



Wolsey Hall School, UK

## Why online learning works for Wolsey Hall students

Wolsey Hall Oxford is a Cambridge International School – registered as online. Principal Lee Wilcock tells us more about its international homeschooling community.

Founded in 1894, Wolsey Hall has a long history as a provider of home study and homeschooling.

“Our mission is to provide educational opportunities to those who can’t, or who prefer not to, attend a traditional school,” explains Principal Lee Wilcock.

“The school was initially aimed at students with specific requirements, such as athletes, or the children of parents whose professions required them to move home frequently. Now students join us for all sorts of reasons; numbers increased substantially during the pandemic and Wolsey Hall now operates as a full-blown online school.”

The school is currently educating students in more than 120 countries and delivers programmes from Cambridge Primary and Cambridge Lower Secondary to Cambridge IGCSE™ and Cambridge International AS & A Level.

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### Choosing Cambridge

The school chose to register with Cambridge International after researching a range of curricula. Principal Wilcock says: “As a global education provider, we seek to provide high-quality, externally recognised courses, designed with an international element in mind. Cambridge was the obvious choice to partner with due to its wealth of experience, expertise and global perspective.

“With our roots in the UK, the Wolsey Hall Primary and Lower Secondary curricula enable us to blend the best of the UK national curriculum with Cambridge objectives to create a unique learning journey for our students.

“Students are then able to study a wide range of Cambridge IGCSE and Cambridge International AS & A Level courses. These lead to formal qualifications recognised by universities and employers around the world as a mark of quality.”

### Supporting students

Wolsey Hall delivers courses through its online learning platform, Canvas, together with a large team of UK-qualified teachers and staff who provide academic and pastoral support.

“We create our own online courses using the Cambridge curriculum,” says Principal Wilcock. “They are broken down into different modules consisting of topics, quizzes and assignments so that our students can study the course material in manageable chunks and at their own pace.

“Teaching is asynchronous, so students can access materials at any time depending on their location. It is a student-focused rather than a teacher-focused approach and parents support the learning experience – especially at Primary level.

“There is a three-way agreement between students, parents and teachers,” says Principal Wilcock. “At Cambridge Primary, parents are helped to teach their child using daily lesson plans for each topic. At Cambridge Secondary, the focus is on helping students to develop independent learning skills to prepare students for university and indeed for ‘life’.”



## Why online learning works for Wolsey Hall students continued

Students submit their assignments via the online learning platform and can also contact their tutor to ask questions using a built-in messaging service. Both students and parents are notified when tutors leave feedback on assignments, helping parents to observe their children's progress. If students experience any technical issues, the Help button on the platform's interface gives them easy access to IT support.

### Overcoming challenges

Principal Wilcock says the school has been supported by Cambridge International every step of the way, from guidance during the application process through to opportunities to participate in trials and initiatives.

The biggest challenge has been the creation of materials and learning resources geared to online learning. Principal Wilcock says: "This takes a considerable amount of time, especially when the curriculum or syllabus change. But as a Cambridge online school, we have had the Cambridge curriculum, specifications and resources to help us, as well as the School Support Hub and a dedicated online education support manager."

Another challenge has been creating a community of learners that replicates the experiences of students in face-to-face learning. "We need to help students feel like part of a wider group," says Principal Wilcock. "Wolsey Hall does this through competitions, community forums and extra-curricular activities, such as online clubs.

"Moving forward, we are focusing on developing new services to foster wellbeing and community to continually meet parents' expectations, as well as maintaining academic excellence. We are also working with a growing number of schools helping them to extend their course provision – particularly in subjects where it may be difficult to justify a full-time teacher."

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