

Inspection of a good school: Wetherby High School

Hallfield Lane, Wetherby, West Yorkshire LS22 6JS

Inspection dates:

20 and 21 February 2024

Outcome

Wetherby High School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This school places pupils at the centre of all its work. Adults care about pupils. They understand pupils' needs exceptionally well. As a result, pupils enjoy attending this happy and vibrant school. Pupils know that adults value their opinions. Consequently, pupils value their education.

The school is relentless in its pursuit to build meaningful relationships. During coaching time three times a week, all adults meet with a small group of mixed-age pupils. Pupils are connected to the school, a school that knows them very well. Coaching also provides pupils with an opportunity to discuss how their week is going. The group also discusses important matters, such as how to keep safe online. As a result, pupils know not to share passwords, and to be careful how to manage their online safety.

The school has high expectations for all pupils. Many pupils meet these high academic expectations. The school supports the most disadvantaged pupils to improve their achievement. Adults model how to be an exceptional member of the school community. Pupils are polite and courteous and contribute to the caring ethos of the school. Pupils' behaviour is impressive. They take responsibility for their own learning and support peers with theirs. Pupils are swift to engage with learning.

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

Pupils benefit from high-quality learning experiences. The school has introduced the 'learning line' to help create a consistent format to lessons. This includes opportunities for pupils to review and apply their learning. Pupils frequently revisit prior learning. They can effectively create links to new learning. For example, in science, pupils explain how their learning about ionic bonding helps them with the new learning of electrolysis.

Teachers' processes for checking what pupils have remembered are highly effective. In all lessons, pupils contribute their ideas using mini whiteboards. Teachers quickly address

any misconceptions. This means that pupils keep up with the high pace of lessons and remember essential knowledge.

Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access the same ambitious curriculum. 'Pupil passports' identify any additional support they require. This ensures that pupils with SEND are very effectively supported in their learning. As a result, they achieve well.

The school provides opportunities for pupils to read regularly. In lessons, teachers select reading materials carefully to provide challenge and develop pupils' understanding. Whole-class and paired reading opportunities support pupils to access challenging texts. The school prioritises the development of a love of reading. Pupils read for pleasure in English lessons and read a range of engaging texts. As a result, pupils enjoy reading.

The school is determined to provide pupils with a memorable education that extends beyond the academic. Pupils engage in a vast array of activities every lunchtime. These include film club, computer club, trampolining and dodgeball. The school places the highest value on providing enrichment activities during 'endeavour' time. It has engaged with pupils to find out what they would like to access during this weekly session. All pupils access this session and excitedly talk about activities that they can take part in, such as fencing, cooking, Dungeons and Dragons and pottery. The positive culture of the school is further underpinned by the vibrant house system. This creates friendly competition among the school community. Pupils describe their house as an extended family.

The school is relentless in its pursuit to secure high attendance for all pupils. However, for some pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND, this is not the case. Their persistent absence remains too high. This means that these pupils miss out on the rich experiences in school. As a result, some of those pupils who receive the pupil premium do not make the same progress as their peers.

Leaders, governors and staff passionately embody the school's vision to create an inclusive environment that values everyone. This is evident in the impressive culture alive in the school, a culture that puts pupils at the centre of all it does. Governors support the school to ensure that the culture is sustained. Leaders carefully consider staff workload and well-being. As a result, staff are proud to work in the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils, particularly those in receipt of pupil premium funding, have persistently high levels of absence. These pupils miss out on the many positive opportunities in school. They do not make the progress that their peers make. Leaders should continue

to ensure that they work with pupils, parents and external agencies to help improve the attendance for these groups.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2019.

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 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

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| Unique reference number | 108088 |
| Local authority | Leeds |
| Inspection number | 10297243 |
| Type of school | Secondary comprehensive |
| School category | Foundation |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 730 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Cindy Bentley |
| Headteacher | Samantha Jefferson |
| Website | www.wetherbyhigh.co.uk |
| Dates of previous inspection | 16 and 17 January 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- The school uses four alternative provisions, two are unregistered.
- The school works closely with Carr Manor Community School.
- 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

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement 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: art and design, English and science. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a

sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The lead inspector met with the members of the governing body, including the chair.
- The lead inspector spoke with the school improvement adviser.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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 considered the views of parents through the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments.
- Inspectors considered the views of pupils through their responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils and through meetings held with pupils across the two days of the inspection.
- Inspectors gathered the views of staff through meetings and through their responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.

Inspection team

Andrew Gibbins, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Katie Spurr

His Majesty's Inspector

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