

St Wilfrid's School

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

Inspection dates

17–19 October 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders have created a school community where relationships between staff and pupils are deeply rooted in mutual respect.
- Pupils make strong progress from their different starting points. A large proportion of pupils arrive working below age-related expectations but they quickly start to catch up.
- Teachers know each pupil well and take into account their prior learning. However, some of the most able pupils are not challenged sufficiently to reach the highest standards.
- Teachers ensure that the emotional needs of pupils are met. However, for a few pupils who join the school at various times of the year, academic progress is slow.
- Pupils are safe. Leaders have created a culture where safeguarding is paramount and implementation of policies is effective. However, leaders are aware that some pupils' knowledge of internet safety lacks depth.
- The majority of children in the early years make good progress, but a minority do not develop their number and writing skills quickly enough.
- Pupils read avidly and choose books based on their knowledge of authors and their own reading experiences. Pupils value the reading opportunities that they have.
- Pupils receive high-quality homework which links directly with what they are learning in school. Parents value the quality of the homework provided.
- Teachers generally ensure that pupils take care over the presentation of their work. Even so, some pupils' written work remains untidy.
- The curriculum is rich and varied. There are opportunities for pupils to take part in many visits to places of interest, which helps to bring the curriculum to life.
- Pupils' conduct is a strength of the school. They have established positive relationships with their peers, and older pupils act as role models for younger pupils.
- Leaders work with a range of local providers so that pupils make informed decisions about their next steps. As a result, pupils make choices based on their own aspirations.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that:
 - pupils are challenged to reach the highest standards, particularly the most able pupils
 - teachers have the highest expectations for all pupils, particularly for how pupils present their work
 - children in the early years have more opportunities to develop their writing and number skills.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - leaders monitor the impact of academic interventions for pupils who are new to the school so that progress quickens
 - strategies are in place for pupils to have a deeply embedded knowledge of how to stay safe online.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders have acted on the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. They have worked strategically to improve these aspects of the school. One particular area of success has been the implementation of the school's target system to help pupils know what they must do in order to improve. Furthermore, leaders have improved the opportunities for pupils in key stages 3 and 4 to discuss their learning.
- Leaders have ensured that the school meets the independent school standards. They monitor these frequently. Leaders evaluate and review key policies and the school development plan. Leaders monitor progress towards the school's own targets effectively through regular meetings. As a result, all members of the school community implement policies in the day-to-day life of the school effectively. Leaders ensure that up-to-date policies are published on the school's website for parents to access.
- Leaders have created an environment where every pupil is valued and the unique contribution that they make to the school is celebrated. The school is a caring, nurturing environment for all pupils. For some pupils, this school has had a transformational effect on their attitudes towards education. Consequently, pupils enjoy their school experience and have good attitudes towards learning.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils in key stage 4 are able to access subjects which align closely to pupils' ambitions and interests. Leaders have recruited staff to ensure that the curriculum enthuses pupils and meets their varying needs. This personalised approach results in pupils feeling positive about the opportunities available to them.
- Leaders have designed a curriculum rich in opportunities for pupils to apply their knowledge, skills and understanding in real-life situations. For example, pupils visited Dawlish Warren and Cabot Circus to explore the impact of human and physical geography on a locality.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported. Leaders work closely with external agencies to meet pupils' needs, in particular those of the most vulnerable pupils who have not excelled in other settings. Support is particularly effective for pupils who have social and emotional needs.
- Many pupils join the school at different points of their academic life. Leaders confirm that they need to strengthen the assessment and monitoring of pupils' academic progress further and liaise with pupils' previous schools to ensure they make good progress from the start.

Governance

- The proprietor's passion for improvement can be seen in every part of the school and inspires both staff and pupils. The whole school community values the pivotal role that she plays and shares her vision.
- The proprietor carries out her statutory duties diligently. She has undertaken training to make sure that she is able to fulfil her role. She has also ensured that all staff receive training to carry out their roles and responsibilities effectively. Staff are well supported

and have access to relevant training. Consequently, staff are skilled in carrying out their roles and, in particular, supporting the emotional needs of pupils. As a result, pupils settle well into school and thrive.

- The proprietor carries out regular checks on the school to ensure that the information on the school's effectiveness is accurate. She has worked alongside leaders to identify strengths and areas for development. Leaders work together to identify the next steps in the school's improvement plan and closely check these to ensure impact on standards. Therefore, leaders evaluate the strengths of the school accurately and know how to further improve.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Safeguarding is given a high priority. Leaders provide regular safeguarding training for all members of staff. Leaders ensure that staff know what to do if they have concerns about a pupil. Detailed records reflect staff vigilance in identifying pupils' welfare needs.
- Leaders have adopted a rigorous approach to their employment procedures. Pre-employment checks are in-depth and in accordance with statutory requirements.
- Leaders have created a strong culture of safeguarding, where it is everyone's responsibility to report concerns. Leaders use this information well and regular contact with external agencies has proved effective, particularly when seeking advice with concerns about a pupil. As a result, pupils feel safe and are safe. Their welfare, health and safety are prioritised by leaders. Parents overwhelmingly feel that pupils are safe.
- Leaders have rightly made it a high priority to ensure that pupils have a deep knowledge of how to keep safe, including when using social media. Nonetheless, they have identified the need to implement further strategies to ensure that pupils learn to stay safe when online.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good.
- Teachers place a strong focus on developing pupils' reading, mathematics and oracy skills across the curriculum. For example, in geography, pupils could debate the cause of global warming. Pupils used the range of evidence from tables, graphs and written extracts to form their judgements. Such rich opportunities allow pupils to develop into confident learners.
- Pupils receive specific feedback to help develop their writing, particularly in key stage 4. Teachers support pupils to reflect on their own writing and skilfully use questioning to draw out knowledge and next steps to make further improvements. Pupils value this approach and respond well. As a result, pupils are able to identify how to improve their own writing and progress is evident.
- Teachers are providing pupils with opportunities to develop fluency when using number. Assessments pinpoint what pupils need in order to make progress and inform future learning. Most pupils make good progress over a short space of time.
- Teachers make effective use of what they know pupils can do and understand to tackle

misconceptions and help pupils to make progress. Teachers deliver a bespoke curriculum for each pupil which builds on their emerging needs. However, for some pupils who are new to the school, the teaching is not finely tuned to their academic needs.

- Pupils have access to a wide range of reading material and make informed decisions when choosing books. Pupils read for enjoyment and discuss what they have read with confidence. They use their previous reading opportunities to help them make sensible predictions and can comment accurately on the plot and character development. Pupils choose books that interest and enthuse them and rarely change books before finishing.
- Pupils receive homework which aligns closely with what they are learning in school. Parents validate the quality of homework and confirm the benefits it has on their children's learning. During the inspection, pupils in an English literature class were using their homework as a tool for editing and making improvements. As a result, homework is of a high quality and correlates directly with what pupils are learning in school.
- At times, teachers do not insist on pupils' best work. Pupils' workbooks show a variance from one lesson to the next and from one subject to another. Where expectations are lower, pupils' presentation of their work is weaker. This is less prevalent in key stage 4.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are overwhelmingly positive about the school's approach to bullying and behaviour. Pupils expressed how behaviour in the school is a strength. Parents and staff agree. They speak passionately about how the family feel of the school has helped to create a positive culture which is solidly built on mutual respect and understanding.
- Pupils receive high-quality careers advice and preparation for the next stage of their education. Parents and pupils praise the school for its work with a range of local providers to give opportunities to pupils. As a result, pupils make well-informed decisions about the next stage of their education.
- Relationships between pupils are extremely positive. Regardless of age, pupils engage well with one another. Older pupils promote activities for younger pupils to take part in, and act as role models. Consequently, pupils' conduct is a strength of the school and relationships are deeply rooted in mutual respect.
- Pupils have a strong understanding of how to stay safe on a day-to-day basis. They speak confidently about the need to follow school rules. Although they demonstrate a growing awareness of staying safe online, leaders have identified the need to deepen pupils' understanding of internet safety.

Behaviour

- Pupils' behaviour is good. They have positive attitudes towards school and their lessons. Low-level disruption across the school is rare. Pupils concentrate well in lessons and cooperate well with their peers. Pupils value their education and say that they enjoy school. They speak positively about how the school meets their needs and are grateful for the opportunities they have to further develop.

- Attendance overall, and for most groups of pupils, is in line with national averages and is improving. Leaders have supported pupils to maintain good attendance, particularly for those pupils who may have missed significant periods of schooling for medical reasons.
- Pupils' conduct is a strength of the school. Pupils demonstrate courtesy and respect for one another and make efforts to ensure that every member of the school community is considered. Older pupils act as positive role models for their younger peers and mutual respect is highly evident.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils make strong progress from their starting points. A large number of pupils join the school at different stages of their academic life, and a number have not had a positive experience of education. Consequently, some join the school not having the skills, knowledge and understanding appropriate to their age. Strong relationships between peers and adults help to ensure that pupils are enthusiastic about learning and make strong progress.
- Pupils enter Year 1 broadly in line with age-related expectations. Due to the strong transition with the early years staff, adults plan well for pupils in order to meet their emerging needs.
- Many pupils in key stage 2 did not join the school at an early age. A significant proportion of these pupils were working below the standards expected for their age when they joined. Teachers ensure that pupils' learning needs are well met. Consequently, pupils make good progress to catch up. In particular, pupils' reading skills are improving strongly.
- In key stage 3, the rate of progress continues to gather pace. Teacher assessments are used to meet the needs of pupils and, even though almost half of the cohort are new to the school, it is evident that most pupils settle well. Workbooks demonstrate strong progress. Teachers skilfully use assessment information to guide future learning opportunities.
- In key stage 4, pupils make faster progress. They have extremely positive attitudes towards their learning and teacher-pupil relationships are strong. Teaching is effective and focuses on developing knowledge and understanding in a supportive, cohesive way. Pupils value the support they receive. As a result, the proportion of pupils who make strong progress from their starting points is high.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. They receive high-quality information which enables them to make sensible decisions about the next stage of their education. During the inspection, two ex-pupils spoke to the inspection team about the positive impact that the school has had on them since they left. They have been successful in pursuing their own education and career paths with help from the school.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities access well-informed and well-designed interventions, particularly those who have emotional needs. The academic development of most pupils is strong. Pupils value their access to physical education opportunities. They have a wealth of opportunities to attend activities off-site and experience success.
- Some of the most able pupils do not receive the challenge and support needed to help

them reach the highest standards. Fewer pupils are working at the higher standards than are capable of doing so. Leaders have identified this from their monitoring and are already improving the quality of teaching to improve outcomes for these pupils.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years provision is well organised to support the development of children. Children can easily access a range of resources within the setting and receive support from adults to help them develop their understanding. As a result, children are familiar with the setting and are confident to explore and utilise what it offers. Consequently, the majority of pupils leave the early years achieving a good level of development.
- Leaders have created a safe and nurturing learning environment. All adults undertake training to keep children safe. Well-considered risk assessments for activities demonstrate staff vigilance. There is a strong sense of care from the adults, who give full recognition to the needs of the children. As a result, adults assess all activities for potential risks and children feel safe.
- Adults have established effective provision for children to develop their skills in the prime areas of the curriculum, particularly in communication and language. Adults use prompts and questions to draw out information from the children as well as modelling a high-quality range of vocabulary. Subsequently, pupils are well supported in their language development.
- Adults effectively use assessment to track the progress of children and plan further learning. Adults know the children well and speak informatively about what they can do to help children make further progress. As a result, adults plan activities that match the needs of children and they make strong progress.
- Adults have developed and maintained strong partnerships with parents. There are daily communication opportunities for parents and staff to share progress. Parents value this. Adults also invite parents to support learning development at home through the school's interactive learning journey. Consequently, parents are well informed about their children's progress.
- Reception staff liaise well with key stage 1 and the lower school leader to ensure that transitions between Reception and key stage 1 are effective. The strong arrangements particularly help when passing on information about children to their new teacher.
- Provision is not yet designed to allow some pupils to fully refine their writing skills and apply their understanding of number. As a result, some pupils begin key stage 1 with weaker outcomes in writing and number than in other aspects of their learning.

School details

Unique reference number	113567
DfE registration number	878/6004
Inspection number	10033881

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 school
Age range of pupils	3 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	45
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	St Wilfrid's School (Exeter) Ltd
Headteacher	Alexandra Macdonald-Dent
Annual fees (day pupils)	£8,706 – £10,809
Telephone number	01392 276171
Website	www.stwilfrids.devon.sch.uk
Email address	office@stwilfrids.devon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	14 May 2014

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. Currently, there are 45 pupils on roll, aged from three to 16 years. There are two pupils with an education, health and care plan.
- The school uses off-site provision for physical education.
- The school was last inspected in 14 May 2014, when it met all the regulations.
- A higher proportion of pupils than seen nationally join the school at times other than at the start of the Nursery.
- Most of the year group cohorts have less than five pupils. Consequently, comparisons against the national average for the end of key stages cannot be made.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in all classes across the school, mostly jointly with senior leaders.
- Discussions took place with the proprietor, the headteacher and senior and middle leaders. In addition, the inspector met with the school's special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), the lower school leader and the early years leader.
- Inspectors scrutinised a number of documents, including school improvement plans, leaders' monitoring of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, as well as records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- The inspectors, together with the senior leaders, looked at pupils' work in their books to establish the current quality of pupils' work and progress over time.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour and spoke with two groups of pupils to seek their views about the school. The views of other pupils were gathered during lessons, playtimes and lunchtimes.
- An inspector conducted a walk around the school to look at curriculum displays, the promotion of British values and to find out how pupils feel about their learning.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of parents and considered 18 responses to the online survey, Parent View. Inspectors also considered 13 completed staff surveys.

Inspection team

Nathan Kemp, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Martin Bragg

Ofsted Inspector

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