

Wigmore School

Ford Street, Wigmore, Leominster, Herefordshire HR6 9UW

Inspection dates

13–14 March 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Pupils' behaviour and personal development and well-being are outstanding; pupils' conduct in lessons and around the site is exemplary; the pupils are a credit to the school.
- The headteacher, supported by senior leaders, has established a very positive ethos based on the values of respect and tolerance. Relationships between adults and pupils and between different groups of pupils are very strong. Disabled pupils are fully included in every aspect of school life.
- Overall outcomes, including for disadvantaged pupils, improved rapidly at GCSE in 2017, especially in science; they are high in English. Pupils currently in the school are making more rapid progress than previous cohorts but this is not yet outstanding.
- Teaching is good, with significant strengths in physical education (PE), drama and textiles; where previous key weaknesses in teaching have been identified, it is rapidly improving. It is not yet outstanding because of some inconsistency in teaching, for example in some languages and humanities subjects.
- The wider curriculum has a significantly positive impact on pupils' personal development and well-being, and participation in the wider life of the school.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well.
- There is a strong culture of looking after pupils' well-being in school; however governors' oversight of this aspect is less rigorous.
- Pupils' outcomes over recent years have been variable, as has been the impact of middle leadership. In some subjects, pupils' progress has not improved quickly enough, while in other subjects there has been rapid progress.
- Leaders have made improvements to subjects where teaching was weak. Opportunities to improve the already good quality of teaching are less well developed.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are making good progress. However, the leadership of this area does not sharply identify which strategies are working and which are not for these pupils.
- Governors' oversight of the impact of additional funding on specific groups of pupils, including those who need to catch up, disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, is not consistently good.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen leadership and governance by ensuring that:
 - leaders, including middle leaders, are consistently robust in monitoring, analysing and evaluating the aspects of provision they have responsibility for
 - the monitoring of teaching, including the stronger teaching, is further developed and consistently rigorous
 - additional funding, including pupil premium, SEN funding and Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium, is evaluated for its impact so that leaders can identify clearly where barriers for some pupils remain
 - governors have more strategic oversight of aspects of the school's work and the impact this has, including in relation to additional funding the school receives and all statutory requirements, therefore enabling them to have a sharply realistic view of the effectiveness of the school.
- Improve outcomes, including in some humanities subjects and languages, by:
 - ensuring that teaching in these subjects is consistently as good as in other subjects
 - ensuring that teaching is consistently challenging in meeting the needs of most-able pupils
 - sharing more widely the very best practice that exists in teachers' questioning.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved further.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and senior leaders have established an ethos where pupils' outstanding personal development, well-being, behaviour and highly positive attitudes to learning can thrive. Pupils' wider needs, including promoting their well-being, are addressed effectively. The school's ethos is built strongly on British values, including those of respect and tolerance. Leaders have an acute awareness of the dangers of radicalisation and extremism.
- Outcomes overall improved significantly at GCSE in 2017, including for disadvantaged pupils, especially in science. They are continuing to improve for current pupils. This was after some poor results for the previous group of Year 11 pupils in a range of subjects. The headteacher has overseen some rapid improvements in outcomes in 2017, especially in science and for disadvantaged pupils, although areas for improvement remain, including tackling low outcomes in some languages and humanities subjects.
- Key weaknesses in teaching are being addressed and have led to improvements. This, coupled with the ethos promoting outstanding personal development and well-being, means that the school is demonstrating its capacity to improve further.
- Leaders promote equality of opportunity very well. The welcoming ethos and accessibility of the site ensures that pupils from diverse backgrounds and wheelchair users are fully included in lessons and in every other aspect of school life.
- Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. Pupils are able to experience cultural life beyond Herefordshire through trips as far afield as France, Spain, Iceland and Slovakia as well as in the UK to London.
- Pupils study a wide range of subjects, including performing arts, drama and music. At present there are limited opportunities for pupils to take examinations other than in academic GCSE subjects. Alternative provision is in place for the very small number of pupils who cannot access the full range of GCSE subjects. Work experience in Year 10 offers a wide range of vocational opportunities, for example working on a building site.
- The school offers a comprehensive range of extra-curricular activities, including a broad range of sporting fixtures. These were all much appreciated by the pupils spoken to. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the activities on offer, including the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, 'bushcraft' club, juggling and 'STEM' subjects (science, technology, engineering and mathematics). Leaders monitor closely the uptake of additional activities by gender.
- There is some inconsistency in the way middle leaders, including subject leaders, have a clear overview of the strengths and what needs further development in their areas of responsibility. Middle leaders show enthusiasm and commitment to their roles but some still require support to be fully effective strategic leaders who are able to monitor and secure improvements, and this is seen in some variance in the progress of current pupils and those who left recently.
- Leadership of SEN requires improvement. Pupils are identified and a range of strategies to support them are provided, but leaders are unable to provide any analysis of the

impact of these strategies. As a result, leaders are unable to identify which strategies are working and why and which are less successful. The school has not published the required information report evaluating the impact on outcomes of SEN pupils.

- The impact of leaders' work is seen in the improving picture of pupils' outcomes. However, leaders' evaluation of the impact of additional funding, including pupil premium funding, Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up funding and SEN funding is not consistently rigorous. As a result, some leaders are unable to say what works well and what does not, in order to target future resources. Similarly, although many pupils successfully caught up as a result of the use of the Year 7 catch-up funding, others did not. Leaders were not able to say what the barriers were for those pupils now in Year 8 who did not make sufficient gains in literacy and numeracy and what they are doing now to help these pupils catch up. Leaders were also unable to explain why the catch-up premium for this academic year is only being targeted at literacy and not numeracy.
- Leaders recognise that, although predictions for outcomes in English and mathematics were accurate, overall predictions for 2017 GCSE examination results were over-inflated. Measures have been put in place this year to increase the rigour and accuracy of assessment, with some success.
- There are opportunities in the curriculum to support the most able pupils, for example to study three sciences and occasionally two languages at GCSE. There are additional activities targeted at them, including trips to universities, 'science live', and 'maths challenge'. However, leaders recognise that current outcomes for most-able pupils in Year 11 and in other year groups are not as high as they should be given these pupils' favourable starting points. Leaders have in the past placed too much emphasis on extra revision rather than on increasing the level of challenge for these pupils in lessons.
- Monitoring of teaching has been effective in challenging where, in a small number of instances, teaching was identified by leaders as being not good enough. Weaker teaching is being addressed successfully through support, coaching and team teaching. However, systems for monitoring and further developing good teaching and learning are not as consistently effective.
- The majority of the very small number of parents who responded to Parent View said they would recommend the school to another parent. However, the majority within this group also said that they did not agree that the school was well led and managed. This conflicted with the school's larger sample of parental questionnaires, which were very positive.

Governance of the school

- Governors are committed and dedicated in their work to support the school's leaders. They know the school's strengths and are accurate in their identification of underperforming subjects, but they have not come to an accurate and balanced view of the school's overall effectiveness. They are not holding leaders stringently to account, as they consider the school to be outstanding.

- There are some gaps in governors' knowledge about statutory requirements, including in relation to safeguarding, although no pupils are at risk of harm as a result, and what should be available to parents on the school's website.
- They are unaware of the impact of the Year 7 catch-up premium for literacy and numeracy on pupils currently in Years 7 or 8 and therefore are unable to challenge leaders as well as they could.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The culture of safeguarding is that 'a very small thing could be the key piece in the jigsaw so must be reported'. A comprehensive training programme is in place for all staff. Records of incidents are kept in detail and referrals are followed up tenaciously. The 'My concern' strategy used by the school has a high uptake by staff, who can register any worries they may have about pupils. It is used effectively by leaders.
- Pupils spoken with said they feel safe. They were clear that that staff promote safeguarding well through lessons such as life skills and through tutor time and special assemblies, for example the Year 9 assembly on cyber bullying. For older pupils, the assembly 'dying to drive' was especially hard-hitting and memorable for them.
- The majority of the very small number of parents who responded to Parent View said their children felt safe in school.
- During the inspection, there were some issues of compliance with statutory requirements identified. However, by the second day leaders were able to demonstrate that they had met all their statutory duties. Governors' oversight of this aspect is not as good as it could be.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching is rapidly improving, as seen in the improving outcomes in most subjects, including mathematics and science. Teaching is very strong in subjects such as PE, drama and textiles. Leaders have been swift and rigorous in tackling weaknesses in underperforming subjects and this has led to improvements in these subjects. There is still more to do.
- Pupils reported teachers' passion for their subject. The physical environment in the classroom is welcoming. Relationships between teachers and pupils are strong. Lessons are devoid of any low-level disruptive behaviour, even in those instances where the pace of learning has dipped.
- Teachers demonstrate a good knowledge of their subject and the assessment criteria. Pupils are given detailed written guidance, in line with the school's assessment policy, on what they need to do to reach the next step in their learning, so that pupils should have a clear idea of how they are doing and what they need to do to improve. In art, for example, pupils were able to evaluate whether their targets had been met, using key technical terms such as 'contrast'. However, not all have such a good understanding of their teacher's guidance. When spoken to, a number of other pupils

were unable to explain what they needed to do to improve their work or achieve the next step or grade.

- Teachers allow pupils time for personal reflection, for example in a music lesson where pupils had composed complex pieces of music. Teachers allow pupils to take responsibility for leading their own learning and that of others, for example through group tasks in which leaders were appointed.
- Support for pupils from additional adults, including group and one-to-one support, is having a positive impact on pupils' learning, particularly for those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. It is effective in ensuring that pupils do not become too dependent on the support.
- Teachers' questioning is variable in quality. It is not as consistently strong in some humanities subjects and some languages as it is in most other subjects. Teaching at its best, in drama for example, is highly challenging. Questions are pitched carefully at pupils' different abilities and starting points to elicit a full answer that shows their understanding and learning. In other instances it is not probing enough. By accepting answers solely from those who volunteer, teachers do not know whether others in the class have understood the concepts that are being taught.
- At times, challenge for most-able pupils is not demanding enough. There are occasions when work, including homework, is set at the same level of challenge for all. In lessons there were occasions when all pupils were given low-level, undemanding tasks, such as copying or drawing pictures, even in some higher sets.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are excellent ambassadors for the school in the way they present themselves. Relationships between pupils and with adults are highly positive.
- There is a strong culture of promoting pupils' welfare in the school. For example, pupils have opportunities to develop their mental as well as their physical well-being.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is enriched by the wide array of additional activities available to them, including a trip to Bayeux Tapestry and war memorials to reflect on the impact of conflict. Those pupils on a recent trip to Slovakia reported how the experience had promoted their independence, organisational skills and ability to work in a team.
- Despite the school's remote rural location and its lack of ethnic diversity, pupils are acutely aware of the wider world. In addition to trips abroad, there are visits to cities in the UK. Pupils gain experience of other religions and lifestyles, for example through a visit to a Buddhist centre. There are a number of wheelchair users in the school and pupils have gained in their understanding of disability, diversity and difference in lifestyles.
- In addition to the roles of head boy and head girl, pupils have the opportunity to act as mentors. In lessons seen, inspectors observed pupils taking the lead through group

work, for example organising and running a football tournament in PE and evaluating a performance in music.

- House competitions have increased participation and competition in school and provided more opportunities for pupils to lead healthy lifestyles.
- Pupils receive helpful independent careers advice, which enables them to make informed decisions about their future.
- In tutor time pupils are willing to discuss issues such as the link between beliefs and emotions and share their ideas in front of their peers while others listen politely and attentively.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils are exemplary role models in their behaviour, dress and personal appearance. Pupils are unswerving in their own commitment to behave well. One pupil, speaking for many, said that this is the case 'not because we are told to, but because we want to'.
- Pupils move around the corridors in an orderly and sensible fashion. Pupils are consistently polite and courteous to visitors. They conduct themselves very well outside, for example on the field during PE.
- Bullying is exceptionally rare. Pupils know what to do should an incident arise. Those pupils spoken to felt they could approach any teacher with a concern. They said any issues they raise are dealt with very promptly.
- There have been hardly any exclusions since 2015.
- Attendance has been consistently above the national average and persistent absence low. No group is significantly disadvantaged by low attendance. Pupils enjoy coming to school and attend regularly. The majority of the very small number of parents who responded to Parent View disagreed with the statement that their children were happy in school, but inspectors found no evidence to support this during their visit. It was not supported by the school's wider questionnaire either.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- School assessment information, based on mock examinations and accurate teacher assessment, indicates that outcomes for current pupils in Year 11 are already exceeding outcomes achieved in 2017. Pupils appear to have made more rapid progress than the previous cohort in Year 11. Rates of progress are also improving rapidly for pupils in most other year groups. The school was unable to provide any progress information for pupils currently in Year 7, however.
- Overall progress of pupils from key stage 2 to 4 improved rapidly in 2017, from a low base in 2016. Outcomes in mathematics and science significantly improved. They remained high in English. Outcomes are not yet outstanding because they are not as strong in some modern languages as in other subjects.

- Progress for disadvantaged pupils from key stage 2 to 4 in 2017 improved from an exceptionally low base in 2016. Overall outcomes for lower- and middle-attaining disadvantaged pupils improved, as they did for boys, although not for most-able pupils.
- Pupils' attainment at GCSE in 2017 was above the national average in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- Overall, lower- and middle-attaining pupils exceeded the national averages for their peers, and outcomes for the most able pupils were in line with those of their peers nationally.
- The school's summary analysis of the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities indicates that the large majority are making good progress overall. This was confirmed by work seen in their books. However, information on their progress subject by subject was not available. Pupil support in literacy has led to a marked improvement in spelling and reading for those pupils targeted.
- Up to 2015, the proportions of pupils who went on to further education, training or employment were well above average. The school has not published any more recent information on destinations, however.
- No pupils achieved the highest grade in English language in 2017, although the proportion achieving it in English literature and mathematics was above the national average. Outcomes for most-able pupils currently in the school are likely to be much higher than last year. However, they are not as high as their targets set by the school to reflect that as a group they had higher prior attainment at the end of key stage 2 than the previous Year 11's most-able pupils.

School details

Unique reference number	136405
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	10037171

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	451
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Mr Stephen Chilman
Headteacher	Mr Dean Curtis
Telephone number	01568 770 323
Website	www.wigmoreschool.org.uk/
Email address	admin@wigmore.hereford.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Wigmore School is smaller than the average-sized secondary school. It is registered with the DfE as an 11–19 school. However, there are no Year 12 or 13 pupils in school and no immediate plans to open a sixth form. It converted to academy status in 2011.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- The headteacher, who was previously in post as a deputy headteacher, was appointed to his current role in 2014.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is about one in seven, which is above the national average. The percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is low.
- The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups is very low. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is well below the national average.

- The current chair of the governing body took up his post in January 2015.
- The school meets the government's floor standards for 2017. These are the minimum standards expected for pupils' learning and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of information on its website.
- Until recently, the school used Red Castle Training for alternative provision where required.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 35 lessons or parts of lessons, all of which were jointly observed with either the headteacher or a member of the senior leadership team. In addition, inspectors made a number of other short visits to lessons and other activities.
- Inspectors heard pupils read during lessons and conducted scrutinies of their written work in literacy and numeracy and other subjects.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, other leaders and members of staff and spoke to two groups of pupils.
- Inspectors met the chair and vice-chair of the governing body and the chair of the trust.
- Inspectors took account of 13 responses to the online questionnaire Parent View.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised a number of documents, including those relating to the school's self-evaluation, as well as governing body minutes, improvement plans, and school information on pupils' recent attainment and progress.
- Inspectors also considered behaviour and attendance information, and policies and procedures relating to SEN, pupil premium funding, the Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium, safeguarding and child protection.

Inspection team

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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