchanges with parents are recorded in daily planners but, in the lower school, greater reliance is placed on informal contact. The informative prospectus contains details about the school's ethos, the curriculum and the education offered, as well as the required details of the complaints procedure. There is also a helpful, detailed handbook for parents. Pupils receive an appropriately detailed report each term.

A notice board in the foyer, and the homework diary which pupils take home each day, combine to keep everyone up-to-date with the life and work of the school. Parents are welcome to come and speak to the headteacher at the beginning and end of the day. The school has conducted its own questionnaire surveys. Most parents responded positively to the questionnaire sent to them before the inspection. The results showed a high level of parental satisfaction with the school, although 13% reported that they would prefer still more visits and activities outside of lessons.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

7. The effectiveness of the school's procedures for handling complaints



The school has a very effective procedure for handling formal complaints which is detailed in the latest prospectus. There has not been any call to put the procedure into operation to date.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

School details



Name of school:	St Wilfrid's School		
DfES ref number:	878/6004		
Type of school:	Primary and Secondary		
Status:	Independent		
Age range of pupils:	5 - 16 years		
Gender of pupils:	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils):	Boys 74,	Girls 51,	Total 125
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need:	Boys 0,	Girls 2,	Total 2
Annual fees (day pupils):	£3,606 - £5,409		
Address of school:	25 - 29 St David's Hill Exeter Devon EX4 4DA		
E-mail address:	office@stwilfrids.devon.sch.uk		
Telephone number:	01392 276171		
Fax number:	01392 438666		
Headteacher:	Mrs A.E.M.Macdonald-Dent		
Proprietor:	St Wilfrid's School (Exeter) Ltd		
Lead Inspector:	Mr Neville Grenyer HMI		
Dates of inspection:	7 - 10 March 2005		

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