

# Old Swinford Hospital

## Inspection report

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Unique Reference Number	103870
Local Authority	Dudley
Inspection number	354340
Inspection dates	19–20 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Kevin Sheldrick HMI

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

The inspection of social care was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

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Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	634
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	261
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Roger Johnson
Headteacher	Peter Jones
Date of previous school inspection	5 October 2006
School address	Heath Lane Stourbridge West Midlands DY8 1QX
Telephone number	01384 817300
Fax number	01384 441686
Email address	headmaster@oshsch.com

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Boarding Provision	Old Swinford Hospital
Social care Unique Reference Number	SC042055
Social care inspector	Angela Hunt, Jane Cooper, David Morgan, Diane Martin

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Age group	11–18
Inspection date(s)	19–20 May 2010
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three of Her Majesty's Inspectors, two social care and three additional inspectors. Inspectors visited eight boarding houses, 24 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of students. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation relating to planning, monitoring, safeguarding and communications with parents and carers. Inspectors analysed questionnaires returned by 67 parents and carers and 99 students.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the progress all groups of students make as reflected in lessons and all the other evidence held by the school
- the link between the use of assessment and provision, particularly the quality of teaching
- how effectively the school balances the need to delegate responsibility with accountability and what this indicates about the school's ability to ensure equal opportunities.

## Information about the school

This is a below average sized secondary school. Around 60% of students are boarders. The school educates students from the West Midlands region, across the United Kingdom and from abroad. Many join the school at times other than in Year 7. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is close to the national average, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language. Only a few students are known to be eligible for free school meals. A small minority are supported by charitable foundations to board at the school. Very few students have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school admits 16 students in each year on the basis of academic ability. The school has had business and enterprise specialist status for some time and gained specialist status in science in 2008.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

## Main findings

Old Swinford is providing good education and care that result in students achieving outstandingly well. There is far more to the school than academic excellence. Students are part of a caring community and become confident young people, extremely well prepared to succeed in the future. The nurturing ethos is particularly important for those students who board. The school's superb curriculum makes a substantial contribution to students' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The wide variety of extra-curricular activities encourages students to decide for themselves how to use their spare time well when boarding. Instrumental in the improvements made to the curriculum and the quality of care, are the excellent partnerships the school has developed with other organisations. At the heart of the school is the house system which provides an important sense of belonging, particularly to the students who board. A strong sense of responsibility is developed through the support students provide as trained prefects and mentors.

Students live very healthily because the school is able to ensure the majority of students can make healthy choices at all meal times. The medical centre contributes well to the health and well-being of students. In addition, all students participate in a lot of physical activity, often associated with the inter-house competitions. Students also have very extensive opportunities to positively contribute to the school and wider community. All students volunteer to undertake community work including working in local schools and raising substantial sums for charity. Extensive support is provided for a school in Uganda and, linked to the school's business specialism; the school has its own rotary club that is very active locally. Although the school has a range of committees that involve students in decision-making, these are not always sufficiently influential. Students expressed a degree of frustration because they are sometimes unclear about why decisions are made and feel they are not able to influence change. Punishments, complaints and sanctions are not consistently effectively monitored and this contributes to differences between houses in how well students are cared for. Students receive consistent high quality guidance, particularly in the sixth form. The sixth form is well led and is held in high esteem by students and the wider community.

Teaching is good overall but there are a minority of lessons which fall short because students are not sufficiently actively involved. In the better lessons, teachers avoid talking for too long and concentrate on identifying very precisely the needs of students, adjusting lessons accordingly. Senior leaders are united in a desire to improve the school and have accurately identified the further improvements that are

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needed. The school has ensured high levels of attainment over a long period of time and all groups of students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make consistently good progress. Middle leaders are permitted a great deal of autonomy by senior leaders in order that staff can be effective in their roles. However, there are inconsistencies in how effectively leaders are held to account and this explains the few examples of less effective teaching and care of students. This generally positive picture is consistent with a good capacity for sustained improvement.

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

- Eradicate the examples of weaker practice in teaching and in the care of students by:
  - establishing more consistent whole-school approaches based on the best practice in the school
  - ensuring all leaders are more involved in regular, robust line management meetings that are tightly focused on targets for improvement.
  - ensuring that punishments, complaints and sanctions are more robustly monitored by leaders and appropriate action taken where needed.
- Ensure students have greater influence on improving the school and boarding provision by:
  - reviewing the effectiveness of the current committee structure
  - involving students more in the leadership of committees
  - improving the effectiveness of communication so all members of the school community understand the reasons why decisions are made.

### Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

In the better lessons, students demonstrate considerable ability to take responsibility for their own learning. For instance, in design and technology lesson, students assiduously avoided copying from internet sources concentrating instead on including their own personal insights. Inspectors saw impressive examples of highly effective teaching that resulted in students progressing very well particularly in English mathematics, history, art and music. Students who receive additional help with homework make especially good progress. The small minority of students who speak English as an additional language make good progress. There are no differences in the progress day students make when compared with boarders. The good progress across the school leads to very high examination results with increasing numbers of students gaining five A\* to C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics. In 2009, 94% of students gained these qualifications.

Students behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. Only in a small minority of lessons is behaviour less than perfect. This is exclusively associated with weaker teaching, particularly where teachers have an unrealistic expectation of how long younger students can passively listen to the teacher. Students have a very clear

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sense of right and wrong. The many sporting activities and the house system ensure students work well in teams. Their cultural awareness is strong because of the opportunities they have to interact with others from a wide range of different backgrounds. Students’ spiritual development is also strong because of the school’s house system and because of the way the school’s Anglican status permeates the life of the school. Students are exceptionally well prepared for their future economic well-being. Attendance is consistently high and students are punctual. In addition to the high numbers gaining five A\* to C grades at GCSE, students develop a wide range of other important skills and attributes needed for future success. The schools specialisms have successfully increased participation levels in science and business studies, particularly in the sixth form.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

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

### How effective is the provision?

Teachers often make very effective use of their subject expertise in order to inspire students. In an outstanding English lesson on advertising jingles, the teacher very effectively shared the lesson objectives so that students knew what was required to achieve at different levels. A high degree of engagement was ensured by regular involvement of students in evaluating the level of the emerging work. This excellent practice was in sharp contrast to a minority of lessons in which students were not at all clear about what they must do to be successful. Some lesson planning is superficial and merely identifies the activities with no attempt to make adjustments for different abilities in the class. At times, teachers talk for long periods of time, sometimes preventing teaching assistants from being able to provide support. In the

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<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

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majority of lessons teachers use assessment well to identify the appropriate learning and plan a range of activities. As a result students show considerable willingness to strive to produce their best, particularly when there is an element of competition. The better lessons end with effective reviews of students' learning. Examples of the effective use of peer and self-assessment were observed in a number of lessons. Effective marking was seen in English but elsewhere students receive insufficient feedback on what they must do to improve.

All students participate in range of extra-curricular activities that extend well into the evening and at weekends. Students experience an extremely broad curriculum throughout their time in the main school. For instance, all students undertake short courses in religious education, physical education, design and technology, and business studies in Key Stage 4. The largely academic curriculum meets the needs of students very well and is a major contributing factor to the outstanding achievement. Students use information and communication technology very well when undertaking their own research. The school has adjusted its curriculum to better meet the needs of students who speak English as an additional language by increasing the opportunity they have to focus on literacy. Following consultation with students, a greater element of choice has further enhanced the curriculum students' experience.

The school carefully monitors the progress students make and targets additional support and guidance at the first sign of any deterioration in students' performance. Effective additional support is given to students who are potentially vulnerable such as those from overseas. Exclusions are rare, reflecting the school's ability to provide a wide range of flexible support. Support for transition into Year 7 is effective but transitions beyond this year group are not so well supported. High quality guidance helps ensure students make appropriate choices at 16 and 18. In one house, older students are successfully providing additional support to younger students.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

## How effective are leadership and management?

The business enterprise specialism has resulted in the school having a strong focus on the local economy. This has led to partnerships that have helped the school in broadening the provision for students and in building links with the wider community. A sense of enterprise had permeated the schools leadership resulting in a range of improvements that have contributed to excellent outcomes.

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The school's plans and targets are evidence of leaders' strong commitment to continuing improvement and the maintenance of high standards. There is a track record of improvement with departments raising attainment and increasing students' progress. The school has achieved success through a policy of delegating responsibility to middle leaders. For instance, departments generally track students' progress well without relying on a whole school system. Some house leaders have improved the quality of care provided in the boarding houses. The school has responded well to the community cohesion agenda by ensuring strong action in terms of the school, local and global dimensions. The school recognises some unevenness in its approach and is implementing effective actions to further promote cohesion in terms of the United Kingdom. The school has well-established and high quality practice as regards safeguarding. The school has a strong record of having taken account of student and parental views with regard to this matter. Staff are very well aware of safeguarding issues, especially the child protection element.

The school has introduced middle leadership self-review although there is variability in how effectively this is used to ensure improvement. Some departments, such as English, use this process well and, as a result, teaching is improving. Other middle leaders are less effective. For instance, some heads of department are not ensuring that all lesson plans include clear learning outcomes. This is slowing the eradication of weaker teaching and reduces students' enjoyment of learning in some subjects. In the boarding sector, this lack of consistency has resulted in some students feeling an understandable sense of injustice. Senior leaders recognise there is good practice and are taking steps to ensure this becomes more consistent across the school. However, one-to-one line management meetings are not used consistently well to ensure the adoption of effective practice. The school monitors the progress different groups make as part of its approach to ensuring equal opportunities, although this is not embedded within all departments. The school has had some success in taking action in response to its monitoring, for instance in terms of the improved provision for overseas students.

Governors play a significant role in helping to shape the direction of the school through the setting of clear objectives for the headteacher, their major involvement in expansion projects and the contribution of their expertise in a wide range of fields. Governors provide a good level of challenge and support for leaders through their monitoring of the work of different departments. The school actively seeks the views of parents and has shown that it is responsive to their concerns. It provides regular information about students' progress which enables parents and carers to support their children's learning.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the	2



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school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

## Sixth form

Students make good progress and attain standards that are above average by the end of the second year of A-level studies. Students make especially good progress in mathematics and art and design. Virtually all students complete their courses and progress from the sixth form to their first-choice universities, including some of the most prestigious in the country. Attendance and punctuality are highly impressive. Students contribute positively to the life of the main school, for instance by being prefects and by mentoring younger students. They volunteer willingly to undertake work in the community. As in the main school, students would like to influence decision-making more and are eager to have more involvement leading the various committees.

The profile of teaching in the sixth form is similar to that in the main school. Students are highly appreciative of their teachers' passion and high levels of subject expertise. Students are happy with the courses they follow but would welcome a greater element of choice. The guidance students receive is first class and they particularly appreciate the dedication provided by the head of sixth form and his assistants. Students also appreciate the variety of places available for private study.

Line management in the sixth form is particularly effective in ensuring students receive the support and guidance they need. Nevertheless, inconsistencies in middle leadership in the school are such that students experience a minority of lessons in which they feel spoon-fed. The head of sixth form has a clear view of the further improvements that will make this provision even more effective.

These are the grades for the sixth form

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

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## Boarding provision

The quality of boarding at Old Swinford Hospital School is good. The school meets all key national minimum standards. It has taken appropriate action to address the recommendations contained in the previous report. A form is now in place to record the assessment conducted by those boarders competent to administer their own medication. The anti-bullying policy has been reviewed in line with the recommendation made.

The school places great importance on encouraging good health through the access to medical care and information. The nutritionally balanced diet and emphasis on outside activities makes sure students are well prepared for leading a healthy life-style. In addition, the personal, social and health education programme increases students' knowledge and understanding of important issues related to their general well-being.

Staff members including the leadership team have completed training in child protection. There is a robust plan to disseminate training to more staff to further strengthen the good safeguarding practice in place. The recruitment systems and processes in place endorse the school's high priority given to ensuring effective safeguarding in recruitment. Clearly laid down procedures for dealing with allegations and effective links with the local authority exist to protect students. The school's designated person for child protection provides useful guidance for staff. The designated person knows about his specific safeguarding responsibilities and of the relevant reporting procedures.

The maintenance of good discipline helps to promote students' welfare and their development. There are inconsistencies in how sanctions are administered across boarding houses. As a result, students expressed justifiable concerns that there is some unfairness. The limited detail recorded in diaries means that the nature of the transgression and the sanctions which follow are not always clear.

Generally, robust health and safety policies exist. However, the practice and recording of fire drills is inconsistent across boarding houses. A system of record keeping in diaries across boarding houses is in place. Information about welfare issues is recorded and shared amongst those staff with pastoral care responsibilities. However, clarity and detail of recording to inform decisions and to serve as a record of action taken by staff is variable across houses. For example, incident and accident forms to complement the information kept in diaries are not consistently used across all boarding houses. These omissions prevent leaders from effectively monitoring the practice in all houses.

All new boarders receive an induction and are appropriately welcomed to the school. Students are able to maintain contact with parents, guardians and friends. Students have access to a range of people if they need support or feel unfairly treated in some way. This includes access to an independent counsellor. The school's structure includes clear and accessible avenues for students to seek help where appropriate.

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Students have good relationships with staff and are well supported. House staff act as mentors and play an important role in monitoring organised prep. Students are articulate and sociable. They are given increasing levels of responsibility and authority as they progress through the school. Taking responsibility for others helps to promote boarders' personal development. A range of committees, meetings and a tutor system encourages students to express their views and opinions. Students do not think that all committees are as effective as they could be.

The new boarding house is decorated and furnished to a very high standard. It has well-serviced communal areas and kitchen facilities where students are able to prepare snacks and drinks. There are well-advanced plans to improve accommodation elsewhere. While there is a variation in the layout and style of the boarding houses, all are pleasantly furnished and decorated to a satisfactory standard throughout. All boarding houses are maintained to a good level of cleanliness and provide suitable facilities for study. Students personalise those areas which they regard as their own and there is good provision to store personal possessions.

A range of well staffed activities outside of the school day provides students with a choice as to what they want to do in their leisure time. The school has coped extremely well in staffing boarding houses when gaps in staffing have arisen. The school has continued to meet the national minimum standards in these more challenging circumstances.

National Minimum Standards (NMS) to be met to improve social care  
The school meets all key national minimum standards.

This is the grade for the boarding provision

The effectiveness of the boarding provision	2
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### Views of parents and carers

Almost all parents and carers indicate that they are happy with the fact the school keeps them informed about their child's progress. The vast majority of parents and carers are also happy with the way the school helps their child have a healthy lifestyle. Most parents and carers responded positively to all the other statements in the questionnaire, except that a small minority disagreed with the statement concerning how effectively the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors found that poor behaviour was rare and was almost exclusively associated with weaker teaching. Partly for this reason, inspectors have included the eradication of weaker teaching as an issue in the 'What does the school need to do to improve further?' section of this report.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Old Swinford Hospital 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 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 67 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 634 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	39	58	19	28	6	9	2	3
The school keeps my child safe	30	45	30	45	6	9	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	30	45	34	51	1	1	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	32	48	31	46	2	3	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	36	54	25	37	3	4	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	23	54	37	55	5	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	31	46	34	51	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	33	49	27	40	7	10	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	37	27	40	7	10	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	37	28	42	8	12	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	32	48	29	43	5	7	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	38	57	20	30	7	10	1	1

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	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 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. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## 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.



21 May 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Old Swinford Hospital, Stourbridge DY8 1QX

I want to outline the main findings following the school's recent inspection. First, I would like to particularly thank the many students we interviewed for their comments which strongly influenced the conclusions we reached.

Old Swinford Hospital is a good school that ensures you achieve outstandingly well during your time at school. Attainment has been maintained at a high level for many years. There is far more to the school than a strong academic record. You are part of caring community and are very well prepared to succeed in the future. The school's superb curriculum makes a substantial contribution to your excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. You use your spare time very well when boarding.

We have asked the school to further improve by eliminating the weaker teaching and by ensuring the best practice in boarding becomes consistent across all the houses. We are also suggesting that the school should ensure you have more influence over decision-making related to your learning and well-being. With this in mind, we are suggesting that the work of various committees should be made more effective. For instance, by involving older students in their leadership and taking steps to ensure all students are made much more aware of the reasons why decisions are made. You can help improve your school by being willing to give your opinions about what helps you to learn and by making suggestions to improve boarding at the school.

I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Sheldrick  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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