

# Wheatley Park School

Holton, Oxford, OX33 1QH

## Inspection dates

13–14 March 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The school has made good improvements to the quality of education since the previous inspection.
- There is a clear trend in improvement. As a result, most students make good progress and achieve well, particularly in English, mathematics and science.
- GCSE results in most subjects have improved since the previous inspection.
- The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. Teaching is good overall and, in some lessons, is outstanding. The best teaching makes good links with real-life situations to make the lessons more interesting for students.
- The sixth form is good and the focus on standards is having a positive impact on students' results.
- Students and staff share an increasingly strong sense of community. Students say they feel safe and value the range of additional activities which are available. The headteacher sets high standards for the school. She is well supported by the senior team and other members of staff.
- Fixed-term exclusions and absence have reduced significantly since the last inspection. The school has effective procedures to maintain punctuality and good attendance.
- Governors know the school very well. They have provided outstanding challenge and support and have a clear view about what the school needs to do to improve further.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In a small proportion of lessons teachers do not always plan activities which meet the needs of different students. Some work lacks challenge and in some lessons teachers talk for too long and do not take enough account of students' ideas.
- A minority of the students who are supported by additional funding are not making as rapid progress as they should.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with half a day's notice.
- Inspectors saw 41 lessons, of which 12 were observed with senior leaders. Inspectors also visited tutorial sessions, an assembly and heard a group of students read.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders and middle managers, two governors, a representative from the local authority, and four groups of students.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information on students' progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents, including 61 responses on Parent View, student and staff surveys.

## Inspection team

Mary Myatt, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Gill Carter	Additional Inspector
Sheila Crew	Additional Inspector
Susan Willman	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Wheatley Park School is slightly smaller than the average secondary school.
- Most students are of White British heritage. The proportion of students who are from minority ethnic backgrounds and the proportion who speak English as an additional language are both below average.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium is below the national average. This is additional funding to support students known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and students with a parent in the armed forces.
- The proportion of students with a statement of special educational needs is slightly above average and those with special educational needs supported at school action is average. The proportion of disabled students is below average.
- A very small number of students attend alternative provision on vehicle maintenance and construction courses.
- Approximately one in ten students is eligible for the Year 7 catch-up programme.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum level expected for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that more is outstanding by:
  - making sure that the best practice from outstanding lessons is shared swiftly and that senior leaders check regularly that this is being consistently followed
  - ensuring that all teachers provide clear advice to students on how to improve their work.
- Improve the achievement of those pupils supported by extra government funding who are not making as much progress as they could by:
  - Increasing the focus on and support for these students in the classroom.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

**is good**

- The progress of all students, including in the sixth form and those with special educational needs, is good. Students typically enter the school with levels that are slightly above average. The proportion of students leaving Year 11 with at least five GCSEs at grade C or above, including English and mathematics, has increased significantly since the previous inspection and is now above the national average.
- The average point scores for students known to be eligible for free school meals are not as high at GCSE as they are for other students. In 2012, in English the difference was one GCSE grade and in mathematics about one and a half GCSE grades. However, the school's data show that similar pupils in other years are making better progress and that the gap is closing. For the small group of students looked after by the local authority, the average point scores were very similar to those of other students.
- Students eligible for the Year 7 catch-up programme are making good progress. The progress of the small number of students following alternative courses is good.
- Students' progress in the sixth form is good, and improving. The monitoring of students' progress has been sharpened up and this has supported the improvement. There are, however, some differences in achievement between subjects. Post-16 students do less well in business studies than they do in art and design and further mathematics, for example.
- The school is working to make sure high quality speaking, reading and writing are developed across the curriculum, and this is having an impact. Evidence from conversations with students shows that they value the focus which the school places on high quality literacy.
- There are extensive opportunities for developing numeracy beyond the classroom and a number of students were hosting and taking part in a mathematics challenge with other schools during the inspection. This ensures that students are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- A small number of students are entered early for mathematics GCSE. At present, they continue their course and take the examination again in the summer. This is a trial system which is being kept under review.
- In the large majority of lessons that are well taught, students are eager to learn. They work well in pairs and groups to support each other's learning. For example, students made outstanding progress in a mathematics lesson because students were working in groups to explain the common mistakes they had found in the answers to an examination question which they had marked. In a small minority of lessons students are not expected to think and explore more widely, teachers talk for a long time and as a result students do not make as much progress as they could.
- A wide range of additional opportunities adds to students' achievement in lessons. Students appreciate these and they value the chance to produce the school magazine, Latin lessons, trampolining, charitable activities, orchestra and the school's production.
- The majority of parents who responded to Parent View believe that their children are making good progress.

### The quality of teaching

**is good**

- Teaching is good over time because lessons are well planned to build on previous learning and to meet students' different needs. Pair and group work is a strong feature in some subjects, encouraging students to learn from each other. Teachers' subject expertise is reflected in well-focused and challenging question-and-answer sessions that extend learning. For example, in an outstanding drama lesson, the teacher expected students to give extended reasons for their answers.
- In most lessons, teachers listen to, carefully observe and skilfully question students in order to

adapt tasks and explanations to improve learning. Most teachers assess students' learning and progress regularly and accurately. Students are given many chances to use the skills they have learnt and to work together. Excellent examples of this were seen in an English lesson.

- While many teachers provide helpful feedback on what students need to do to improve, this is not always applied consistently across the whole school. The school recognises that high quality feedback needs to be consistent in every lesson.
- A few lessons require improvement in a number of ways. Here, teachers may talk for too long, or do not ask questions which sufficiently challenge students' thinking or expect students to ask good questions about what they are learning. In a few lessons, teachers do not provide enough opportunities for students to share their work, including what went well and what could be improved.
- In the best lessons, students work on projects which they say are relevant to them and where they are able to contribute original ideas. Teachers have high expectations. They expect students to engage with difficult ideas and to explore them through high quality discussion. For example, in a geography lesson groups of students researched different aspects of sustainability and reported their findings to one another. This resulted in high quality discussion where students were encouraged to talk through their arguments.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Attendance has improved significantly since the last inspection, particularly for students with special educational needs and for students who are known to be eligible for free school meals. This is the result of additional support from the attendance officer and good use of systems to encourage attendance.
- Students' attitudes to learning are positive and behaviour is good. Many students commented that behaviour has improved significantly, although a minority of parents who responded on Parent View disagree. One student who had arrived at the school, having been permanently excluded from another school, spoke about the high quality of support and care he had received from the school. As a result he is on track to reach his potential.
- Students say that instances of bullying are rare, that they know who to turn to and that they are dealt with effectively by the school.
- There is a positive atmosphere in the school. Staff know students and their individual circumstances very well – the headteacher makes a point of knowing the name of every student in the school. This creates a school culture which is open and inclusive. Examples of this were seen in an assembly. Students took part both in highlighting additional opportunities for students and in helping a senior leader demonstrate the importance of persevering with work they may find difficult.
- Students are aware of how to keep safe and of different forms of bullying such as racist and homophobic name-calling. Conversations with students show that they value the school's emphasis on good behaviour for learning and when students need additional support with their behaviour they are integrated back in to lessons with a minimum of disruption to other pupils.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The headteacher has provided strong leadership and together with her leadership team has secured considerable improvements since the previous inspection. There has been well-focused support from the governing body in moving the school forward. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and the headteacher and leadership team have put in place robust systems for improving the students' progress. They are well supported by middle managers who share the school's vision and are very clear about their responsibilities.
- Staff are committed to the school and its continued progress. The questionnaire responses were

mostly positive and many commented on the high quality support they receive from the headteacher.

- The quality of teaching over time has improved since the previous inspection. This is because the school has focused on providing different ways of improving practice. There is a well-developed web-based resource, developed by the school, where best practice is shared. The weekly briefings focus on improvements in learning, particularly on giving feedback to students. The leadership team know that there is more to be done to make sure that all teaching is of the same standard as the best lessons.
  - Careful tracking of students' progress means that resources are used where they are most needed to prevent underachievement. The school has a robust approach to performance management. Teachers are held accountable for the progress of students they teach through regular reviews. Teachers who are on the upper pay scale only receive salary increments when they meet their performance management targets.
  - The curriculum is broad and balanced with an increased focus on literacy across the curriculum. The school has reviewed its provision for vocational courses and these are now offered within the school. The school is adjusting the curriculum offer, for example in offering computer science GCSE to replace a less challenging course.
  - The school has considered carefully how to make best use of the pupil premium. It has used the findings of research to inform its priorities. The school has provided extra support for students who need help to make progress. The school's progress data show that students who are eligible for additional funding are now catching up with other students.
  - The school has also used the pupil premium to provide more training for teachers to improve feedback to students. While this is having an impact in most lessons, further work needs to be done to make sure this training is consistently implemented. The school's self-evaluation shows that leaders recognise that this area of work needs to have even greater impact.
  - Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. There were examples of high quality provision seen in tutorials, assemblies and in lessons. A 'Thought for the Week' is displayed around the school site and discussed in tutorials. In Years 7 and 8 students make good use of the historic site of the school. The school's 'big learning days', covering topics such as civil rights, also make a good contribution to their cultural development.
  - Safeguarding meets current requirements.
  - The school has received effective support from the local authority to help improve students' achievement and for aspects of leadership and management.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - provides outstanding strategic thinking and challenge for the school's leaders
    - has a secure understanding of the performance of the school, including the quality of teaching, for example at Key Stage 3
    - ensures the efficient financial management of the school's resources and takes a rigorous approach to performance management
    - is extremely well informed about the strengths and weaknesses of the school, is involved in working with teachers on the school's development plan and engages in many aspects of school life
    - ensures that safeguarding procedures are thorough.
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## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	123243
<b>Local authority</b>	Oxfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	400120

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	996
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	158
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Tessa Shaw
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kate Curtis
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	February 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01865 872441
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