

Wetherby High School

Hallfield Lane, Wetherby, West Yorkshire LS22 6JS

Inspection dates

20–21 September 2016

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Require improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of teaching between subjects and across year groups remains variable. On too many occasions, work set does not challenge pupils adequately and misconceptions are not always addressed.
- Leaders' monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is not linked closely enough to pupils' progress and outcomes over time.
- Pupils do not routinely use teachers' feedback well to improve the quality of their work as they are not clear on the actions that they could take to make good progress.
- Despite emerging strengths, pupils do not make consistently strong progress in a wide range of subjects. Their progress in lessons and across subjects, including mathematics, has been too variable.
- The improvements in leadership and overall provision have not yet resulted in the great majority of students making strong progress across all the subjects they study in the sixth form.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have robustly addressed weak teaching and brought in stronger accountability systems that are contributing to improving rates of progress.
- Leaders have set high expectations for pupils and staff and secured a collective focus on school improvement.
- Governors are committed to the academic and pastoral welfare of pupils at the school and provide support and challenge for school leaders in their efforts to secure further improvement.
- Pupils are safe, well behaved and develop as well-rounded individuals. Leaders demonstrate a thorough commitment to their overall welfare and wider personal and social development.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the progress of pupils across a diverse range of subjects, including mathematics, by
 - addressing the remaining inconsistencies in the quality of teaching
 - using planning to build on pupils' starting points by setting work that enables them to make good progress
 - ensuring that pupils use feedback to improve the quality of their work
 - paying closer attention to the quality of literacy across the curriculum in subjects other than English, including the provision of greater opportunities for extended writing.
- Strengthening leaders' systems to monitor the quality of teaching by linking this more closely to pupil's outcomes and progress.
- Improving the effectiveness of the 16–19 study programme by strengthening the quality of teaching so that students are further challenged to make strong progress.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders have introduced a significant cultural change of high expectation that is clearly recognised by pupils and staff. Leaders have introduced more robust systems and procedures which are beginning to contribute to improving rates of progress. This is most evident in subjects such as English, science and physical education. Progress in other subjects, for example humanities and modern foreign languages, has been more variable, while improvements in mathematics have been slow.
- Leaders have worked hard to eliminate weaker teaching through stronger support and challenge and effective recruitment of new staff. The effective use of professional development and good links with the local authority are improving leadership at department and whole-school level and have enhanced the rigour of governance. Teachers value their professional development, which is beginning to influence improvements in the quality of teaching. New accountability systems are more robust in holding staff to account.
- Leaders have introduced more rigorous systems to enhance the curriculum and monitor pupils' progress. These systems are not yet being implemented fully as staff do not always provide work that builds on pupils' starting points, enabling them to make better progress.
- Pupils benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum. Flexible learning opportunities enable many pupils to participate in artistic, musical and sporting activities beyond the classroom. These activities are enhancing pupils' social and cultural development.
- Leaders have developed a culture where pupils feel safe and teachers have a stronger understanding of their needs. Their key priority, 'to know our pupils well', is achieved through strategies such as the school's coaching initiative which enables teachers to develop a deeper awareness of pupils' needs. The school's learning for life programme provides more age-specific social and emotional guidance to promote pupils' wider well-being.
- The additional funding that leaders receive to support Year 7 catch-up and to support pupils eligible for the pupil premium is used judiciously to provide a range of support, from targeted interventions with teaching assistants to specific courses further up the school. There are signs that this is leading to improving rates of progress.
- Leaders have a comprehensive view of the school's performance and over the past two years have predicted pupils' outcomes accurately. However, their evaluation of the quality of teaching is overgenerous as the monitoring of teaching is not closely enough aligned with progress and outcomes.
- Pupils feel that leaders have promoted a more tolerant culture where diversity is celebrated and prejudice rare. A number of pupils said that this represented a significant cultural change that had occurred because of more rigorous procedures and heightened expectations over the past two years. The school curriculum in its widest sense enhances pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and prepares them well for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders in the sixth form have strengthened the 16–19 study programme with more formalised work experience and are monitoring students' progress more closely. However, their actions have not yet resulted in the majority of students making strong progress across all subjects.

Governance of the school

- Governors are committed to the further success of the school.
- Governors' committees provide a regular focus on pupils' progress and curriculum provision and they closely scrutinise the impact of additional funding, such as the pupil premium.
- The new chair and her team are assiduous in carrying out their duties, as is reflected in their high attendance records and continual self-review to check their effectiveness. Governors hold leaders to account for progress and have supported leaders in their more challenging actions to address underperformance over the past two years.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders take their responsibilities to keep pupils safe extremely seriously. They make strenuous checks on the suitability of adults working at the school and pursue any concerns about pupil welfare rigorously. The school curriculum actively promotes pupils' awareness of key safeguarding issues and staff training is up to date. Governors with specific safeguarding responsibilities work diligently with leaders to monitor safeguarding practices and maintain pupil welfare as a constant priority.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is variable, and this contributes to uneven rates of progress across subjects. On occasions, teachers do not pitch work correctly so that it provides sufficient challenge for pupils, particularly the most able, based on their starting points. In some cases, work in mathematics unnecessarily revises work undertaken in primary school. On other occasions, teachers move pupils on to additional tasks before knowledge, skills and understanding have been consolidated.
- Over the past two years leaders have introduced robust systems to challenge and support weaker teaching, and inadequate teaching has been addressed. External partnerships with the local authority and local schools are beginning to provide stronger guidance on curriculum planning that is contributing to improving progress in some subjects.
- Time in lessons is not always used to good effect. Teachers' lengthy explanations and introductions to tasks reduce time for pupils to complete tasks in lessons. Teachers are developing positive attitudes to learning and relationships are good, but pupils are not always able to apply their learning when directed to work independently or in groups.
- Teachers provide feedback in line with the school's policy, but pupils are not sufficiently clear on the actions they could take to make good progress. Errors can go uncorrected and inaccurate spelling of key vocabulary is not routinely corrected across the curriculum. Opportunities for extended writing in subjects are limited and poorly presented work too often goes unchallenged.
- Teachers have worked diligently to devise relevant and appropriate programmes of study, but these are not always implemented with sufficient attention to pupils' starting points and this can limit progress.
- In subjects where teachers use careful assessment of previous learning and thorough subject knowledge to plan well and probe pupils' understanding, pupils are thoroughly involved in their learning and make good progress. This is particularly evident in

English and also apparent in subjects such as science and physical education.

- Teachers set homework in line with the school's home learning policy. Pupils respond positively to extended homework tasks at key stage 3 but some key stage 4 pupils feel that extended homework tasks can distract them from their ongoing examination preparation and coursework.
- Targeted interventions have been used effectively in recent years to improve progress and attainment for disadvantaged pupils.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The school promotes courtesy and respect, and this is evident in classrooms and when pupils move through corridors, providing a climate conducive to learning.
- Coaching sessions are used to support one of the school's key goals: 'to know our children well'. Pupils believe that coaching sessions contribute to the harmonious atmosphere and positive relationships that now characterise the school.
- Pupils' emotional and social welfare is supported well by programmes such as 'learning for life', which complements the coaching programme with more age-specific guidance on how pupils can develop emotional resilience and self-awareness.
- Many pupils show positive approaches to learning, although they are not always equipped with the skills to take full advantage of tasks without close teacher direction.
- Pupils state that the school takes action to help them to stay safe in school and in the wider community. Pupils believe school is a safer environment with a more positive culture than it was two years ago, and prejudiced behaviour is not accepted.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Exclusion rates have fallen and the school's approach to restorative practice encourages pupils to take responsibility for their own actions.
- Pupils' behaviour in classrooms, on corridors and around the site is positive and they show consideration for one another. Incidents of low-level disruption are rare and only occur when teaching is less engaging.
- Levels of attendance are similar to those seen nationally. The proportion of pupils who are regularly absent from school has declined, although disadvantaged pupils remain more likely to be regularly absent than other pupils.
- Incidents of bullying are rare and there is little derogatory language. Pupils are confident that their teachers and coaches swiftly address any such incidents.

Outcomes for pupils

Require improvement

- Pupils enter the school with levels of attainment that are broadly in line with, but in some year groups significantly above, national averages. While leaders have taken actions that are leading to improving rates of progress, pupils do not make consistently strong progress across a wide range of subjects. In 2016, the strong progress that pupils made in English and science was offset by the slower progress they made in humanities and languages.

- Changes to staffing and improvements in teaching have contributed to some improvement in rates of progress in mathematics. However, the rate of improvement has been slow, with the school's own tracking information only showing an improvement in progress of two percentage points since 2014. The improved progress in school tracking information at key stage 3 is not reflected in the work in pupils' books.
- Leaders' actions to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are leading to improving rates of progress, although the picture is not yet consistent. In 2016, disadvantaged pupils made better progress than their peers in English in Year 11 and in science in Year 10. While their progress improved slowly in mathematics, differences in progress have not substantially diminished as disadvantaged pupils remain less likely to make consistently strong progress.
- The school's own tracking information points to improving levels of progress for current pupils, particularly at key stage 3. This was not reflected in the quality of work seen in pupils' books.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities made significantly weaker progress than their peers in 2014 and 2015. As a result of improving provision, their progress improved in 2016 but it remains slower than other pupils with the same starting points.
- The most able pupils made less progress than their peers nationally at key stage 4 in 2014 and 2015, while overall progress in 2016 is anticipated to be slightly below average. School tracking information points to improving progress and attainment for the most able pupils in key stage 3, although this was not always reflected in the work in books. The work provided for these pupils is not consistently challenging enough.
- Outcomes for students in the 16–19 provision are improving, but as yet students do not make strong progress across all aspects of their study programmes.
- The proportion of pupils progressing to further education, apprenticeship, employment or training is above average. Pupils are increasingly better prepared for the next stage of their education, although weaker progress in mathematics limits this for some pupils.

16 to 19 study programmes

Require improvement

- The leadership and management of the sixth form have improved the 16–19 study programme but not had sufficient impact on the quality of students' outcomes over time. While there are signs of some improvement, overall outcomes remain below average.
- Overall academic and vocational attainment has been below average for three years. Students are beginning to make improving progress, but variance remains between differing groups. Girls made slower progress than boys in 2014 and 2015, while most recent progress information shows that the improving progress of lower-ability students has not been matched by those of middle ability.
- Vocational outcomes were well below national in 2014 and 2015 but leaders believe stronger monitoring is leading to improving outcomes.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is improving and forecast information points to increased progress over time. Students are sometimes made to think hard through the provision of challenging subject material. However, at other times the

questions asked do not always challenge students and the choices given over the completion of homework does not compel all students to make progress.

- Recent changes to the 16–19 study programme mean that the school now meets requirements, in particular with stronger work experience provision. This is preparing students better for education, employment and self-employment. In 2016, over 90% of A-level students secured their choice of university or employment or training.
- Learners without GCSE grades A* to C in English and mathematics recorded well above national attainment towards achieving a grade C in 2016, with over three quarters of these learners achieving a C grade in mathematics.
- Careers advice and guidance is improving. Stronger links exist with local universities and employers and increasing proportions of students are progressing to higher education.
- Retention rates have improved since the last inspection and are now in line with national averages, reflecting the improving guidance that pupils receive when entering the sixth form.
- Students feel safe and stated that behaviour across the school and the overall school culture had improved substantially since the last inspection.
- The school met the government's interim minimum standards in 2015.

School details

Unique reference number	108088
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	10019725

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	682
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	115
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Cindy Bentley
Headteacher	Ms Lucie Lakin
Telephone number	01937 522 500
Website	http://www.wetherbyhigh.co.uk
Email address	info@wetherbyhigh.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	7–8 October 2014

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the publication date for its review of the school use of the pupil premium on its website.
- Wetherby High School is smaller than the average secondary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for extra support from pupil premium funding is below the national average.
- The school makes very limited use of alternative provision. Support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is available through access to the school's additional on-site provision.

- The school works in close partnership with Carr Manor Community School in Leeds, which provides it with leadership support and challenge.
- The executive headteacher took up post in June 2014 and the acting headteacher took up post in September 2014.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A minority come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who access support for special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations of pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors carried out observations of learning in 38 part-lessons, of which a number were jointly undertaken with senior leaders.
- Pupils' behaviour was observed during lessons, lunchtimes and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors examined the quality of work in books, in folders and in displays around the school.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, headteacher, senior leaders and middle leaders. Inspectors also talked to a wider group of staff. The lead inspector met the chair of the governing body and two other governors, and two representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors met groups of pupils in key stage 3, key stage 4 and in the sixth form. They also talked less formally to pupils in lessons and around the school site about aspects of their learning.
- Inspectors looked at the school's work and considered documents including the school's own evaluation of its work, the school improvement plan, curriculum plans and information relating to pupil achievement and safeguarding.
- Inspectors took into account 45 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View survey, 72 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and the pupils' surveys.

Inspection team

Malcolm Kirtley, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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