

# Wheatley Park School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123243
<b>Local Authority</b>	Oxfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	362846
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 February 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Peter Limm HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1071
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	218
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Tessa Shaw
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kate Curtis
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 September 2009
<b>School address</b>	Holton Oxford Oxfordshire OX33 1QH
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<b>Age group</b>	11–18
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## Introduction

When Wheatley Park School was inspected in September 2009, it was judged to require special measures because it was failing to give its students an acceptable standard of education. Her Majestys Inspectors of Schools subsequently visited the school on three occasions to monitor its progress and evidence from these inspections has been included in this report.

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majestys Inspectors and three additional inspectors. Inspectors saw 25 lessons or part lessons and 25 teachers. They observed the schools work, and looked at school improvement plans, policies, monitoring records and minutes of meetings held by the governing body. They interviewed students, staff and the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body along with a representative of the local authority. They held a telephone conversation with the School Improvement Partner.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the schools work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

How well teachers use assessment information to help plan lessons that meet the needs and abilities of all students.

The effectiveness of approaches to improve behaviour and reduce persistent absence.

The capacity of the new school leadership to sustain improvements already introduced.

## Information about the school

Wheatley Park is a larger than average school set in parkland near Oxford. The majority of students are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is rising. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with that nationally. The number of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The school is a specialist media arts college. It holds the Artsmark Gold, Sportsmark, Healthy Schools Award, Eco Schools Silver, and the International Award.

**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?****3****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****2**

## Main findings

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures since it is now providing an acceptable standard of education for its students.

Wheatley Park has made a great deal of improvement in leadership and management and most aspects of its provision since the last inspection. As a result, some of the outcomes for students, including behaviour, are now good or better. In particular, the extent to which students feel safe is outstanding as a result of the school's effective care, guidance and support and the outstanding safeguarding practices which pervade much of the school's work. Relationships in the school are good. The positive working atmosphere contributes to the highly favourable views of the school expressed by students.

Attainment, although broadly average, is improving. Learning and progress are satisfactory and an increasing number of students meet challenging targets in different subjects, although not in sufficient numbers to bring about good progress. Much good and outstanding teaching was observed, and the proportion of good and better lessons is rising. A common feature of teaching is the close direction of the students' work by teachers. This means that almost all students make satisfactory progress. Students with identified special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress as a result of the specific programmes of work provided by the school. Opportunities are missed to develop their literacy skills more effectively across the curriculum.

The school's procedures for assessing and tracking students' attainment and progress are good. These systems enable the school to identify underachievement in particular classes and for individuals and groups of students. In these cases, the school takes rapid action to provide support so that students do not fall behind. In the good and outstanding lessons, assessment information is used well to match lesson activities to the needs and abilities of students. However, this is not the case in all lessons and, as a result, some students, especially the more able, are doing work which is too easy and does not extend their learning enough for them to make better progress. The students know how well they are doing in each subject and know their target grades or levels.

The curriculum provides a good range of options. For some students with particular needs it is highly personalised. The good use of partnerships enables such students to succeed, for example through achieving well on a hairdressing course at a neighbouring school. Successful work with a local college enables students at risk of dropping out of education, employment and training to thrive. The students are adequately prepared for life after Wheatley by sound advice and guidance. The students display high levels of confidence and maturity which the school actively nurtures in all its students, including those with social and emotional difficulties.

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The school's good capacity for improvement is based on effective self-evaluation, which enables staff and the governing body to understand the school's many strengths and to target key areas for improvement. The school's arrangements for monitoring and evaluating its work are much improved since the last inspection. Improvements in attendance and behaviour demonstrate the school's ability to tackle key barriers which have previously hindered learning. Statutory requirements which were not in place previously are now fully developed. Much has successfully been done to address the weaknesses identified at the time of the previous inspection. Leaders agree that the key to continued and sustained improvement is to ensure consistently high quality practice across the school in relation to lesson planning, departmental self-evaluation and the use of assessment information to match lesson activities to the needs of all students.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Raise achievement further by:
  - ensuring all teachers, not just the best, embed consistently well the current planning and self-evaluation procedures
  - using prior attainment and assessment information to plan precisely to meet the learning needs of all students in lessons
  - providing more opportunities in the curriculum for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities to improve their literacy skills.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

Students display good attitudes to learning. They behave well around the school and, in lessons where teaching is good or better, their behaviour is exemplary. Students respond well to teachers' questions in lessons when they discuss their ideas with a partner or have time to think carefully about their answers. For example, in an outstanding design and technology lesson, all students carried out a difficult task of cutting and heating strips of metal and molding them into the required shape. Their understanding was improved as they discussed their work in stages as it progressed. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are fully integrated into the life of the school.

Observations of work during the inspection confirmed that attainment is rising. Where particular groups of students are found to be underachieving, the school takes active and successful steps to ensure that any gaps in achievement are reduced.

All the students who were interviewed indicated that they enjoy school and that they have high levels of confidence in all aspects of the school's work. In particular, students indicated that they feel very safe in school. Students indicated that bullying is rare and that any problems are usually dealt with quickly by the school. Students' attendance is above average and the number of students who are persistently absent is much reduced. Students contribute enthusiastically to the school and wider community, especially through activities related to the school's specialism of media arts. They have a good understanding about the choices they face regarding their health.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

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

## How effective is the provision?

Teachers' good subject knowledge gives students confidence. Marking is helpful and often indicates the next steps the students should take to improve their work, particularly in mathematics. Teachers are aware of the different levels of ability and the prior attainment of students in their classes so that they know broadly what to expect students to achieve. In the best lessons, teachers modify the work according to the particular needs of each student. However, in some lessons tasks are set which do not fully stretch the more able. In these lessons, the pace of learning is not fast enough to enable students to make good progress.

The curriculum provides extensive opportunities for the students to develop and apply a range of important skills. The wider option choices enable all groups of students to have the chance to follow courses that match their abilities and interests well. Opportunities are missed, though, to develop the literacy skills of those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school's specialist status has had a considerable impact on the curriculum.

The school provides high-quality care, guidance and support for its most vulnerable students. Consequently, a number of individual students with considerable social, emotional and behavioural difficulties have been helped and supported by the school to work through their problems successfully. Concerted efforts with students to change their perception of the importance of attendance, including rewarding good attendance, have

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successfully improved overall attendance. In addition, well-focused work in close partnership with parents and carers, has proved effective in raising the attendance of students who were persistently absent.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The school is rightly gaining the confidence of students. The leadership team has been restructured since the previous inspection, as has the governing body, and these changes have been highly influential in bringing about improvements in all aspects of the school. The governing body is much more effective in holding the school to account and in ensuring its statutory requirements are met fully. Staff and students subscribe to the vision of an inclusive school community focused on learning. School leaders and managers are helping to realise this vision by focusing on learning through teaching. Teaching and learning are improving as a result of accurate and systematic monitoring. Monitoring information is used effectively to identify underperformance and plan whole-school professional development. However, good practice is not always shared across all subjects and the improvements required to bring about high-quality learning are not found in all lessons.

The school tracks the attainment, progress and well-being of individual students and different groups of students well. It takes particular note of more vulnerable students and has a good track record in making the extra effort required to improve the achievement and well-being of these students. The school is increasingly effective in working with parents and carers of those students who need high levels of support. It actively seeks the views of parents and carers. The school community is highly cohesive and the school takes active steps to work with different religious and cultural groups in the wider community. Safeguarding is given a very high priority throughout the school community. The governing body carefully monitors safeguarding arrangements and ensures its equalities policies are being put into effect fully. It holds the school to account effectively for its performance.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Sixth form

As the schools own evaluation shows, the sixth forms effectiveness is satisfactory. A-level results are broadly in line with the national averages. In lessons, students make satisfactory, and often good, progress. Although provision is satisfactory overall, teaching is good. Teachers know their students well and regularly review their progress to help them stay on track. Marking of students work is regular and thorough. Students are offered a wide choice of advanced academic courses. Following a review of its post-16 curriculum, the school has developed good plans to broaden the curriculum further and so meet the needs of all students better. Leadership and management are good, and new policies and procedures are beginning to have a positive impact on attainment. There are increasingly robust procedures in place to monitor the quality of teaching and learning and to track students progress. Systems for monitoring attendance are satisfactory. Students say they are consulted well and are regularly provided with systematic and well-informed guidance. They play a full part in the life of the school.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2



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## **Views of parents and carers**

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for monitoring inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

## **Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire**

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

## 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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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:	<p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



4 February 2011

Dear Students

**Inspection of Wheatley Park School, Holton OX33 1QH**

We inspected your school recently and I am writing to inform you of our findings. Thank you for making us feel welcome, especially those of you who helped us with the inspection.

You will be pleased to know that we decided that your school no longer needs special measures to help it improve. Wheatley Park is a satisfactory and improving school. Although examination results in recent years have been broadly average compared to other schools nationally, attainment is rising. Most of you make satisfactory progress, and some of you make good progress. In lessons, you work well, but in a few lessons the work you do does not always help you make good progress. You know how well you are doing in each subject and what level or grade you are trying to achieve.

Your behaviour is good and, in some lessons, it is excellent. You generally enjoy school, attend well and feel very safe. The school provides a wide range of subject choices and provides you with good advice about future options. The school is well run by the headteacher and other staff, all of whom have your best interests at heart.

We have set out below how the school should improve.

Further improve examination results by ensuring that learning and progress in all lessons improve to the levels seen in the best lessons.

Improve the quality of teaching in some lessons by making sure you are given work which is more tailored to your individual needs so you can make more rapid progress. You can help by informing the teacher when you think you need extra challenge in the tasks set.

Provide those of you with special educational needs and/or disabilities more opportunities to develop your literacy skills in the curriculum.

Yours sincerely

Peter Limm

Her Majesty's Inspector

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