

Inspection of Wheelers Lane Technology College

Wheelers Lane, Kings Heath, Birmingham, West Midlands B13 0SF

Inspection dates:	11 and 12 February 2025
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

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 September 2014. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

An overwhelming sense of community and mutual respect greets you as you arrive at this school. Relationships between pupils and staff are strong and supportive. Pupils appreciate their teachers and know that they want them to be successful in their learning.

Remembering key knowledge is a focus in every subject. As a result, pupils achieve exceptionally well. Pupils understand and follow the 'Wheeler's Way Personal Development promise', which includes developing character and resilience. They are safe and know who to talk to about any concerns they have.

There is a purposeful atmosphere around the school. Pupils can focus on their learning. On the rare occasions when there is low-level disruption, teachers act quickly and effectively to address it. During social times, pupils move around and mix in a calm and orderly manner. This is evident in pupils' exemplary behaviour, pride in their appearance and how they speak to visitors and staff.

The school places a powerful emphasis on pupils' personal development. The school celebrates and supports pupils' interests well. Pupils welcome many leadership opportunities including reading buddies and charity ambassadors. The majority of pupils take part in an extensive range of high-quality enrichment opportunities. Public speaking, rock climbing and science clubs enhance pupils' wider experiences.

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

There is exceptional leadership of this school. Leaders have designed a highly ambitious and rigorous curriculum for all pupils. The curriculum successfully encourages and enables pupils to achieve their academic potential. Positive relationships between staff and pupils help pupils to learn the most important skills and knowledge across the curriculum with great success. As a result, pupils demonstrate significant achievement in their learning.

The school has precisely identified the important things that pupils need to know to succeed. Teachers use activities at the start of lessons to help pupils recall and build on their learning. Pupils welcome this and say it helps them to remember the most important information. For example, pupils in Year 7 mathematics could use their knowledge about the area of a cylinder to confidently explain which method of working out would help them to calculate the area of a cone. Teachers routinely check pupils' understanding and then make effective adaptations to ensure that each pupil achieves their potential.

The school quickly identifies the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). 'Pupil profiles' outline their needs, and teachers use these effectively to support pupils and to adapt learning. The school identifies pupils who are not confident readers. Specialist teachers support these pupils to address weaknesses in phonics, grammar and comprehension. Pupils value reading. The school encourages pupils effectively to widen their reading through form time, inter-house competitions and author visits.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Pupils display excellent self-control and highly positive attitudes to learning. Staff and pupils share highly respectful relationships. This creates an open and encouraging culture where everyone is equally valued. School attendance is excellent, with robust systems in place to support absent pupils to catch up on their work quickly. The school communicates well with parents and carers about the importance of pupils being in school.

Personal development is a strength of this school. An extensive personal development curriculum promotes the development of pupils' character and interests exceptionally well. Pupils develop detailed understanding of healthy relationships and respect for the views of others. Pupils regularly discuss careers, university aspirations and apprenticeships. This prepares pupils extremely well for the next stages of their education and careers.

All leaders, including those responsible for governance, understand deeply how the school's local context impacts pupils' learning and attendance. The governing body holds the school to account well for all aspects of provision, including exemplary safeguarding and the quality of personal development. The school has implemented a comprehensive and well-thought-out professional development programme for staff, which benefits staff expertise. Ongoing encouragement, praise and openness to research are key to this. The school supports all staff with both their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

Unique reference number	103501
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10343749
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	673
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Alex Tracy
Headteacher	Scott Wheeldon
Website	www.wheelerslane.bham.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	23 and 24 September 2014

Information about this school

- The school has undergone significant changes since the last inspection. This includes the appointment of the current headteacher, who took post in September 2023, and changes to staff in senior, subject and pastoral leadership roles.
- The school uses three registered and two unregistered alternative providers that a small number of pupils attend part time, attending school on other days.
- 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 (early years and/or 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.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, French, geography and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspectors also looked at the curriculum, lessons and pupils' work in other subjects.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents. These included information about pupils' behaviour, attendance, the school's curriculum and improvement planning.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 observed informal times of the day as part of their evaluation of safeguarding and pupils' behaviour. Additionally, inspectors spoke to pupils to discuss their views about school life.
- Inspectors met with the chair of governors, headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers, support staff and pupils.
- Inspectors considered responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire and the free-text responses. They also took into consideration the online staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Stuart Clarkson, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Andrew Washbourne	His Majesty's Inspector
Jane Epton	Ofsted Inspector
Gwen Onyon	Ofsted Inspector

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