

SCHOOL INSPECTION SERVICE

Independent professional inspection of schools affiliated to the Focus Learning Trust

INSPECTION REPORT

**INSPECTION CARRIED OUT ACCORDING TO SECTION 162(A)
OF THE EDUCATION ACT 2002**

REPORT REFERENCE NUMBER: SIS/162A/2006-7/03

Name of school:	Wellgrove School
DfES number:	302/6117
FOCUS number:	410
Inspection team::	Lead inspector: Mrs M A Buckingham Supporting inspector: Mr N Grenyer Lay inspector: Mr D Siderfin
Dates of inspection:	13 – 16 November 2006

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- Section C: The quality of the organisation and management**

SCHOOL DETAILS

Name of school: Wellgrove School

Address of the school: 4 Well Grove
Whetstone
London
N20 9EQ

Telephone number: 0208 446 8855

Fax number: 0208 446 9289

Proprietor: Wellgrove Education Trust

Name of Chief Executive Officer: Mr Chris Walton

Name of Senior Teacher: Mr Wayne Jones

DfES number: 302/6117

FOCUS number: 410

Type of school: Independent school affiliated to the Focus Learning Trust

Age range of pupils and students: 11 - 17

Gender of pupils: Male and female

Total number on roll: Boys: 26 Girls: 34

Number of post-16 students* Boys: 3 Girls: 4

* In addition, there are 5 part time post-16 students (all boys)

Number of pupils with statements of special educational need: None

Type of inspection: Section 162(A) Inspection

Inspection Team: Lead Inspector: Mrs M A Buckingham
Support Inspectors: Mr N Grenyer
Dr R Long (one day)
Lay Inspector: Mr D Siderfin

Dates of inspection: 13 – 16 November 2006

Date of issue of report: 12 December 2006

Report reference number: SIS/162A/2006-7/03

PART A: INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

Purpose and scope of the inspection:

This inspection was carried out by the School Inspection Service (SIS) in accordance with Section 162(A)(1)(b) of the Education Act 2002, and it follows the inspection framework laid down by the SIS and the Focus Learning Trust (FLT) and agreed with the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). It was conducted by two independent professional inspectors who looked at all aspects of the school's provision as required by the current regulations. They were joined for one day by the Co-ordinating Inspector of the SIS. The professional inspectors were accompanied by a trained lay inspector who looked at agreed aspects of the regulations. The lay inspector also evaluated both the Trustees' stewardship of resources and the ethos of the school and reported on these in an internal report to the FLT; his findings are summarised in Section C of this document headed 'The quality of organisation and management'. This section is not a statutory part of the inspection process.

During the inspection, the team held discussions with Trustees, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), the senior teacher, members of the teaching staff, including volunteer teachers, attended assemblies and spoke to pupils and students. The school provided a range of documents for inspectors to scrutinise, together with samples of pupils' work from Years 7, 9 and 11. Two days were used to observe teaching and learning. The inspection team wish to thank all staff, pupils and students at the school for the help and co-operation they received during their time in the school.

Information about the school:

Wellgrove School was provisionally registered with the DfES as an independent school in August 2003. It had formerly operated as a tuition centre providing part time instruction for secondary age pupils and students who were otherwise being educated at home. In 2004 it merged with a similar institution, Littlebury School, and the new school was finally registered with the DfES on 18 March 2005. The school has a distinctive Christian character and is affiliated to the FLT. There are currently 60 boys and girls of compulsory school age on roll between the ages of 11 and 16 years. In addition, there are 12 post-16 students, five of whom are part-time. The school is situated in a residential area of Whetstone in north London. The catchment area is wide and pupils and students travel from as far afield as Hertford, some 22 miles away. No pupil has a statement of special educational need.

Summary of main findings:

Wellgrove provides a broad curriculum in a lively and stimulating educational environment. The good and very good quality of teaching enables all pupils and students to learn and make good progress. Pupils and students respond with enthusiastic interest and enjoy their learning. Committed teachers and Trustees work well together towards the school's aim to '*...bring out the potential of each student...*'. Pupils and students are given ample opportunities to develop their moral, social and cultural understanding. The school supports families in providing for the spiritual development of their children and is diligent in fulfilling its responsibilities for the welfare, health and safety of pupils and students. The school is well supported by parents and families, and by the FLT. The Trustees are actively seeking to acquire new premises in the near future.

NOTE ON THE TERMINOLOGY USED IN THIS REPORT

Throughout this report the word 'pupil' is used to describe young people in years 7 to 11. The word 'student' is used exclusively to describe those studying in year 12 and beyond.

What the school does well:

- it enables pupils and students to flourish in the supportive family atmosphere where relationships are very good;
- its students leave as confident and poised young people, well prepared for adult life and the world of work;
- it provides good and very good quality teaching;
- its pupils and students enjoy school and have positive attitudes to learning; and,
- it is particularly strong in its provision for the teaching of citizenship.

What the school must do to comply with the regulations:

The school meets all the regulatory requirements for continuing registration.

Next steps

Although not required, the school might like to consider the following steps as it seeks to continue to improve its provision:

- consolidate and review the planning and provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE);
- continue to develop the pupil tracking system;
- review the frequency of issue of reports to parents; and,
- consider the requirements for pupils' changing facilities in physical education (PE), within the planning for the new school premises.

Distribution of this report

This report is being sent to the CEO and senior teacher of the school, and the CEO is asked to ensure that copies are made available to parents of all pupils and students. In addition, it is being sent to the Registrar of Independent Schools and the Independent Schools Registration Team of the DfES, to the Trustees of the FLT and to its Regional Trustee, to members of the SIS team, and to the members of Her Majesty's Inspectorate in OFSTED charged with monitoring how the SIS conducts its inspections. The FLT has established a website upon which this, and other similar inspection reports, will be placed. Details can be found at the end of the report.

PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH REGULATIONS FOR REGISTRATION

1 The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of the curriculum

The curriculum is broad and enables all pupils and students to learn and make progress. The school follows the curriculum policy of the FLT. Schemes of work, in a variety of formats, are available for all subjects and include details of coverage and progression across the curriculum. In Years 7 to 9 all subjects of the National Curriculum (NC) are taught, including a rotation of lessons in design and technology - resistant materials, cookery and textiles. Typing is taught in Year 9 in preparation for further study in Year 12. In Years 10 and 11 pupils have opportunities to enter General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) courses in English (Language), mathematics, science, geography, history, French, business studies, and design and technology. Pupils study citizenship and take the GCSE examination at the end of Year 10. In addition, girls study a FLT textiles course and physical education (PE) is provided for all.

In Year 12 the school provides a strong vocational education, including a Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) award in Business Administration. A useful link is established with the local Barnet College. Students are currently entered for English, accounts and law at Advanced Supplementary (AS) level. In response to students' needs, the school is seeking to extend the range of AS subjects offered. The Year 12 curriculum is enhanced by internally moderated courses in cookery and building studies, together with typing, PE and Bible study. The Year 12 provision helps students prepare very effectively for adult life.

In keeping with the Christian foundation of the school, Bible study is taught weekly to all pupils and students. A significant number of pupils and students of the school, from all year groups, enthusiastically take part in the weekly orchestra session and regular concert performances. Visits to places of interest complement the timetabled curriculum.

The school aims to ensure that all pupils of whatever ability or talent are well provided for. The progress of pupils identified as having special educational needs is carefully monitored. A good initiative this term has been to provide pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 with two lessons of additional support in English and mathematics, each according to their learning needs. More able pupils receive 'booster' lessons, for example, to develop their creative writing skills and extend their mathematics. Other pupils receive support in reading, language and mathematics, both as individuals and in small groups. Pupils and students of all abilities make good progress and, by the time they leave school, they are successful in public examinations.

PSHE is timetabled on a weekly basis for Years 7 and 8, but in Years 9 to 12 it alternates with private study lessons. In Year 12 current affairs topics take the place of citizenship in a similar arrangement. The cookery course in Years 7 to 9 makes a valuable contribution to pupils' understanding of a healthy lifestyle. The school is seeking to implement the FLT PSHE course and is mindful that its current provision needs to be consolidated and coherent across the age range.

Through the curriculum and participation in work experience, pupils develop a range of skills and positive attitudes and values relevant to the work place and for adult life. A useful booklet on careers for students in Year 12 outlines the benefits of training and life

long learning. Outside speakers from a range of organisations, and their own families, enhance pupils' and students' knowledge and understanding of the world of work.

The quality of teaching and assessment

The overall quality of teaching is good or very good and some lessons have outstanding features. In a few instances the teaching is satisfactory with some positive aspects. During the inspection, the inspectors observed 24 lessons from all subjects of the curriculum except for current affairs, building studies and law. Each year group was visited.

The aims of the school, as detailed in its handbook, include seeking '*...to create a learning environment where students are actively engaged in the learning process....*' and these aims are mostly clearly achieved. In every lesson, pupils know what the lesson is about and what they are expected to learn. The good and very good lessons are carefully planned and provide stimulating and challenging opportunities for learning. Pupils of all abilities are actively involved in a variety of classroom tasks to capture their interest and make them think. Effective discussion, for example in an English lesson on life during the holocaust, involved pupils demonstrating good oral skills in a lively debate. Practical science work is good and enjoyed by pupils. Effective use is made of the virtual classroom facility shared for the teaching of history with Noak Hill School.

Pupils and students have positive attitudes to learning and invariably respond with enthusiasm and interest, and consequently make good progress. In this school, pupils usually thank their teachers for their lessons. In one BTEC lesson, which had some outstanding features, students worked through a potentially daunting statistical method, and then burst into a spontaneous round of applause at the end of the lesson, celebrating their perseverance and achievement.

The satisfactory lessons have positive aspects such as a clear purpose and they build effectively on previous work. However, in these lessons there is some lack of pace and confidence in managing classroom routines, and there are not enough systematic checks on what pupils have learnt.

The displays in classrooms and around the school have meaning and purpose, and they provide reference materials and literary prompts, as well as celebrating pupils' work and stimulating their interest. Effective use is made of a good range of educational materials with up-to-date textbooks, whiteboards and relevant poster presentations. Homework is set regularly and extends the class work.

The school has very good systems in place for assessing pupils' work regularly and thoroughly. It has recently established the first steps of a pupil tracking system. It uses commercial external tests to provide a baseline when pupils enter in Year 7, although in common with other FLT schools, it re-tests in Years 8 and 9.

Within a whole school marking policy there are very good mark schemes in science, English, mathematics and cookery, and these explain the grades for effort and attainment alongside numerical marks. They include some good advice and suggestions for how to improve, for example in English and science. Pupils' performance is assessed half-termly. Parents receive reports annually, which comment in detail on pupils' and students' progress and effort.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

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

The school provides well for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils and students. Spiritual development is seen to be primarily the responsibility of parents but the school complements this by providing a positive learning environment and a curriculum that supports, informs and extends this development.

The pupils and students at this school come from a religious community where they learn from an early age to identify right and wrong and to respect the law. The school's self-evaluation states that supportive and secure family backgrounds greatly contribute to this aspect of pupils' and students' personal development. The Trustees are committed to a way of life which is at all times governed in every detail by the Holy Bible.

The Trust and management seek successfully to create an ethos within the school where every pupil and student feels valued and a part of the whole. Citizenship is a particular strength of the provision. It provides pupils with a broad knowledge of public institutions and services in England through other curriculum subjects, including history and geography and work experience, and, later, in business studies. In addition, to support its citizenship work, Members of Parliament have visited the school and trips have been undertaken to the Bank of England, the House of Commons and RAF Lakenheath. Music is an important feature of the school's life. The school orchestra has a wide repertoire, and there are a number of more informal bands, while a very high proportion of the school take music lessons. Every pupil or student who has a birthday is serenaded by the entire school in assembly.

The citizenship GCSE programme has very effectively encouraged pupils to research and support local and national charities, an example of making a positive contribution to the wider community. This has led to pupils organising and running a waste-paper recycling system for all parts of the school, while others have worked on a wide range of environmental projects and charities. In a citizenship lesson, with outstanding features, Year 9 pupils showed that they could very capably take on responsibilities for organising events such as presentations by the Metropolitan Police.

The school handbook outlines the aims of the school '*...to develop skills and promote attitudes necessary for a sense of independence, uniqueness and self worth...*' Pupils' and students' responses to the questionnaires completed prior to the inspection, and in conversation, show that they consider that the school helps them to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence.

The school has analysed its curriculum to produce a multicultural map, showing that, in Years 7 to 11 and especially in Year 12, all subjects make some contribution to help pupils and students acquire an appreciation of other cultures and to develop a respect for others. In English, for example, pupils study the *Diary of Anne Frank* and the novel *Friedrich*, which leads to consideration of the holocaust. Other examples include topics in history, geography, cookery and music, where aspects of other cultures are considered and how these influence our own. In Year 12 topics includes a specific study of the Race Relations Act.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

3 The welfare, health and safety of pupils

The school is watchful of the welfare, health and safety of pupils and students and discharges these responsibilities conscientiously. All of the required policies to safeguard pupils' and students' health and safety are in place and based on those provided by the FLT. Procedures for safeguarding pupils and students are as required. The designated health and safety trustees have recently devised a useful strategy for ongoing monitoring of health and safety and fire precautions. Meticulous risk assessments are undertaken for educational visits and recently for the premises and accommodation. Similarly, thorough attention is given to safety in the practical subjects. Appropriate procedures are in place to deal with any accidents, including a suitable number of trained first aiders. Pupils and students are confident in approaching members of staff for help and advice and reported their appreciation of the time given to them by staff. The staff handbook provides useful information, and reminders of the policies for health and safety are given at staff meetings.

A central feature of the behaviour policy, which is an expression of the Christian ethos of the school, is one of respect and consideration for others. This is clearly evident in the daily life of the school. Pupils and students understand the school's rules for behaviour. Their behaviour is exemplary. They get on well together and enjoy each other's company, often with much humour.

The completion of the admission register and daily attendance registers meet regulations.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

4 Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The Wellgrove Education Trust is a registered charitable organisation with a Board of Trustees consisting of members drawn from the sponsoring religious community. Trust members have all been checked with the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) records.

The school's teachers, learning assistants and support staff have an appropriate range of experience and are well qualified for the work they do. They are in turn supported by a number of dedicated and very helpful volunteers from the community. All teaching staff, support staff and volunteers have been checked with the CRB. The records on file show that the necessary processes have been carried out to confirm new staff's identity, medical fitness, previous employment history, character references and, where appropriate, qualifications and professional references.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

5 Suitability of the premises and accommodation

The premises and accommodation are good and provide a stimulating environment for teaching and learning. The buildings are pleasantly situated and well maintained and are suitable for the number of pupils and students. There is specialist provision for art, design and technology, music and science. The cookery room has been refurbished to a high standard, providing good support for learning. The library is centrally located with good resources.

Administrative and staff accommodation is good. The washrooms are adequate for the numbers on roll. A good-sized hall provides useful space for assemblies, extra curricular activities and for music. The play areas for both boys and girls are good and provide both hard and soft play spaces. There is a good-sized field adjacent to the school which, together with one of the hard surface play areas, is used for games lessons, but there is no indoor space that can be used. The rooms at present used for changing in lack shower facilities. The school is aware of the need to improve its changing facilities and will include appropriate arrangements in its plans for a new school. Once a week all pupils and students are taken by coach to a local sports centre.

The Trustees are actively seeking new premises on a more centrally accessible site, and a Premises Committee has been appointed and is now at work.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

6 The quality of information for parents

All the required policies and procedures used are those set out by the FLT. They are clearly listed in the school's prospectus and are available, on request to parents and prospective parents, at any time. Communication to parents is further augmented by an excellent booklet setting out the curriculum programme for each year group. Parents receive an annual report stating clearly their children's progress in each subject. From the responses to the parents' questionnaire sent out prior to the inspection, it is clear that they are extremely supportive of the school. However, some parents mentioned that they are not fully satisfied with the frequency of the learning progress reports and that they would like them to be sent out more than once a year. Pupils, students, parents, teachers and supporters of the school are kept very well informed about what is happening through a regular illustrated magazine known as *The Welcome*, to which both young people and adults contribute.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

7 The effectiveness of the school's complaints procedure

The school uses the standard complaints procedure adopted by the FLT and authorised for use in its affiliated schools. This fully meets the requirements of the regulations. So far there have been no formal complaints..

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT

This section is not a requirement of the Education Act 2002. The Lay Inspector evaluated both the school ethos and the Trustees' stewardship of resources and produced an internal report for the Focus Learning Trust, and his report is summarised below.

The school is controlled by a Board of Trustees. The Trust meets every four to six weeks. There have been some recent changes of responsibilities within the Board, including the appointment of a new CEO. The daily administration and management is effective and is run by the CEO, the senior teacher (male) and deputy senior teacher (female) and a general administrator. The relationships and cross-communication between each of these responsible persons are excellent, resulting in a friendly atmosphere throughout the school. Communication to parents is augmented by booklets setting out the year's programme.

The school amalgamated with Littlebury School in 2004, at which point the senior teacher of Littlebury retired. Apart from a few temporary syllabus problems, which were dealt with during the course of the academic year, there were no others.

The premises are well apportioned for all teaching and administrative personnel. There is good apportionment of play areas.

The atmosphere and ethos meet with the aims set out in the prospectus. The impression is of calm control where none of the legal requirements have been overlooked, and where pupils and students can happily receive academic tuition and pursue activities broadening their outlook for life as responsible adults.

Can the organisation and management be improved?

The Trustees have developed a very good working pattern which has enabled the school to make good progress and secure an effective delivery of its educational provision. During the course of the next two years the Trustees are going to be heavily involved in seeking for appropriate new premises for the school and they must take great care to ensure that concern for this does not affect the effective day-to-day running of the school.