

# The Westgate School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	110105
<b>Local Authority</b>	Slough
<b>Inspection number</b>	356691
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 May 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Seal HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Modern (non-selective)
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<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>	906
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	115
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Edward Picton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Roger Thomas
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 February 2008
<b>School address</b>	Cippenham Lane Slough SL1 5AH
<b>Telephone number</b>	01753 521320
<b>Fax number</b>	01753 521200
<b>Email address</b>	secretary@westgate.slough.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. They observed 39 lessons which involved seeing 36 teachers. Meetings were held with groups of students, staff and members of the governing body. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at data on students' progress, a range of policies and planning documents, minutes of meetings, the school's self-evaluation documents, risk assessments, financial information, and the single central record of safeguarding checks on staff. The team analysed questionnaires returned by 162 parents and carers, 101 students and 38 staff.

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

- The progress and attainment of all students, especially those in Years 10 and 11.
- The quality and consistency of teaching and learning in lessons.
- The extent of leaders' and managers' influence on improving the quality of teaching and learning.
- The levels of attainment and progress of students in the sixth form.

## Information about the school

This is an average-sized secondary school, with specialist status for business and enterprise. Nearly half of the students are of White British heritage. A high proportion of students are from a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds, most of whom are Asian or Asian British. An above-average percentage of students speak English as an additional language. Only a very small number are in the early stages of learning English. The proportion of students who are known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of students identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is much higher than average. Many of these have speech, language and communication needs. The school has a resource base for 12 students with physical disabilities; there are currently 15 on roll. The school is part of a well-established federation with two local secondary schools.

**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

This highly regarded school provides an outstanding quality of education for all its students. The inspirational headteacher and dedicated, committed team of senior leaders and middle managers work with all staff in providing students with the excellent care and attention and the high-quality learning experiences they need to be prepared for their future lives, employment and training. As a result, students:

- make outstanding progress, including students with special educational needs/and or disabilities, those known to be eligible for free school meals and those who speak English as an additional language
- reach above-average attainment by the end of Key Stage 4 from below-average attainment on entry to the school
- feel extremely safe, looked after and cared for
- behave in an outstanding manner
- make an excellent contribution to the school and wider community
- are exceedingly well prepared for their future lives, learning and work.

Teaching and learning are outstanding because of the very high proportion of consistently good and better lessons. Teachers have high expectations and students' needs in the majority of lessons are matched accurately to the right activities and courses.

The all-pervading specialist status underpins the outstanding curriculum. Business and enterprise makes a high-profile contribution to the wide range of subjects because of the highly effective partnerships with a remarkably wide range of businesses and other organisations.

The sixth form is improving markedly. In recent years, students have made better progress and achieved higher results in some subjects and courses compared to others. Consequently, progress has varied and attainment is average overall. The highly influential senior leadership team's impressive collaborative approach to improving and developing the school is paying dividends.

The headteacher's passion and vision for the school has been instrumental in its improvement. The highly skilled team of committed leaders and managers at all levels, including the dynamic governing body, have an unremitting focus on student progress and the provision of the high-quality teaching and learning. They are very aware of the school's strengths and where it needs to improve further and are restless in their quest to improve the learning environment, provision and results for all students. The promotion of equal opportunities and community cohesion and the effectiveness of safeguarding are all outstanding. The current building, learning environment and upward trend in results stand

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testament to the leaders' relentless ambition and vision. Consequently, the capacity for improvement is outstanding.

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

- Secure more consistent rates of progress and higher results across subjects taught in the sixth form.

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

**1**

Students' attitudes to learning and their school are highly positive. The students enjoy their school life and learning. Their regular attendance is above average and punctuality is excellent. One student said 'This is a good place to learn.' Attainment has consistently improved since the last inspection and is now generally above average, with increasing proportions of students attaining good GCSE results from typically low starting points. The students' work and the lessons seen support the school's data, which indicate that progress continues to be at least good across nearly all year groups and in many cases is outstanding, particularly for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who speak English as an additional language and those known to be eligible for free school meals.

Students' contribution to the school and wider community is thoroughly integrated at all levels. The students are organised into three community groups. In these, students of all ages are involved in working together with groups such as older people, primary schools and local businesses. Students have a range of responsibilities. The close working relationships between all ages of students and the positive atmosphere of the school underpin their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

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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>1</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</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>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</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?

Lessons are well planned, well equipped and highly organised. There is a very clear consistency of approach between lessons and across subjects. Teachers have exceptional subject knowledge, which is used to good effect in their questioning. By using information and data about students' prior knowledge and understanding, in the best lessons, teachers provide students with opportunities to learn for themselves. Excellent relationships between staff and students are often exemplified by teachers' good sense of humour, mutual respect and a clear focus on high achievement. Students enjoy their learning and remain productive throughout the lessons. There is clarity about how to achieve the best results possible for individuals. On a few occasions, too much teacher direction leads to students being over-dependent on being told what to do next. This lack of involvement by students in their own learning means their skills in learning independently are then less well developed and this slows down their progress. Leaders and managers are aware of this issue and have already put in place strategies to address it.

The curriculum provides students with first-rate opportunities to experience a very wide range of learning across all subjects. As a result, students' basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology are highly developed. The school's specialism is omnipresent, providing students with a raft of opportunities to explore the world of work and develop positive attitudes towards learning. Partnerships with other

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schools and organisations provide a well-developed breadth and depth to the number of courses and expertise on offer.

The school takes great care of the students. There is a tangible atmosphere of friendliness and warmth. Students are known very well to staff and the introduction and development of the 'vertical' tutor groups has been a particular success. As a result, older students take care of the younger ones, contributing to remarkably low numbers of bullying and racist behaviour incidents. The school works exceptionally closely and collaboratively with a very wide range of agencies, businesses and professionals. This ensures that students and families who may be vulnerable or have special educational needs and or/disabilities, including those in the resource base, are very well cared for and looked after. Students starting at the school and moving on at the end of Key Stage 4 are very well supported and provided with good advice and information. The students' views are taken very seriously. For example, as a result of feedback, the school introduced careers advice during Year 8 to enable students to start considering their future options earlier.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## **How effective are leadership and management?**

Approaches to investing in and supporting the appointment and professional development of teachers are deeply embedded and well developed. The governing body's clear and strategic view of the school's future direction ensures that decisions are well thought through and are in the best interests of the students. Equal opportunity and tackling discrimination are of an exemplary nature. Students talk about how well they are treated and relationships are very strong. Discrimination is just not tolerated and is extremely rare. Safeguarding procedures are very robust and monitored well to ensure the excellent promotion of the health, safety and well-being of all students. The school's outward-looking and highly effective links with the local community, national and international organisations ensure that community cohesion is outstanding.

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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>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
<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>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>1</b>

## Sixth form

The sixth form has many areas of strength, including strong corporate leadership from all senior leaders and managers, good teaching, and effective pastoral support for the students. Although many of the student outcomes are good, examination results and progress have varied between subjects over recent years. Consequently, the actions taken by senior leaders and managers have yet to deliver their full impact. Recent data and the work seen during the inspection indicate there is a more consistent upward trend for 2011 and 2012. The high level of enjoyment seen in the main school continues into the sixth form. Students have very good attitudes to learning and school life and make a very strong contribution to the school community. For example, Year 12 students are key members of the 'vertical' tutor system. Provision is organised well to meet the needs of the students. The students have a choice from a wide range of A level and BTEC courses provided by both the school and partner institutions.

Most lessons are good and teacher assessments enable students to learn well. The assessments are linked to good information advice and guidance. Consequently, students are prepared well to continue their learning into higher education and future learning. Experiences in international work experience and attendance at national and local conferences are offered, in addition to residential activities. Other enrichment experiences include international links with schools in Kenya. There is a clear vision for how the sixth form will develop. Senior leaders and managers of the school are directly involved in driving improvements, supporting the head of sixth form in the ironing out of inconsistencies between subjects. Lessons and students' progress and teaching and learning in lessons are rigorously monitored and evaluated. These processes ensure that areas of strength are identified and weaknesses are tackled well.



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*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	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

## Views of parents and carers

Most of the parents and carers who returned the questionnaires were highly positive and supportive of the school. All but one of the responses were either at least in line with the current national benchmarks or above for agreeing with the statements. Some parents and carers disagreed with the statement regarding the school helping their children to live a healthy lifestyle. Inspectors found no evidence to support their concerns.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Watergate 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 162 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 906 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	60	37	98	60	3	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	67	41	90	56	2	1	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	48	30	100	62	14	9	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	52	32	102	63	8	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	49	30	103	64	6	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	37	23	100	62	20	12	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	33	20	104	64	18	11	2	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)	45	28	99	61	5	3	2	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	43	27	101	62	12	7	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	53	33	86	53	11	7	5	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	31	19	106	65	14	9	5	3
The school is led and managed effectively	61	38	97	60	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	76	47	79	49	5	3	0	0

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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.**



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13 May 2011

Dear Students

**Inspection of The Westgate School, Slough SL15AH**

We thoroughly enjoyed our visit to your school recently. Many thanks for your warm and friendly welcome. During the inspection, we met with groups of you and read the questionnaires that some of you returned. We observed you in lessons and looked at your work. Nearly all of you told us that you enjoy school, and feel extremely safe and very well looked after. We agree with you and judged that your school provides you with an outstanding education.

Some of the many outstanding things we found were:

- The proportions of you achieving better results are improving and your attainment is above average at the end of Year 11.
- A very high proportion of your lessons are good and many are outstanding.
- Your behaviour is excellent.
- Your attendance is above average and you get to lessons on time.
- The school's specialist status helps you learn in very interesting ways and has helped develop excellent links with local businesses.
- The school's excellent curriculum offers you a very wide variety of courses and this is partly because of the very strong links with the other schools and colleges.
- Your headteacher and the team of senior leaders are outstanding in how they lead and manage the school.

We have talked to your headteacher, staff and the governing body. They will be working on helping more of you make better progress and attain higher results across subjects in the sixth form.

You can all help by making sure you continue to attend well and work as hard as you can. We wish you all the best for the rest of your time at school and your future lives.

Yours sincerely

John Seal

Her Majesty's Inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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