

Wetherby High School

Hallfield Lane, Wetherby, West Yorkshire LS22 6JS

Inspection dates

16–17 January 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher's strong and focused leadership, supported by the executive headteacher, has ensured that Wetherby High School now provides a good education for its pupils.
- Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas that still need development. They challenge and support leaders effectively.
- Since the last inspection, leaders have driven improvement relentlessly. Their determination and the positive ethos they have created is helping to promote further improvement.
- Pupils are keen to improve their work. Behaviour in and around the school is outstanding. Pupils are courteous, friendly and routinely regulate their own behaviour. Pupils have very high expectations of each other's behaviour.
- Pupils of all abilities have opportunities to develop their personal and social skills through a wide range of extra-curricular activities. This is underpinned by the school's approach to mixed-age 'coaching' groups.
- Students make good progress across a range of vocational and academic subjects in the sixth form. Leaders and teachers ensure that students are well supported.
- Overall, teaching is good, although there is some variation in quality, particularly in key stage 3.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and are enthusiastic. They know their pupils very well and plan lessons to meet the needs of most pupils. However, lessons do not consistently provide enough challenge for the most able, and this hinders the progress they make.
- The progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils have improved significantly as a result of effective deployment of additional resources and direct teacher interventions. Leaders carefully track pupils' progress and put in a range of strategies to address any underperformance.
- The school is very well supported by the local authority and held in high regard by parents and carers.
- Pupils say they are safe and secure in the school. Arrangements to safeguard and protect them from harm are effective.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Sustain and build on the increasingly effective impact of school leaders and governors in improving the school's overall effectiveness so that the quality of education provided and pupils' outcomes are outstanding by:
 - embedding and sharing across the school strategies which have proved successful in raising academic standards and increasing pupils' progress
 - ensuring that teachers set challenging work that enables the most able pupils to make outstanding progress across the curriculum and builds on what they already know, understand and can do
 - ensuring that any variability in the quality of teaching, especially in key stage 3, is addressed.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher is determined that all pupils should strive and excel. She has set out a clear vision to transform the school and build a strong learning community that is committed to improving the life chances of pupils. She has galvanised leaders and teachers. Working together, they are improving the school rapidly.
- Leaders identify the school's strengths accurately. They know which aspects of the school need to improve most urgently and are taking considered steps to tackle them. As a result, improvement plans are precise and reflect leaders' priorities for the development of the curriculum, the quality of teaching and increasing pupil numbers. The monitoring of the impact of these plans is rigorous and is shared between leaders and governors.
- Senior leaders have introduced new approaches that are improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. They monitor the quality of teaching closely and act quickly to improve it where required. Teachers have access to high-quality training opportunities and support that in turn then have a positive impact on pupils' progress.
- There has been a significant turnover of staff since the previous inspection. Leaders have put a considerable effort in to ensuring that they recruit high-quality staff. Newly appointed staff to the school say that the quality of their induction and professional development is of a very high standard and has enabled them to establish themselves as successful teachers at the school without delay.
- Throughout the school, staff are hard-working and committed to ensuring that pupils thrive, feel safe and achieve well. Pupils and staff are proud of improvements at the school. The learning environment is well kept and provides a secure and stimulating place for pupils to learn and develop.
- All staff who responded to Ofsted's online survey are proud to work at the school. They feel well supported by leaders. Consequently, staff morale is high.
- Leaders and governors are rightly proud of the varied and motivating curriculum on offer to the pupils in the school. Pupils study academic courses, but also have a wide choice of arts, technology and vocational subjects. Leaders have reviewed the subject choices on offer and made sure that these are right for the pupils in the school. There is something for every pupil.
- A wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities are on offer and attended well by pupils. In some cases, activities are led by sixth-form students. This enables them to develop their leadership skills. Pupils are impressed by the personal approach shown by teachers and adults across the school in sharing their own hobbies and interests and allowing pupils to experience these, for example astronomy and golf.
- The culture and ethos of the school is very supportive to pupils and staff alike. The school's impressive coaching model and personal development curriculum is highly regarded by pupils and families and supports the school in being a strong and caring community where pupils accept each other's differences and celebrate diversity.

- Leaders make effective use of the pupil premium funding. They identify barriers faced by disadvantaged pupils and have the same high expectations of them as of other pupils. These pupils make the same good progress as others in the school.
- Additional funding for pupils who need to catch up with their literacy and numeracy is used effectively so that these pupils quickly improve their reading and number skills.
- Subject leaders make a strong contribution to the development of teaching and pupils' learning. Subject leaders are provided with strong professional development and are skilled in evaluating performance and guiding staff. However, there are some examples of inconsistency where leaders are relatively new to their roles, and pupils experience variable learning opportunities as a result.
- Excellent support and guidance have been provided by the executive headteacher, one day a week, who has provided a clear and well-communicated school improvement agenda.

Governance of the school

- Governance is a strength of the school. Members of the governing body possess an impressive understanding of the school's strengths and what needs to improve.
- Governors provide focused challenge to school leaders about the impact of their work. Governors monitor pupils' achievements carefully and precisely to ensure that they are sufficiently strong. Governors hold senior leaders to account effectively for the impact of their work on pupils' outcomes, attendance and behaviour. Governors share leaders' high aspirations for the school.
- Governors are regularly informed about the work of leaders and other staff to keep pupils safe. They have a good understanding of the potential risks for pupils, and deploy those governors with specialist expertise to check on the school's safeguarding policies.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils' safety and welfare are paramount in this school. The inclusive and caring ethos ensures that staff are vigilant and knowledgeable about pupils and the risks they may be vulnerable to.
- Leaders' systems for vetting staff suitability to work in a school are rigorous, and all visitors are subject to appropriate checks.
- Policies and procedures are in line with the latest national guidance and are up to date.
- Partnerships with outside agencies work well in ensuring that pupils, and particularly vulnerable pupils, receive appropriate support when they need it.
- Pupils feel, and are, safe in the school. They know who to turn to if they are worried about themselves or their friends. They learn about managing risk and keeping themselves safe, including how to use the internet and social media responsibly.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Staff create a very positive atmosphere for learning through their passion for their subjects and the caring relationships they share with their pupils.
- Leaders accurately monitor the quality of teaching across the curriculum and provide effective support and targeted training when required. Teaching overall is now good, although there is still some variability in the quality of teaching at key stage 3. As a result of leaders' actions and improved teaching, pupils' outcomes in 2018 improved, including for disadvantaged pupils.
- In English, teachers use their subject knowledge well to plan lessons that the pupils enjoy. Teachers develop skilfully pupils' understanding of key concepts. As a result, pupils make good progress. Work in English books is extensive and presented well.
- Teachers' well-developed questioning means that misconceptions in lessons are addressed and pupils learn from their mistakes. As a result, pupils develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in a wide range of subjects. For example, in a Year 8 mathematics lesson, the teacher challenged pupils to justify their answers with learning that was linked to the assessment criteria. This enabled a pupil to model answers that provided a positive learning experience for all pupils.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported well both in and out of lessons. Staff understand the individual needs of these pupils, and as a result they make the same good progress as their peers.
- Pupils have positive attitudes towards the completion of homework. They told inspectors that they particularly enjoy completing homework through the extended learning and flexible learning opportunities as well as completing pre-learning tasks each half term.
- Reading is promoted well, and every pupil is provided with a reading list with interesting and challenging texts suited to their abilities. Pupils' reading skills are assessed and results are used to help pupils whose progress is weaker to improve.
- A small amount of teaching does not reflect high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. As a result, the most able pupils sometimes make less progress than they are capable of because they are not challenged effectively.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. During arrivals at school, departures at the end of the day, travelling around school and during breaks and lunchtimes, pupils behave very safely.
- The pastoral support provided by the school is a clear strength. Leaders have created a truly inclusive school where every pupil is valued and cared for. Pupils and staff are unanimous in their praise for the help, support and guidance they receive when they need it. Parents agree that the school is a safe place for their children.

- Pupils say that bullying is extremely rare. They have every confidence that when it does occur, it is dealt with swiftly and effectively by staff. Leaders have introduced restorative practice and trained pupils to undertake aspects of restorative practice with their peers. This is now well established and valued by pupils and staff. It allows pupils to resolve issues quickly as well as provide opportunities for them to take on leadership roles in the school.
- Leaders regularly seek pupils' views about school life. This information is then used to further develop what the school does to support its pupils. As a result, pupils say that they feel listened to and that their points of view matter.
- Staff ensure that all security checks on staff working at alternative providers have been carried out and they also visit regularly to check on pupils' progress. As a result, the pupils at alternative provision are safe, they learn well and their attendance improves.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils behave extremely well in classrooms and when moving around the school. They are committed to their learning and want to do their very best. They work well together and show the highest level of respect towards each other and towards members of staff.
- Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils are clear about what these are, and staff consistently apply the school's behaviour policy. As a result, the number of pupils being excluded for a fixed period of time is, and has been over time, well below the national average. Sanctions are very rare, and when they are used, they do change and influence pupils' behaviour to be positive.
- Pupils are immensely proud of their school. When a pupil is absent, leaders have robust and clear procedures in place to check on them and to ensure that they attend as soon as possible. As a result, attendance is improving.
- Breaks and lunchtimes are calm and sociable occasions. Adults provide positive role models for pupils, which helps them to develop positive social skills.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In 2018, pupils' attainment in key measures improved and was broadly in line with the national average. Pupils' progress also improved. Current pupils make good progress across a range of subjects. This is because they experience appropriate levels of challenge from teachers. However, sometimes teachers do not provide the extra challenge to stretch the most able pupils; in these instances, pupils' learning is not as effective.
- Leaders ensure that all staff focus on improving disadvantaged pupils' progress. As a result, disadvantaged pupils' progress is improving so that they are overtaking other pupils nationally from similar starting points, particularly in English, mathematics and humanities.

- Pupils with SEND make good progress from their starting points. This is the result of effective support from teachers and teaching assistants, who understand the needs of their pupils and adapt tasks so that they can participate fully in lessons.
- Pupils follow an appropriate curriculum at both key stage 3 and key stage 4, which is designed to prepare them well for their next steps in education or training. A greater number of pupils now take courses leading to the English baccalaureate, in which they achieve well. The school provides very good impartial careers advice and guidance that ensures that pupils receive high-quality information. As a result, the number of pupils who leave the school and go on to further education, employment or apprenticeships is high.
- Pupils who attend an alternative education provision for part of the school week make good progress on their courses. Leaders ensure that the alternative provision is reviewed regularly to ensure that it meets pupils' needs.
- The standard of literacy is good. Generally, pupils' basic spelling, punctuation and grammar are accurate, and they can express themselves well.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Since the previous inspection, leaders have addressed the culture and ethos of the sixth form. They have taken an ethical approach to its student body to ensure that the correct students are on the most appropriate courses.
- Strong working relationships exist between students and staff. Students are confident to seek advice from staff when they face personal difficulties and challenges. Whole-school safeguarding procedures ensure that students in the sixth form are kept safe and feel safe. Students speak warmly about the quality of relationships with staff and with their fellow students in the sixth form. Consequently, there is a strong culture of care and mutual respect.
- Students' progress was above the national average in 2018. Assessment information and work in students' books and folders show that current students make good progress across a range of subjects, including biology, chemistry, physics and mathematics.
- Students who resit their GCSEs in English and mathematics make good progress on resit courses and are successful in improving their grades.
- Teaching and assessment in the sixth form are now good, with lessons providing challenge to all learners. Students speak positively about the individual support they receive and how it contributes to building their knowledge and understanding.
- Teaching is characterised by positive relationships between students and adults and a strong focus on learning. Teachers are increasingly effective at spotting exactly what individual students understand and can do, and plan for their next steps accordingly.
- The school's work to ensure that students have the opportunity for work-based learning is highly effective. Students apply and are interviewed by the school and employers so that they get the most appropriate placement. All students benefit from work experience placements. Students are well prepared for these placements and receive feedback after their work experience.

- Students are very proud of their sixth form. They are a credit to the school. They have high aspirations and are good role models for younger pupils.

School details

Unique reference number	108088
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	10059038

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
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	620
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	72
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Cindy Bentley
Headteacher	Ms Lucie Lakin
Telephone number	01937 522500
Website	www.wetherbyhigh.co.uk
Email address	info@wetherbyhigh.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	20–21 September 2016

Information about this school

- Wetherby High School is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is below the national average.
- The school uses alternative provision at the Music and Arts Provision (MAP) and at Aspire and Achieve.
- The school works in close partnership with Carr Manor Community School in Leeds which provides support with school leadership.

- The school is currently in consultation to disband the Education Trust for Wetherby (foundation status).

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 36 lessons across a broad range of subjects. These included lessons observed jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors also carried out a scrutiny of some pupils' work.
- Inspectors held discussions with four groups of pupils and with many other pupils informally around the school. Inspectors listened to a number of pupils read.
- Meetings were held with staff, including senior and middle leaders, teachers and newly qualified teachers. A meeting was also held with four members of the governing body. A meeting was held with the school's local authority improvement adviser. Inspectors also met with a number of parents.
- Inspectors took account of the 92 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 48 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors looked at the school's website and a range of documentation provided by the school. This included information on pupils' achievement, attendance and behaviour; school policies; the school's self-evaluation of its work; school improvement plans and information about safeguarding.
- Inspectors looked at behaviour records and reviewed safeguarding documentation and how this related to daily practice, as well as speaking with staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Tudor Griffiths, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Fiona Dixon	Ofsted Inspector
Kate Lounds	Ofsted Inspector
Garry Stout	Ofsted Inspector

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