

Inspection of a good school: William Brookes School

Farley Road, Much Wenlock, Shropshire TF13 6NB

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 February 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. Inspectors are recommending the next inspection to be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders at William Brookes School encourage 'excellence, friendship, respect, hard work and kindness'. Pupils understand these expectations and most follow them each day.

Leaders have developed a broad and ambitious curriculum. Pupils study a range of subjects, including creative and performance subjects. Despite this ambitious curriculum, some pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Current learning is now more clearly planned and sequenced. However, some teachers do not check if pupils remember and understand the most important knowledge effectively.

Recent changes to routines have raised teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour. These changes are beginning to have a positive impact on some pupils' behaviour. However, some staff still do not address and deal with pupils' poor behaviour consistently. As a result, poor behaviour continues to disrupt some lessons. This is generally because a number of pupils truant from their lessons or arrive late. Some pupils are often removed from lessons and/or suspended from school. Consequently, they miss too much learning time.

Leaders support pupils' wider development well. Pupils learn about their health and well-being. Pupils take part in a range of extra-curricular activities, including sports. As the sole Coubertin school in Great Britain, these activities promote the Olympic values of 'excellence, respect and friendship'.

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

The new headteacher and senior leaders have raised learning and behaviour expectations across the school. However, these expectations have not been fully realised in the curriculum or in the behaviour of some pupils.

Leaders have designed a curriculum that aims to give pupils a broad and ambitious education. They have identified the important things that pupils need to know in order to succeed. In some subjects, teachers present key knowledge precisely. This helps pupils to learn and remember it. For example, in mathematics, pupils have successfully developed their understanding of trigonometry. They can explain how this knowledge has developed over time. However, some teachers do not present important knowledge clearly enough. When this happens pupils do not understand what they should know and remember certain information.

Teachers use 'do it now' tasks at the start of lessons to assess what pupils know. However, teachers do not use the tasks in the same way. Some pupils do not understand or complete the tasks fully. Teachers do not consistently pick up on this. This means they do not identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding well enough. This makes it hard for pupils to build on their prior learning successfully.

Pupils' absence from school and lessons has improved. However, there are still too many pupils who miss school unnecessarily or who choose to not attend lessons. This means that they miss out on too much learning. Additionally, some pupils do not behave well enough during lessons or unstructured times. They disrupt the learning of others. Leaders have recently introduced a new behaviour policy. However, some staff do not follow the behaviour policy and so pupils continue to misbehave.

New leaders are better at identifying pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). 'Pupil passport' information is personal to every pupil. The information sets out the support pupils need effectively. Teachers use this shared information well in lessons. Leaders have begun to use a range of strategies to support pupils with SEND who are not confident readers. This is being developed to support all pupils who find reading difficult.

Leaders have carefully planned careers advice and guidance. Pupils appreciate the range of external speakers and events to promote career pathways. Pupils are well informed about their next steps in education or employment. Sixth-form students support younger pupils as reading mentors, supervising at lunchtimes and as house leaders.

The trust has invested time and resources to develop leadership across the school. This has helped leaders to develop the skills and knowledge needed to further improve the school. Trustees and governors provide challenge and support to leaders. However, recent changes to learning and behaviour expectations are not clearly understood by some staff or within the community. This leads to misunderstanding and inconsistency for staff, pupils and parents.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Experienced and well-qualified safeguarding leaders have extensive knowledge of the wider risks that pupils face in the community. They make sure that all staff know how to

spot indicators of harm. Staff record their concerns. Leaders act on these concerns quickly. Leaders meet regularly and ensure a wide range of information provides early support for pupils and their families. Leaders make appropriate referrals to children's services and follow these up to make sure that pupils get the help they need.

Pupils say they know who to talk to and how they can report any concerns they have. Leaders teach pupils how to keep themselves safe, including online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils miss too much school. Other pupils attend school but choose not to attend lessons. This holds back their progress and achievement. Leaders must work closely with parents and external agencies to secure more regular attendance for all pupils.
- Some staff do not deal with poor behaviour effectively. This means that there is disruption to learning and some poor behaviour during social times. Leaders must continue to raise expectations for behaviour throughout the school community and ensure that all staff deal effectively with poor behaviour in line with the school's policy.
- Some teachers do not use assessment strategies well enough to check what pupils know and remember. As a result, in some subjects, pupils have gaps in their knowledge. Leaders should ensure that all teachers use assessment strategies consistently to check on what pupils know and can do.
- Some teachers do not present key knowledge clearly enough. As a result, pupils do not understand or retain the knowledge. Leaders should ensure that all teachers present important information and knowledge clearly so that pupils understand and remember it.
- Leaders, including those responsible for governance, have not fully engaged with the community, or staff, when bringing about updated policies and raising expectations. This means that stakeholders do not understand what the expectations are and why they are enforced. Some staff are unsure of what is expected from them. Leaders should ensure that clear communications are sent out regularly with opportunities to discuss concerns and perceptions with parents, pupils and staff.

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 October 2017.

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](#)' 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.

School details

Unique reference number	139769
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	10241839
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	935
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	99
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Gary Turner
Headteacher	Stephen Richards
Website	http://williambrookes.com/
Date of previous inspection	17 and 18 October 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher was appointed in January 2022.
- The school is one of six academies in The 3–18 Education Trust
- The academy makes use of three 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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors focused on the following deep dives: English, mathematics, modern foreign languages and art. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- They also looked at other subjects to check the curriculum and how those subjects are taught.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents. These included information about behaviour, attendance, the school's curriculum and improvement planning. The school's website was also checked.
- Inspectors talked to staff and leaders about safeguarding arrangements. They examined how leaders make employment checks on staff and scrutinised further safeguarding records. They also asked how incidents reported by pupils are recorded and analysed.
- Inspectors observed informal times of the day to evaluate safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors held meetings with trustees, directors, the principal, senior leaders, subject leaders, pastoral leaders, teachers, including early careers teachers, and pupils. They also talked informally to pupils and staff to gather information about school life.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, and the free-text comments. Inspectors also considered Ofsted's staff survey and pupil questionnaires.

Inspection team

Stuart Clarkson, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Andrew Madden

His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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