

The Piggott School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110079
Local Authority	Wokingham District Council
Inspection number	356685
Inspection dates	1–2 December 2010
Reporting inspector	Carmen Rodney HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,233
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	284
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Brian Griffin
Headteacher	Mrs Hilary E Winter
Date of previous school inspection	26 September 2007
School address	Twyford Road Wargrave Reading RG10 8DS 0118 940 2357 01189 940 4892 winterh@piggott.wokingham.sch.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. They spent most of the time observing students' learning by visiting 38 lessons taught by 38 teachers. The inspection also looked at a range of documentation, including policies on teaching and learning, safeguarding, equality of opportunity, community cohesion, special educational needs, assessment and behaviour. Inspectors also met with leaders and managers, three groups of students and members of the governing body. In addition, the questionnaire responses of 697 parents and carers, 150 pupils and 57 staff were analysed and their views taken into account.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas:

To what extent is the quality of provision meeting the needs of all students, in particular lower-ability boys, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the few students from minority ethnic groups?
How effective are leaders and managers at all levels in driving improvement and what is their capacity to sustain better outcomes?
What are the key features of assessment and how well are they used to drive achievement?
How effective are strategies to support students at risk of exclusions, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities?

Information about the school

The Piggott School is larger than the average-sized secondary school, with slightly more boys than girls. The school is oversubscribed and caters for a culturally diverse group of students. The large majority of students are of White British heritage. While a small proportion are from minority ethnic groups, very few are at the early stages of learning English as a second language. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is low. The proportion of students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is average but the proportion with a formal statement of special educational needs is above average.

The school has three specialisms, in languages and humanities and as a Leading Edge School (leadership for Achievement and Gifted and Talented). It has a range of awards including, for example, Healthy School status and International School.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

'Piggott is an exceptional school that provides a strong ethos that I know will stay with my children for life.' This summary from a parent accurately identifies the high quality of education that The Piggott offers to its students, whom the majority of parents and carers described as 'well-rounded individuals' when they leave the school.

The exemplary leadership of the headteacher ensures that staff understand the vision of high aspiration and nurturing students' personal development. Leaders at all levels, and the staff, understand this vision because it has been clearly articulated. Academic achievement is therefore high and students make outstanding progress in the main school and in the sixth form.

The momentum for improvement has been sustained and there is a strong commitment to moving the school forward. Two of the school's outstanding strengths lie in the clear lines of accountability and teamwork of all staff. The comprehensive tracking systems, demanding departmental reviews and rigorous performance management ensure that students' progress is kept under close scrutiny. All of this enables the school to make carefully considered provision that is well matched to the needs of students. Within this inclusive ethos, every child matters and students are at the forefront of whole-school and departmental planning. Equality of access underpins provision so that all groups and individuals have equal opportunities to achieve exceptionally well. Leaders' understanding of developing a corporate approach to inspire staff and students is very well demonstrated in the school's continuing success. Consequently, the capacity for improvement is outstanding.

The culture of high aspiration and achievement is linked to an exemplary curriculum and outstanding care, guidance and support. The specialist status, particularly in languages, plays a major role in driving academic achievement and improvement in relation to the curriculum, teaching and students' personal development. These provisions have a direct impact on students' behaviour and attendance, both of which are excellent and underpin their highly positive attitudes and desire to do well. Excellent relationships between students and adults contribute to them responding extremely well to the teaching that is mostly good or better. Although the quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection, minor flaws prevent a higher proportion of lessons from being outstanding. While assessment is good, and teachers keep very good track of students' progress, marking does not always make

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clear how students should improve and assessment data are not consistently used to match work to learning needs.

While a minority of parents and carers have raised questions about communication between the home and school about their children's learning, the large majority are very supportive and see it as the centre of the local community. These parents and carers are rightly very impressed with the provision, the 'teachers' dedication' and the 'proactive way' in which the school 'does its best to motivate and support students'.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

Ensure that a higher proportion of teaching is consistently outstanding to accelerate achievement further by:

- using assessment information to underpin all planning so that work is carefully matched to the needs of all students
- building on sharing and developing good practice across departments
- marking work regularly and giving students detailed comments so that they know their targets and are clear about how to improve.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Student attainment is particularly high in the key subjects of English, mathematics, science and the specialisms of modern foreign languages and the humanities. Results in the GCSE and A-level examinations have improved each year since the previous inspection. In 2010, 73% of students achieved five GCSE passes at grades A*-C including English and mathematics. At least 80% of students gained grades A*-C in both English and mathematics, placing the school in the top 10% of schools nationally in these subjects. While the majority of groups make similar progress, including those from minority ethnic groups, a few lower-attaining boys did not achieve their targets as predicted for personal reasons beyond the school's control. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to other groups.

Learning and progress are outstanding because students' excellent behaviour creates the right climate for learning, enabling lessons to progress smoothly. In most lessons observed, the quality of learning was at least good and a minority was better. Students are very keen to learn and demonstrate engagement and willingness to work collaboratively or individually to develop their skills. The most-able often take on a leading role in groups, while those requiring additional help make excellent progress because they are very well supported.

Students feel safe and understand what unsafe practice means, within and outside of the school. They have an increased understanding of how to conduct themselves because there is extensive coverage of issues about keeping safe. A Year 9 student

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explained, 'I will always remember the issues around safety which are drummed into us from Year 7.' The Christian ethos of the school contributes to equipping students with strong moral principles and skills to help them make choices. Empathy and respect for each other, as well as for other cultural heritages, underpin students' relationships and their extensive contributions within the school, and the local, wider and global communities. This has led to a high proportion of students holding posts of responsibility and participating in a wide range of activities, locally, nationally and internationally. As a result, students seize opportunities to develop leadership skills in Piggott and primary schools, working as mentors and 'teachers' as well as sports leaders. Students are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their education but equally important to them are the opportunities offered to shape their thinking and ability to be charitable to others. A reflective Year 9 student said, 'I will always remember the great experiences and life skills.' Students' excellent outcomes reflect the extremely well-balanced provision in relation to academic performance and character building.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment:	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Lessons are well planned and purposeful, with clear learning objectives that are shared and explored with students. The teachers' good subject knowledge, and their very good use of assessment information to support learning in most lessons, ensure that work is well matched to students' needs. There is a shared understanding of

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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high expectations of work and behaviour between staff and students and, because students are ambitious to achieve well, there is a good level of interaction during group work or whole-class teaching. Teachers use a good range of questions to assess and explore learning by ensuring that students understand and can use the taught skills. Procedures for tracking students' progress are thorough and teachers have excellent insight into their achievement. Nevertheless, a few lessons are less effective, when they are too teacher-directed and assessment information is not consistently used in planning to meet the individual needs of students. In addition, irregularity in marking has resulted in some students not being clear about how well they are doing or what they need to do to improve.

The curriculum and enrichment activities meet the interests and needs of students very well. The strength of the curriculum lies in the highly personalised offers and the innovative approach to capturing students' enthusiasm for learning. For example, Year 9 students derive many benefits from making choices about courses they wish to study beyond Year 8. As a result, they demonstrate a high level of maturity and are well equipped to apply a good range of study skills when they begin the full GCSE courses in Year 10. Strong achievement across the majority of subjects testifies to the suitability of the curriculum for individuals and different groups.

This inclusive school ensures that high quality care, guidance and support are at the heart of its work. Targeted support for students at risk of exclusion has had a very clear impact on outcomes; attendance is high and exclusions are rare. Students are very confident that the school provides excellent advice and support and meets their needs very well. For example, students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are very well supported. Exemplary pastoral care, from admission to the sixth form, involves, for example, mentoring and strong links with external agencies, and underpins students' welfare.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers at all levels are clearly focused on high achievement and improving students' personal development. They therefore use well-established systems to keep the quality of provision under scrutiny. The monitoring of teaching and learning is a strength, as are the regular briefings to update practice and introduce innovative approaches. Monitoring is given a high priority, and leaders do

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not avoid giving strong messages about improvement and taking action, as necessary. High achievement is sustained because reviews are regular and there is close attention to analysing results and using the findings to make further improvement. The headteacher welcomes new ideas, encourages professional development and uses new initiatives to inspire staff and the governing body to embrace change. The governing body is providing increasingly greater challenge. It is influential in guiding and monitoring the strategic direction of the school, and there is awareness that new governors have yet to develop their skills further. Safeguarding procedures are rigorous and all requirements are met. For example, the school community is aware that the senior leaders are vigilant and decisive in all matters relating to the well-being of students.

The school recognises that partnership work with parents and carers is a key feature to students achieving very well. Parents and carers are well informed and feedback from them has led to changes in presenting reports. Within the community, extensive links with external organisations and agencies ensure that students are exposed to a breadth of experiences and support to raise their aspirations. Planning for improvement is extensive and care is taken that all groups have equal opportunities to achieve exceptionally well. Community cohesion is very well promoted, with particular strengths in the local and international fields. Within this rural setting, careful attention is given to increasing students' understanding of the diverse cultures in the school, locality and wider community.

While the building has been refurbished in parts and there are short-term plans to develop sections of it, lack of specialist space and a new build remain disadvantages as the school roll increases. Despite these shortcomings, the school deploys its resources extremely carefully so that outcomes and value for money are outstanding.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

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Sixth form

The sixth form has been strengthened since the previous inspection; its increased popularity and reputation have given rise to more students entering it and improvements in results and provision are now outstanding. Students make excellent progress each year with a continuing upward trend, most notably in 2010, when the school achieved its best results. Over two thirds of students achieved the higher grades, A–B, in the A-level courses, demonstrating exceptionally good progress from Year 12. Within the sixth form, the retention rate is good and attendance is high, which contribute to students achieving very well. The majority move on to higher education, including Oxford and Cambridge. Students take on responsibility within the school and beyond. They demonstrate excellent collaborative and employability skills and are excellent role models for younger students.

Teachers promote independent learning and research skills well. In lessons observed, students used key basic skills, including information and communication technology, very well to develop their ideas. Teachers know the students very well and set them realistic but challenging targets. Students appreciate the variety of teaching styles and see this as a strength of lessons, as well as the feedback, which they see as 'informative' and 'constructive'. As a result, in lessons, they engage well, participate enthusiastically in group work and use peer- and self-assessment very well.

Students benefit from an outstanding curriculum that meets their aspirations for high achievement and higher education. This is well supplemented by an excellent range of enrichment activities. For example, they are offered opportunities to experience studying at higher levels before they enter university. The quality of outstanding care, guidance and support from Year 11 through to post-16 and beyond is appreciated by students. In particular, there is specific care and support for students with physical disabilities. The sixth form benefits from excellent leadership and management. Extensive links with external partners and planning for improvement ensure that students' views are taken into consideration. Data are managed well and the high level of inclusion in the main school continues into the sixth form. Despite poor accommodation, which has not improved since the previous inspection, students are focused on their studies and typically say, 'We love the sixth form.'

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	1
Taking into account:	1
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	1
The quality of provision in the sixth form	1
Leadership and management of the sixth form	1

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Views of parents and carers

The response to the questionnaire was very high and the very large majority of parents and carers who participated in the survey are very supportive of all that the school offers. In the written comments received, and in the meeting with a few parents and carers, most are very clear that the school provides their child with an outstanding education. In addition, they gave personal testimonies of high quality pastoral care, individualised support for their child and for those with special educational needs, and good quality teaching leading to their child's excellent achievement.

In recognition of the teachers' dedication and commitment to the students, a minority of parents and carers indicated that their child was from the second or third generation to attend the school. However, a very small minority of parents and carers raised concerns about a number of issues, including lack of communication between staff and the school about their child's progress, insufficient help to support their child's learning, maintaining a healthy lifestyle and inconsistencies in managing unacceptable behaviour. In addition, rather more were concerned that the school does not take account of their views. These concerns were explored during the inspection.

The evidence base for the inspection confirms that the school acts on the concerns of parents and carers and sets up a forum, as required, to seek and use their views to make further improvements. The school has comprehensive policies on behaviour and healthy lifestyles, which are well reflected in the day-to-day practice and provision. The school is proactive in supporting students whose circumstances have made them vulnerable and the curriculum, as indicated in the report, promotes all aspects of healthy living. The school is inclusive and it is mindful that, despite having extensive approaches to communicating with parents and carers, a very small minority require even more information. The school is therefore examining the management of its information to make sure that all groups are fully satisfied.

The views of one parent convey what most think about the provision: 'The headteacher does a terrific job and should be proud of her achievement, and those of her staff and students. I expect my child to be committed to his studies and long-term education... I expect the same of his school and am happy to say The Piggott has proved that it is.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Piggott School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 697 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1233 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	182	26	469	67	31	4	71	
The school keeps my child safe	212	30	455	65	16	2	2	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	126	18	455	65	83	12	4	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	141	20	455	65	53	8	3	0
The teaching is good at this school	127	18	481	69	34	5	2	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	119	17	419	60	100	14	11	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	103	15	437	63	96	14	8	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	161	23	420	60	37	5	1	11
The school meets my child's particular needs	138	20	465	67	49	7	3	6
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	162	23	408	59	66	9	10	7
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	121	17	414	59	67	10	12	12
The school is led and managed effectively	175	25	444	64	29	4	8	6
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	197	28	427	61	23	3	4	7

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	583642			
Primary schools	843409			
Secondary schools	10354213			
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be. The school's capacity for sustained improvement. Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. The quality of teaching. The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.

3 December 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of The Piggott School, Wokingham RG10 8DS

Thank you for taking part in the inspection. We valued your contribution when we spoke to you in groups or casually in lessons or around the school.

The Piggott provides you with an outstanding education and you are right to be very proud of your school. Results in the core subjects, English, mathematics and science, and in the specialisms, far exceed the national average. Excellent results were also achieved in other subjects last year. This excellent achievement has been sustained over the last three years. It is a tribute to the school that many of you from second and third generation Piggott families are continuing to achieve highly.

Virtually all aspects of the school's provision for you are outstanding. This has been possible because the vast majority of you have excellent attendance and you work extremely hard in lessons and concentrate very well. Behaviour around the school and in lessons seen during the inspection was excellent. However, we are aware that because you are highly focused on learning, a few of you are easily irritated if there is the slightest disruption. The exemplary pastoral care and well-established code of conduct ensure that lessons flow smoothly and students requiring help with their behaviour get the support needed. We agree with your views that your school puts your needs first and provides you with exceptional opportunities to develop life skills. There is no doubt that relationships between all groups are very good. You have developed a good range of traits that show generosity and understanding of others within the local community and beyond. Your personal development is indeed outstanding.

The school is highly ambitious to continue to provide this high quality education for you. We have therefore asked the school to ensure that teaching is consistently good or better. We are asking that teachers use assessment data consistently when planning lessons, and marking, including clear targets, always makes clear how you can improve your work further. The inspection team is confident that The Piggott School will continue this tradition of high achievement.

Yours sincerely

Carmen Rodney
Her Majesty's Inspector



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