

Wishmore Cross Academy

Alpha Road, Chobham, Surrey, GU24 8NE

Inspection dates 15–16 July 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
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 good school.

- The headteacher leads the school with a strong vision. Every student's emotional health and well-being is paramount.
- Leaders at all levels make sure that teachers and teaching assistants plan and teach activities that stimulate students' interest and challenge them so that they make good progress. Consequently, the quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Leaders responsible for subjects make sure that they carefully track the progress students make.
- Achievement is good overall because students make good progress in their literacy and numeracy skills from low starting points.
- Students who are supported by additional funding and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress because their learning experiences build on what they understand, know and can do.
- Students behave well in lessons and around the school. The school provides them with many opportunities to develop their skills in working positively with others.
- Parents and carers are pleased with the way the school keeps their child safe.
- Governors ensure resources are allocated efficiently so that additional funding has a positive impact on the achievement of eligible students.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- On some occasions, teachers do not plan hard enough work for the most able students. As a result, some of these students do not achieve to the best of their ability.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 12 lessons jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors listened to students read, and spoke to students about their experiences at school.
- Meetings were held with teachers, school leaders, governors and a representative from the Academy Trust.
- Inspectors visited an assembly, and took account of feedback from staff questionnaires.
- There were insufficient responses to the Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire, which provides evidence of the opinions of parents and carers. However, inspectors took account of comments from parent surveys carried out by the school.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including school improvement plans, information on students' current progress, students' written work, the governing body minutes and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Janev Mehmet, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Wishmore Cross Academy serves students between the ages of 11 and 16 years who have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Some students also have additional needs, which include a combination of speech and language difficulties and autistic spectrum disorders. All students have a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of students eligible for support through the pupil premium is higher than the national average. This is additional government funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The number of students from minority ethnic backgrounds and the number of those who speak English as an additional language is significantly below the national average.
- Wishmore Cross Academy converted to become an academy school on 1 September 2012. When its predecessor school, Wishmore Cross School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school has a boarding facility that has been inspected separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching from good to outstanding by:
 - making sure that teachers always set work for the most able students that is suitably challenging and enables them to make rapid progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The achievement of students, from their low starting points, is good. Students make good progress because their teachers have a good understanding of their emotional and behavioural needs. The proportion of students making good progress in English and mathematics is similar to that found nationally for students with similar backgrounds.
- Students' literacy and numeracy skills are promoted well across the school. In English lessons, students develop their skills in reading and expressing their opinions. In mathematics, they enjoy relating problem-solving techniques to real-life scenarios and this helps them learn well.
- Students eligible for additional funding make good progress in both English and mathematics. There is no gap between them and their peers. Those from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language also make good progress from low starting points. This reflects the school's strong focus on ensuring equality of opportunity.
- Some of the most able students make good progress from their starting points. However, others learn at a slower pace than they are capable of because the work set for them is too easy.
- Students improve their reading at a good pace through a range of programmes provided by the school. Every student reads to their key worker on a daily basis, and as a result, students are confident readers. Checking of their progress in reading is rigorous and shows that the school's efforts are having a good impact.
- Students' achieve well in sporting activities. They are encouraged to develop their teamwork and communication skills through team cricket, rugby and football. Students' health and physical development is also supported through swimming, trampolining and outdoor adventure activities.
- Students in Key Stage 4 make good progress in programmes that prepare them well for life after school. They take part in peer mentoring training and support the development of younger students. Some of these students take GCSE examinations and attain levels that are in line with those of students in similar schools. Recently, all students at the end of Key Stage 4 have secured college placements for the following year.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is good because teachers and teaching assistants use their knowledge of students' experiences effectively so that students engage well in lessons and make progress. There are good relationships between students and their teachers. Classrooms are positive learning environments.
- Students are interested in learning because tasks are well planned. However, work for the most able students is sometimes too easy. This slows down the progress they are capable of making.
- Students are given helpful opportunities to express their views and develop their skills in listening and speaking. For example, in a Year 8 English lesson, students developed these skills by asking and answer questions about the topic they were working on.
- Teachers help students to deepen their mathematical knowledge and improve their skills in solving everyday problems. For example, in a Year 10 mathematics lesson, students worked hard to apply what they had learned when solving a range of problems.
- Praise and clear verbal feedback to students help them to understand their learning. Regular feedback in students' books helps them to know when they have done well and how they can further improve their work. Students respond well to this feedback.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of students is good. Teachers and other adults in the school demonstrate a caring and patient approach towards students. There is a high-level understanding of how to manage behaviour well. As a result, over time students learn to model positive behaviour and are progressively more courteous towards each other and their teachers as they mature.
- When they start at Wishmore Cross Academy, students have to learn how to work with others and on their own. They are encouraged to learn these skills and build positive self-esteem. Soon after, students usually know how well they are behaving in their subjects, and understand what they need to do to improve.
- Students' attitudes to learning are positive. In their lessons, they listen attentively to instructions and are keen to achieve well in their tasks. For example, in their food technology lesson, Year 9 boys were keen to prepare baps and fillings from scratch. They followed the instructions and supported each to complete the activity.
- Students are motivated by outdoor learning activities that are provided for them on a weekly basis to develop empathy, teamwork and an understanding of the world. These experiences are then linked to classroom tasks in order to make learning more interesting. For example, Year 9 students in a science lesson discussed the life cycle of an insect and proudly explained to the inspector the meaning of 'entomophagy' (eating insects). Students were excited about discussing which insects were eaten in different parts of the world.
- Students contribute positively to their school. They take part in fund raising activities for a range of charities. For example, students worked together to fill shoeboxes with toys and sweets to be presented as Christmas gifts for children in Eastern Europe.
- Students in Key Stage 4 train to become peer mentors and support younger students in situations that require them to find a solution in a difficult situation. In this way, older students set a positive example around the school.
- Students attend work and college placements, which prepare them well for when they leave school. Reports received from the workplaces praise students for their reliability and positive attitudes to their work.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good.
- Students are safe in school. Records show that incidents of bullying are rare and students are well supported in learning to keep themselves safe, including on the internet. They explore issues to do with bullying through assemblies, posters and displays. They all sign the anti-bullying charter and respect it.
- Attendance is in line with the national average for similar schools. Parents and carers acknowledge that their children are happy in school and feel safe.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher leads the school with a vision that ensures that student's emotional health and well-being is paramount.
- Senior leaders work hard to maintain good quality teaching and learning across the school. They reinforce high expectations for all staff and students and ensure that every student has access to experiences that interest them and help them to learn well.
- Middle leaders work effectively to ensure the vision of the school is delivered. They consistently check and develop members of staff they work with. Lessons in a range of subjects are effectively planned to meet the differing needs of students.
- Planning is detailed and focused on students making steady steps towards their personal targets. Thorough records are kept on individual students and these include examples of work and achievements. Leaders check students' progress systematically and continuously support teachers to perform at their best. Teachers take part in regular training and share good practice to improve their performance, for example by visiting other schools.
- Additional funding is allocated effectively. It is used to provide a range of therapeutic opportunities for students, as well as training for teachers on specific approaches they can use to improve the experiences of students when they first arrive at the school. Consequently, those

students eligible for additional funding achieve well from their very low starting points.

- Students enjoy developing their artistic skills. Displays of their artwork show how their studies link to other cultures and religions. For example, students learn about aboriginal art, design their own wallpaper based on the style of the British designer William Morris, and sculpture Egyptian sarcophagi (elaborate coffins of Egyptian royalty) from clay.
- Assemblies enable students to reflect on choices they make and which charities they will support. Work displayed around the school reflects the international dimension of students' lessons. Consequently, the school successfully ensures that students' understanding about spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning is developed through a range of subjects.
- Safeguarding practices are effective throughout the school. Leaders and managers ensure there is good understanding about all aspects of keeping students safe.
- The Academy Trust provides good support for the school. The representative for the school visits monthly and works closely with the headteacher to ensure that regular progress checks lead to the school's continual development.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body works effectively with school leaders. Governors have a good understanding of their roles and their accountability. They support and challenge school leaders in securing the best opportunities for all staff and students. Governors also work hard to build links with parents and carers. They attend fund raising events at the school so as to communicate and build a relationship with parents and carers. Governors take part in training linked to safeguarding and have a clear understanding of the school's information on students' progress and achievement. They ensure that teaching is good, and that teachers are suitably rewarded for good performance related to the quality of their teaching and students' achievement. They allocate additional funding in the best interests of the students concerned. Consequently, these students make good progress from their starting points.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering p 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

Unique reference number	138766
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	440155

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special convertor
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	61
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bernard Bartlett
Headteacher	Jed Donnelly
Date of previous school inspection	30 March 2011
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