

Inspection of a good school: Woodrush High School

Shawhurst Lane, Wythall, Worcestershire B47 5JW

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 April 2024

Outcome

Woodrush High School continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is John Barber. This school is a single academy trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running it. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Professor Stuart Brand.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school where pupils live out leaders' expectations of being Woodrush Ready: be prepared, be productive, be respectful, and be reflective. This means the school is a harmonious community where difference is celebrated, and pupils behave considerately to each other and to visitors. The school takes pride in its role in the local community, and pupils take a lead in promoting this.

Pupils respond well to the school's expectations of them academically. They that adults at Woodrush High go the extra mile for them, both in their studies and the many extra-curricular opportunities that are organised for them. These include a wide range of trips and visits, which are planned within the curriculum. There are also a number of sporting opportunities including partnerships with local clubs.

Typically, pupils focus in lessons and aim to do their best. Pupils understand the school's expectations of them and aim to meet them. They know that the school will listen to them and support them in a range of ways. Pupils speak highly of this, and are proud of their school.

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

The school has put in place an ambitious curriculum for all pupils, with the English Baccalaureate suite of qualifications at its core. Leaders have extensively reviewed what pupils will learn and the order in which this will happen across all subjects. For the vast majority, this means the curriculum clearly sets out the key knowledge that pupils need to learn and remember. Assessment supports teachers to identify where there are gaps in pupil understanding, and appropriate adaptations follow to ensure these gaps are closed. However, there are occasions when assessment is not used effectively to check that pupils have understood key learning. On these occasions, misconceptions persist, or

opportunities are missed to move pupils on to more challenging tasks. The school has worked very effectively to increase pupil numbers in its sixth form. The curriculum offer for post-16 is now broad and of high quality, with a significant number of enrichment opportunities. The school has a strategy in place to support weaker readers and to promote a wider love of reading. This strategy is yet to be fully embedded. Leaders are not regularly checking the impact of their work to support pupils who are struggling to read to help them become fluent readers.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have their needs accurately identified. Appropriate adaptations are made for learning in class or with personalised support. As a result, these pupils achieve well.

The school has effective systems in place to track attendance, and puts support in place when there are concerns. These actions have had a positive impact and, as a result, overall attendance is above national levels. That said, attendance is lower for some more vulnerable pupils, and these pupils miss too much school.

The wider curricular provision is extensive and strategically planned. Leaders take care to track uptake on trips and wider opportunities to ensure that all pupils benefit from their offer. Leaders review the provision to ensure it remains of high quality, including the work to enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils receive regular information about careers and future destinations throughout their time at the school. Pupils in Year 10 and Year 12 have work experience placements, and the school ensures that pupils who are disadvantaged have appropriate support to achieve this. The school has well-developed links to a wide variety of post-16 and post-18 destinations.

The school has successfully clarified expectations around pupils' conduct, with 'Woodrush Ready' being clearly embedded through regular reviews in form time. This means pupils understand how the school expects them to behave, and pupils are polite, respectful and courteous. Pupils know the school will take effective and fair action should they need support to meet leaders' expectations. Pupils appreciate the leadership positions which exist in the school, and that their voices are heard by leaders.

The headteacher and governors have worked extensively to ensure that leaders at all levels are supported in their roles, and can make decisions that are in the pupils' interest with appropriate autonomy. Engagement with staff at all levels drives key decisions, and staff report that they appreciate developments that leaders have put in place to manage workload and support them in their roles. Governors are highly supportive of the school and hold leaders to account effectively. They ensure that they secure external validation of the school's work to build further improvements.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Assessment is not always used precisely enough. This means that, on occasions, teachers miss opportunities to identify when pupils have not understood key learning, or when pupils could be moved to more challenging work. The school should ensure that all teachers are skilled in using assessment effectively to identify and promptly address any misconceptions, or to ensure that pupils have the knowledge to move to more challenging work.
- Although current overall school attendance is above national levels, absence rates for more vulnerable pupils are higher. This means some of these pupils miss too much school and learning. The school needs to continue to work closely with parents and external agencies to instil the importance of regular attendance for these more vulnerable pupils.
- The school has work in place to support pupils in the earlier stages of reading. However, this is not yet fully embedded. This means that some pupils who struggle with their reading, especially in phonics, have challenges in fully accessing the curriculum. The school must ensure that it accelerates its programme of support for pupils who struggle with reading and regularly measures its impact. In this way, these pupils can access the whole curriculum effectively.

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 December 2018.

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	136924
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10322826
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,008
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	100
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Professor Stuart Brand
Headteacher	John Barber
Website	www.woodrushhigh.worcs.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	11 and 12 December 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a single academy trust.
- The school uses four registered alternative providers.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this ungraded inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- The inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- 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.
- As a part of this inspection, the inspectors met with members of the chair of the trust, other governors, senior leaders, subject leaders, teaching staff as well as other employees in the school. An inspector also looked at copies of minutes from governor meetings.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in: mathematics, art and modern foreign languages. They also looked at examples of pupils' work in other subjects. For each deep dive, the 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 inspectors reviewed the school's extra-curricular activities, enrichment programme and their careers and personal development programmes with leaders and pupils.
- The inspectors reviewed the school's behaviour and attendance records with school leaders.
- The inspectors met with members of staff and spoke to pupils, both formally and informally, at various points in the inspection. They took account of responses to a staff survey, Ofsted Parent View and the free-text responses.

Inspection team

Andrew Madden, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Julie Griffiths

Ofsted Inspector

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