

St Wilfrid's School

25–29 David's Hill, Exeter, Devon, EX4 4DA

Inspection dates 14–16 May 2014

Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management	Good	2

Summary of key findings

This is a good school because

- Pupils make good progress in their learning, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Teaching is consistently good and some is outstanding. This contributes to the pupils' good standards of achievement.
- The pupils' behaviour is outstanding, reflecting the importance the school places on fostering positive relationships. The school is a caring, safe and nurturing environment where pupils learn and develop well and where every pupil is known very well.
- The school is well led and managed. Leaders have a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' achievement ensuring that they are all good.
- Pupils who may have failed to thrive in their previous school have achieved well, both academically and in their personal development.
- There are very positive partnerships with parents and careers, who are pleased with the care and education provided.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The standard of teaching, although consistently good, is not yet outstanding.
- Systems to check on pupils' progress towards ambitious targets are at an early stage of development.
- Although a system for making checks on the quality of teaching has been established it is not as fully effective as it might be.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- The inspectors observed 16 lessons or parts of lessons, some accompanied by a senior leader.
- Meetings were held with the school's leaders, teaching staff and pupils. A range of documentation was examined, including policies, assessment records, and curriculum and teachers' plans. The inspectors heard pupils read and looked at pupils' written and other work. They observed pupils at break times and lunchtimes.
- The views expressed by 12 members of staff in survey questionnaires were considered.
- There were 21 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire. The inspectors spoke to parents and carers in person and received a number of letters and emails from parents and carers who wished to communicate directly with them.

Inspection team

Jill Bainton, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Janet Hallett

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Wilfrid's School is a co-educational, non-selective day school registered for 125 pupils aged between five and 16 years of age. It occupies extended Georgian and Victorian buildings close to the centre of Exeter. Currently, there are 80 pupils on roll, aged from three to 16 years. Of these, 11 children attend part time in the Early Years Foundation Stage and are in receipt of government funding. The school was established in 1870 by Anglican nuns and seeks to maintain a Christian ethos. It is currently in the ownership of a private company, St Wilfrid's School.
- The school uses off-site provision for physical education.
- There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school was last inspected in September 2008, when it met all the regulations.
- The school aims to provide 'a happy, secure and stimulating environment in which all pupils achieve a positive self-image by experiencing success, accepting responsibility and by recognising and respecting the needs of others'.
- The school submitted a material change request during the inspection to change the age range from five to 16 years to three to 16 years of age.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching and levels of achievement so that all pupils make more rapid progress by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils in the upper school to discuss their work and ideas
 - making sure pupils clearly understand what they are expected to learn in lessons
 - strengthening the use of targets so that all pupils know how to improve their learning.
- Strengthen the impact of leadership and management by:
 - developing the system for making close checks on the quality of teaching and learning
 - fully implementing the system for checking on pupils' progress and attainment and of setting them challenging learning targets.

Inspection judgements

Achievement of pupils

Good

- The school has been successful in maintaining the good levels of achievement since the last inspection as a result of good teaching and a rich curriculum. Pupils join the school with very varying educational experiences and at different times, some late in the academic year. From these different starting points they make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress towards achieving the early learning goals as a result of careful planning and a good range of activities, both those led by teachers and those chosen by the children. The play activities are purposeful and every opportunity is taken to enhance and speed up children's learning using the well-equipped indoor and outdoor areas.
- By the end of Key Stage 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above typical expectations. Pupils are confident readers and enjoy reading for pleasure. Younger pupils are given support and guidance in learning phonics (the link between letters and sounds). Most read fluently, confidently and with expression from an early age. Pupils needing additional support in reading are quickly identified and appropriate help is given. In writing, pupils take pride in presenting their work. In mathematics, pupils build successfully on their good early learning of basic mathematical skills such as times tables.
- Pupils' good progress continues through the secondary section. Pupils are successful in their examinations at GCSE level, with the majority achieving well from their widely differing starting points compared with national expectations. Senior pupils who may have joined the school with low expectations for success in GCSE examinations have made good progress as a result of good teaching, and some achieve better results compared to national expectations. More-able pupils are enabled to reach their potential and do well.
- Those leaving at the end of Year 11 gain places at local schools and colleges of their choice for post-16 studies. By the time they leave school, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- A number of parents and carers commented on how very impressed they are with the way that their children, who may have had a previously unsatisfactory experience in school, have made such good progress and achieved their potential through the caring and supportive education they receive at St Wilfrid's School.
- Achievement is not yet outstanding as pupils are not yet making rapid and sustained progress towards ambitious targets. A system of setting targets has been implemented in the upper school and pupils know what they need to do to achieve better results in their examinations. This system is now being extended to the lower school.

Quality of teaching

Good

- The quality of teaching is good and some of it is outstanding. This helps the pupils to achieve well across subjects. Pupils' understanding is checked frequently through searching questions which maintain their interest and encourage them to think hard and attempt difficult tasks. For example, in a home economics GCSE lesson, probing questioning by the teacher enabled pupils to compare and evaluate the different processes involved in making apple tarts.
- Teachers expect much of the pupils, in tune with the very positive climate that encourages good learning in the school. Most staff plan well to provide interesting and relevant activities which help pupils make at least good progress in their learning. Teachers create positive relationships so, for example, the pupils enjoy their work and take an active role in their learning.
- Teachers have strong subject knowledge and use this to good effect to support individuals very well in their learning. The approaches used by teachers enable them to respond well to pupils' different learning needs.
- Pupils especially praise the way that staff encourage, support and challenge them to achieve

their best in most lessons. The most able pupils are sufficiently well challenged and achieve well.

- Although teachers generally plan learning activities well, in a few instances they do not ensure that pupils fully understand the purpose of what they are required to do and what they are expected to learn.
- The assessment of pupils' learning is mostly effective. Pupils are given an initial detailed assessment when they start at the school. Staff make regularly checks on each pupil's progress against the targets they have been set. This system has been introduced into the upper school and is now being implemented in the lower school.
- Pupils confirm that they understand what they have to do to improve their work, including their spelling, punctuation and grammar, through the comments made in teachers' marking and oral feedback. Homework is used well to support learning.
- In the upper school, pupils do not always get sufficient opportunities to fully secure their learning, for example, by discussing their work and ideas with each other.
- The curriculum is good and has improved since the last inspection with additional subjects at GCSE level. It is well documented and covers a wide range of subjects, with specialist staff teaching in the upper school and some specialist teaching in the lower school. There is a wide range of additional activities with many planned visits off site, which pupils confirm they enjoy. These various activities have a positive impact on the pupils and contribute to their academic achievement, personal development and enjoyment of school.
- Teaching assistants are given good direction and support pupils' learning well.
- The school makes good uses the off-site provision for physical education to ensure pupils can develop their physical skills.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They behave very well in lessons and around the school and are enthusiastic learners. Pupils are friendly, respectful and helpful to each other. Their excellent attendance reflects their high levels of enjoyment and desire to do well.
- Relationships are excellent at all levels between both staff and pupils and among the pupils themselves. There is a shared enthusiasm for learning throughout the school. Pupils are very proud of their school and expressed a desire for the inspectors to reflect this in the report, saying that 'Small is beautiful and we are one big family here.'
- Pupils understand the different forms that bullying can take, including cyber bullying. They confirm that they have no concerns about bullying and any very small incidents are effectively dealt with by staff. Pupils have a clear awareness of how to remain safe. Parents and carers confirm that their children are happy and enjoy coming to school.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. The school's safeguarding systems are robust and maintained to a high standard.
- Older pupils enjoy and take very seriously their responsibilities as prefects. They also assist the younger pupils in many pastoral ways and younger pupils say this is very helpful. Pupils were eager to speak to the inspectors and made very many positive comments, such as: 'This is a great school'; 'The staff really help and support us'; 'We are all friends here'.
- The school's promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and enables pupils to thrive in a very supportive, caring and nurturing learning environment. Pupils are receptive to new ideas, have a well-developed knowledge of their own and other cultures and racial harmony is effectively promoted.
- The school has a close connection with the local parish church which it uses for various celebrations. Pupils study world religions in religious education and visit different places of worship locally.
- Leaders ensure that when controversial and political issues are considered, steps have been taken to offer a balanced presentation of opposing views.

Leadership and management**Good**

- The quality of leadership and management is good and underpins the school's success in ensuring that teaching is good and that pupils make rapid academic progress, develop very well individually and prosper in the caring, nurturing environment.
- The headteacher and senior staff, who also undertake the roles of middle leaders, have evaluated the effectiveness of the school. They have high expectations of themselves, staff and pupils. They have devised plans for the future which identify how they can further improve the school. Senior staff have made checks on the quality of teaching in recent years which have brought about improvements. They know that they could make even closer checks on teaching and learning and provide more opportunities for training.
- All staff who responded to the inspection questionnaire stated that they are proud to work at the school. Parents and carers demonstrated through their varied responses and comments that they are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. They made many favourable comments such as, 'The school is unique; it protects, nurtures and allows for individuals.'
- The curriculum successfully promotes an eagerness in the pupils to learn. As a result, they make good progress academically, in sporting activities and particularly in their personal development. The programmes of work effectively promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils through a range of well-planned activities. They are enhanced by after-school clubs, off-site visits and visitors to the school.
- The premises and accommodation are well maintained and provide a stimulating learning environment, including the outdoor area.
- The proprietors have ensured that all the regulations for independent schools and statutory safeguarding and welfare requirements for the Early Year Foundation Stage are met. The proprietors know about teaching, about how any weaker teaching is addressed, how well the school is doing and about staff appraisal processes.
- The school's application to change the age range from five to 16 years to three to 16 years of age was approved by the Department for Education during the inspection.

What inspection judgements mean

School	
Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Non-association independent school inspection handbook* which is published on the Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140053.

School details

Unique reference number	113567
Inspection number	443455
DfE registration number	878/6004

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, 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	All-age day school
School status	Independent
Age range of pupils	5–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	80
Number of part time pupils	11
Proprietor	St Wilfrid's School (Exeter) Ltd
Headteacher	Mrs A Macdonald-Dent
Date of previous school inspection	16 September 2008
Annual fees (day pupils)	£7,356 – £9,459
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