

# Inspection of The Westgate School

Cippenham Lane, Slough, Berkshire SL1 5AH

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Inspection dates:	14 to 16 January 2025
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Sixth-form provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The headteacher of this school is Jon Gargan. This is the only school in The Westgate School single-academy trust. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, co-chaired by Inderjit Dhillon and Zarrin Hamid.

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since March 2014. The school received a monitoring inspection under section 8 of the Act in November 2018. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

The strong relationships between staff and pupils help to make this a happy school. There is clear ambition for all to achieve their best and, as the school puts it, to be 'equipped for life'. Academic achievement has strengthened, something pupils recognise and appreciate. Results in published outcomes continue to rise, particularly for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils now achieve in line with national averages at GCSE and A Level.

Alongside this focus on a broad range of qualifications that help to prepare pupils for their next steps, is a determination for pupils to become young adults who have confidence and resilience for success in their futures. Pupils have an increasing set of opportunities that link thoughtfully into their interests and help them to develop new ones.

Pupils appreciate the recent changes to the school. Although some of them think that the rules for behaviour can be too strict at times, they do recognise that the high expectations have made things better for everyone, especially in lessons. They appreciate the way that staff act to support them if anyone is unkind or falls short of these expectations.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

The school is determined that all pupils are included in the full life of the school and benefit from all it offers. At the heart of this is the expert knowledge that staff have of pupils, including of any additional needs. Generally, this knowledge is used well by staff who shape learning activities carefully to meet the needs of pupils. This is particularly strong in the sixth form. However, this is not consistent across the school. In some instances, tasks do not match what pupils need to learn next. When this happens, pupils do not learn as well as they could.

Over the past year, a comprehensive staff training programme has made a real difference to staff expertise. Overall, staff have strong subject knowledge which they use well, particularly when adapting work to support pupils with SEND. In discussions, pupils are keen to show their new knowledge. In many subjects, they apply this with confidence to solve problems. Here, they are supported well to remember and recall knowledge. Sixth-form students demonstrate impressive independent working skills.

Reading is prioritised by the school. Activities to encourage a love of reading are threaded through many events. Specific support for pupils at the earliest stages of learning to read is currently being established. As well as focusing on securing their confidence and fluency, this programme aims to develop pupils' research skills.

As with achievement, attendance is improving over time. The school has provided well-considered support to pupils and their families. This has helped to overcome barriers to attendance.

The school is an orderly environment. The clear routines support the high expectations. Most pupils have positive attitudes and are keen to learn. They understand the need for

many of the new school rules, including those associated with mobile phones, but are annoyed when things do not seem fair. This is generally linked to inconsistent application of the school rules. Additionally, there are pockets of pupils who are unkind to each other. Pupils are confident that staff will resolve any issues, including bullying, but pupils do not always report problems. These remaining examples where mutual respect is lacking tend to be during unstructured social times.

The provision for careers is a strength of the school. This is comprehensive and well structured, extending from Year 7 to 13. Pupils with SEND get appropriate additional support. Pupils value this support and the information they receive, including from external providers.

The personal development programme is also carefully planned and matched to pupils' needs. Pupils value the way that more sensitive topics, including consent, respectful relationships and personal safety, are delivered in an age-appropriate manner. They describe how these lessons help them to understand modern Britain and how they can play their part in society.

Leaders know that there is still work to do and they have a clear plan of what is involved. They understand that the pace of the change can be unsettling and have tried to engage with parents and carers to explain the purpose of decisions. They recognise that there is more work to do here.

Staff feel supported. Teaching staff, including those new to the profession, value the professional development they receive. Support staff are pleased that their development opportunities are now starting. For all, there is a clear focus on decisions being about what is in the best interests of the pupils.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

#### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Recent changes to establish high expectations for behaviour across the school are not fully embedded, particularly during unstructured social times. There are some pupils who are unkind to each other. The school needs to ensure that actions are taken as intended so there is mutual respect throughout the school.
- Some classroom tasks do not link well enough to pupils' prior learning. This means some pupils do not learn as well as they could. The school should strengthen the approaches they have set out to ensure that tasks build on pupils' learning consistently well.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	138012
<b>Local authority</b>	Slough
<b>Inspection number</b>	10341709
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,288
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	98
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trustees</b>	Inderjit Dhillon and Zarrin Hamid (Co-Chairs)
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jon Gargan
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.westgate.slough.sch.uk">www.westgate.slough.sch.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	20 and 21 March 2014, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- This is the only school in The Westgate School single-academy trust.
- There have been considerable staff changes since the previous inspection. The headteacher joined the school in September 2023 and many staff, including senior leaders, have joined since then.
- The school has a resourced provision that caters for up to 15 pupils with physical disability. These pupils have education, health and care plans and are placed by the local authority.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Through no fault of the school, inspection activities were suspended for a short period on 16 January and a new inspector arrived to lead the inspection. A new team joined her on 17 January. All evidence collected over the three days on site was evaluated to determine the grade for each key judgement.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior staff and school improvement partners. They also met with the co-chairs of the local governing body, one of whom is also the chair of the trustees. They held telephone calls with representatives from local authority services.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, science, history, modern foreign languages, mathematics and performing arts. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors also met with the special educational needs coordinator and explored provision for pupils with SEND, including in the resourced provision.
- Inspectors considered the views of pupils from the pupil survey and by meeting with groups of pupils formally and informally throughout the inspection.
- The views of parents were considered through responses to Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors also met and held telephone calls with parents.
- Staff views were considered through the staff survey and in discussions during the inspection.
- School information was also taken into account, including the school's own surveys of pupils, parents and staff. Other documentation, including that relating to attendance, behaviour and the work of governors was also evaluated.

## Inspection team

Lucy English, lead inspector (15 and 16 January)	His Majesty's Inspector
James Stuart, lead inspector (14 and 15 January)	His Majesty's Inspector
Andrew Morrison (14 and 15 January)	Ofsted Inspector
Ian Cooksey (14 and 15 January)	Ofsted Inspector
Julia Mortimore (14 and 15 January)	Ofsted Inspector
John Burridge (14 January)	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Ellison (16 January)	His Majesty's Inspector
Russell Bennett (16 January)	His Majesty's Inspector
Matthew Haynes (16 January)	His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

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