

# William Brookes School

Farley Road, Much Wenlock, Shropshire TF13 6NB

## Inspection dates

7–8 February 2017

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an inadequate school

- Safeguarding is ineffective. Leaders and governors have not ensured that the school's safeguarding policies and procedures are followed consistently. They do not have a good enough knowledge or understanding of safeguarding.
- Leaders have not ensured that all staff understand their role to safeguard pupils.
- Some staff do not have the secure knowledge in safeguarding needed to enable them to identify issues effectively. New staff are not given good enough safeguarding training as part of their induction. Leaders do not have a clear overview of who has, and who has not, been trained.
- The systems for reporting safeguarding concerns are not clearly understood by all staff. Leaders do not keep detailed, accurate, accessible or securely stored records when concerns are raised.
- The school's own policies on making checks on new staff are not consistently followed.
- Leaders do not monitor pupils' attendance or behaviour effectively so that patterns can be identified and action taken as needed. Attendance in the sixth form is also too low, although it is improving.
- Pupils' behaviour requires improvement because a minority of pupils disrupt the learning of others in lessons.
- The sixth form is inadequate because safeguarding is ineffective. Students in the sixth form do not have a strong enough knowledge of a range of risks they may encounter.
- The school's work to support pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate because school leaders have not ensured that safeguarding is effective.

### The school has the following strengths

- Teaching and the systems for monitoring pupils' progress across all year groups are effective.
- Pupils make good progress in their studies because teaching has improved since the last inspection.

## Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- As a matter of urgency, improve safeguarding by ensuring that:
  - all staff, including non-teachers, understand that they have an important role in promoting the safeguarding of pupils
  - staff closely follow all policies and procedures for safeguarding
  - leaders responsible for safeguarding have a full overview of all elements of safeguarding in the school
  - leaders keep records of safeguarding concerns and cases in a secure, well organised, accurate and detailed way
  - all staff understand the systems for reporting concerns and that these systems enable effective communication to take place between staff, leaders, pupils, families and outside agencies
  - leaders review records of safeguarding training so that they can be sure that all staff are appropriately trained
  - leaders address immediately any gaps in staff training or knowledge that exist
  - students in the sixth form gain a stronger knowledge of the range of risks they face.
- Improve attendance and the monitoring of attendance, by:
  - regularly checking on the attendance of groups of pupils so that leaders identify patterns in absence and can address them immediately
  - using up-to-date national comparisons for absence and persistent absence
  - improving the attendance of students in the sixth form.
- Reduce the instances of low-level disruption in lessons, by:
  - ensuring that all teachers use the school's discipline policy consistently
  - identifying where behaviour issues are prevalent in particular subjects or for groups of pupils

An external review of governance, with a specific focus on safeguarding, should be undertaken to establish how this area of leadership and management can be strengthened.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Inadequate

- Safeguarding is ineffective. Leaders and staff do not understand well enough how to keep pupils safe and there are weaknesses in the systems and processes for safeguarding.
- Leaders do not analyse information about pupils' attendance well. They do not know enough about trends in attendance or about particular groups whose attendance is low or declining. As a result, they are not able to take effective action to improve attendance.
- Although leaders collect information about behaviour incidents and track some groups' behaviour, they do not fully analyse it by group or subject. They therefore cannot use this information effectively to inform their strategies for improving behaviour.
- The school provides a variety of extra-curricular activities which pupils value. There are many sports clubs, creative arts opportunities and opportunities for pupils to catch up on their work if they fall behind. However, leaders do not have a clear overview of how many pupils take part or which groups benefit from these activities because they do not track pupils' participation.
- Leaders give pupils a variety of opportunities to develop their social, moral, spiritual and cultural awareness. These opportunities include assemblies and themed days on issues such as the Holocaust, in addition to the opportunities provided through regular timetabled lessons. Inspectors observed a variety of displays which showed the ways in which pupils expressed their understanding of major historical events such as the first world war.
- Leaders have designed a robust assessment system which enables them to quickly identify, for all year groups, where pupils or groups of pupils are not making the progress expected of them. Middle leaders have mapped out the key skills which pupils require in each subject so that they can pinpoint for individual pupils, and their parents, where they most need to improve.
- Leaders' work to improve parents' attendance at consultation evenings has had a marked impact. The vast majority of parents now meet with teachers to discuss pupils' progress.
- Leaders make effective use of the pupil premium funding and the Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up funding to support the progress of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who enter the school with weak literacy and numeracy skills. These groups of pupils are making good progress because the interventions to support them are carefully targeted, reviewed and adjusted regularly. Leaders monitor these groups closely so that their progress is a high priority. Mentors in core subjects support literacy and numeracy, while enhanced careers advice, leading to firm progression plans, motivates pupils to work hard.
- Leaders review and adjust the curriculum when they need to do so, according to the requirements of different groups of pupils. For example, they have recently introduced the teaching of an additional foreign language to give pupils a wider choice. Leaders have ensured that different pathways are available so that a range of pupils' needs can

be met. For example, some pupils have weekly work experience, and extra core skills lessons are provided to support those who need them. In partnership with another school, some pupils take vocational courses in a range of areas including construction, hair and beauty, and motor vehicle maintenance.

- Subject leaders play an important and developing role in the school. They told inspectors that they are fully involved in decision-making and whole-school action planning, and have the authority and skills to make improvements in their departments. Subject leaders are increasingly taking responsibility for developing classroom practice, arranging peer observations and enabling teaching staff to work together on professional development. Pastoral leaders have a range of progress and behaviour information available to them. However, they do not yet use this information consistently or strategically to identify patterns or spot concerns in groups of pupils.
- School leaders have ensured that strong systems are in place to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. Leaders take a wide range of information into account including samples of pupils' work, examination results, lesson observations and lesson 'drop-ins'. This means that leaders have a clear view of where strong teaching is leading to good outcomes and where more work needs to be done.
- The local authority has an accurate understanding of the academic strengths and weaknesses of the school. It supports the school well in its development of pupils' progress.
- Inspectors recommend that newly qualified teachers may be appointed.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governance is ineffective. While governors have a detailed and nuanced understanding of many areas of the school, they have not recognised the weaknesses in safeguarding practices. Governors have read Part 1 of the government's guidance 'Keeping children safe in education', 2016, but there is no record of them being familiar with the rest of the document which sets out the legislative responsibilities of governing bodies.
- Governors actively seek ways to strengthen their impact on the school. For example, they have commissioned two 'health checks' on their own effectiveness. As a result, the governing body has been restructured so that more governors can have oversight of key areas of performance.
- Governors make sure that they can independently hold school leaders to account by scrutinising information about pupils' performance. With the support of the local authority, the school has appointed new governors who have deep knowledge of school accountability, and one governor has completed training on the interrogation of information about pupils' achievement.
- Governors have an accurate and detailed overview of academic outcomes in the school. They know where weaknesses remain, and support and challenge leaders robustly.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

- Leaders do not promote the importance of safeguarding rigorously and some members of staff who regularly come in to contact with pupils do not understand their responsibilities fully. Their knowledge of safeguarding is not secure enough to enable them to recognise the signs that a pupil may be at risk.
- The approach to reporting concerns is not consistently understood by all members of staff. Some concerns are referred verbally but there is no clear system for recording these. Other concerns are passed on in writing but these are not consistently dated or signed by staff. Case files are disorganised and sometimes do not detail the actions taken, when they were taken, by whom, and their impact.
- Leaders do not maintain accurate records of safeguarding training. Some staff have not received comprehensive induction training or safeguarding updates, and leaders do not demonstrate a sense of urgency in this regard. Although all staff have been issued with a copy of the most recent version of Part 1 of 'Keeping children safe in education' and have been asked to sign to say that they understand it, records show that a significant number of staff have not complied. There is no evidence of leaders addressing this in a timely way.
- Records of safeguarding concerns and referrals show that leaders are not tenacious in dealing with safeguarding issues. Leaders have not challenged undated letters about referral outcomes from the local authority. This means that responses which are not timely cannot be checked and pursued. Not all information is stored centrally or securely.
- The school's policies on checking new staff are not followed consistently. Leaders do not consistently obtain references for new employees.
- Pupils in the lower school know about a range of risks and how to keep themselves safe. Leaders have designed a curriculum that covers many different aspects of risk in an open and detailed way.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Teaching has improved across all year groups and is now more effective, leading to good outcomes for pupils. Leaders have developed a strong system of assessment so that they know where pupils are in their learning and can identify their next steps. They know which subject areas still require further development and are taking action to address this.
- Leaders monitor the quality of teaching through a well-planned programme of lesson visits, assessment analysis and by looking at pupils' work. Teachers are beginning to share good practice in departments, and take part in peer observations and coaching. In some subject areas, teachers collaborate very well and are developing and sharing high levels of expertise. Leaders recognise that some subjects can improve further, and effective plans are in place to enable this to happen.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are generally good and pupils usually do what they are asked to do willingly. Sometimes, however, low-level disruption leads to pupils not focusing fully on their learning. Teachers often intervene effectively but sometimes they have to repeat this intervention to keep pupils on task.
- Teachers have strong subject knowledge and use this to plan lessons which generally

provide an appropriate level of challenge for pupils, developing their skills and knowledge and keeping them engaged in their learning. This is a particular strength in sixth-form lessons.

- Inspectors observed many examples of very effective practice leading to strong progress. Where expectations are highest, pupils respond very positively. This is evident in a range of subjects and particularly in higher-ability groups.
- Teachers' strong knowledge of new course specifications means that they are able to prepare pupils well for their examinations, and pupils in Years 11 and 13 have confidence that they will succeed.
- Teaching assistants are used well throughout the school. Some teaching assistants with particular subject knowledge are attached to subject areas and effectively support pupils' development in literacy and numeracy. Others work with a range of different groups so that pupils do not become over-reliant on one teaching assistant. Some teaching assistants use questioning effectively to help pupils make progress in their learning.
- In discussions with inspectors, key stage 3 pupils said that they are confident learners and that they feel well-supported in their lessons. They enjoy the variety of subjects on offer, particularly physical education, the creative arts and science. Key stage 4 pupils' views are more mixed and they said that the support they received in lessons depended on which teacher they had.
- Leaders have improved provision for literacy in the school. They have ensured that effective interventions are in place for those pupils who need additional support, including for the effective teaching of phonics. There is additional targeted intervention for a small group of pupils, overseen by the special educational needs coordinator, and specific literacy strategies are helping this group make progress. However, these strategies are not yet consistently applied across subjects.
- On occasion, teachers do not set work which provides pupils with a consistently appropriate level of challenge. Sometimes, tasks are too hard and at other times they are too easy. In the most effective lessons, teachers' questioning is strong, encouraging discussion and deeper thinking. In other lessons, questioning is too fast and pupils do not have time to think and respond, or teachers give answers to questions too quickly.
- Work in some pupils' books is not consistently well organised and presented. In some classes, inspectors observed work on loose pieces of paper which had not been put into pupils' books. As a result, the work had become damaged which meant that pupils could not refer back to it when required.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Inadequate**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- The school's own logs of bullying issues suggest that bullying is rare. However, a significant minority of staff and pupils, through the online surveys, raised concerns

about bullying and said that the school does not deal with it consistently effectively.

- A significant minority of pupils who met with inspectors, and over a third of those pupils who completed the online survey, said that they did not particularly enjoy school. Just under half of those surveyed did not feel that the school is good at encouraging them to look after their emotional and mental health.
- Many pupils raised issues with the quality of the school's support for their next steps. They said that they would value more information on life skills, the qualifications needed for different careers, apprenticeships and courses available at different post-16 providers.
- The curriculum covers a wide range of welfare issues so that pupils are aware of a range of risks facing them. For example, Year 7 pupils complete an e-safety course and these messages are revisited as pupils move through the school. Pupils also gain knowledge of issues such as female genital mutilation through the personal, social and health education programme. Pupils have the opportunity to discuss issues openly and understand the risks facing them.
- Leaders have ensured that alternative courses are available for the small number of pupils for whom a wholly academic curriculum is not appropriate so that they can make stronger progress. Leaders have ensured the welfare of these pupils by monitoring their attendance and providing safe transport.
- Leaders have provided safe spaces where pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, or who are suffering from anxiety, can feel safe. These spaces are effectively used and enable pupils to feel that they are safe in school.

## **Behaviour**

- Pupils' behaviour requires improvement.
- In a significant minority of lessons, inspectors observed low-level disruption which took pupils' and teachers' attention away from learning. Pupils told inspectors that while this behaviour is not the norm, there are some lessons where it happens more regularly.
- A significant minority of staff who responded to the online questionnaire raised concerns about the ways in which leaders support them in dealing with behaviour issues. They identified a lack of consistency in the application of the behaviour policy in lessons and leaders' response to behaviour problems as the main issues.
- While there has been a rise in fixed-term exclusions this year, the rate of fixed-term exclusions is lower than the national average. Permanent exclusions are rare and used appropriately as a last resort.
- In 2016, while the absence of pupils overall was in line with national averages, the absence of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities was well above the national average. Currently, pupils' attendance overall is in line with national averages. However, on inspection, leaders could not clearly explain the current attendance and absence figures for groups of pupils.
- Pupils' behaviour between lessons and around the school site is generally positive. Most pupils treat staff and each other respectfully in social times.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Academic outcomes for pupils have improved since the last inspection across a range of subjects, including English and mathematics. This is because teaching has improved.
- In 2016, overall, pupils made progress in line with pupils nationally with similar starting points. While the published information shows that disadvantaged pupils performed well below what might be expected given their starting points, this group of pupils was relatively small and the long-term absence of some had a disproportionately negative effect. The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, made progress in line with others nationally with similar starting points.
- Some subjects had strong attainment in 2016. These included English literature, media and drama. Pupils made particularly strong progress in humanities and sciences.
- Teachers track pupils' progress closely and accurately so that they can intervene if pupils fall behind. Teachers' predictions for the current Year 11 are that their progress will be better than the school saw in 2016. Pupils in key stage 3 are similarly closely tracked and teachers' assessments show that pupils are making good progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils' progress and attainment has improved steadily over the past three years because leaders and governors have ensured that extra funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively. School leaders have ensured that the difference between progress for this group and pupils nationally with similar starting points is diminishing quickly. The school's own information on the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils currently in Year 11 suggests that disadvantaged pupils will make progress in line with other pupils nationally with similar starting points.
- Students in the sixth form make good progress from their starting points.
- Current cohorts of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making progress in line with those pupils nationally with similar starting points. This is because support plans for these pupils are regularly reviewed and support adjusted according to their particular needs.
- There are a small number of subject areas where attainment is weaker. Leaders are tackling these subject areas robustly.

## 16 to 19 study programmes

**Inadequate**

- The sixth form is inadequate because safeguarding is ineffective.
- Leaders' work to raise students' awareness of the range of risks they face is not well developed. While leaders address some risks through the tutorial programme, students' knowledge, for example of radicalisation and extremism, is limited.
- While students appreciate the careers and university application guidance their teachers give to them, students told inspectors that they would appreciate career advice from independent advisers to give them a broader overview of the opportunities available to them.
- Sixth-form students' attendance is too low. The school's own information suggests that attendance is improving this year, but it is still not at an acceptable level.



- Retention in the sixth form is very high. The vast majority of students complete all of their courses. This is because leaders make sure that each student follows courses that are appropriate to their aspirations and abilities.
- Outcomes for students in the sixth form in 2016 were in line with the national average and have improved over the last three years. Students make good progress across a range of subjects. Students told inspectors that their teachers are approachable and helpful, and that they encouraged them to succeed.
- Leaders provide a range of non-qualification opportunities to students and work experience which students value. Students can become mentors for pupils in the lower school, get involved in annual performances, access governor scholarships and international travel as a part of the school's 'Coubertin' status.
- A small number of students enter the sixth form having not secured a higher grade in GCSE English or mathematics. Teachers support these students well and all attain these qualifications before they leave the school.
- Students go on to a range of appropriate destinations including work, higher education and apprenticeships. The proportion of students moving on to their preferred destinations has risen over the last three years and the school's own information shows that, in 2016, all students went on to appropriate education, training or employment.

## School details

Unique reference number	139769
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	10025191

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
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	976
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	166
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Catherine Connery
Headteacher	Geoff Renwick
Telephone number	01952 728900
Website	<a href="http://williambrookes.com">williambrookes.com</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@williambrookes.com">admin@williambrookes.com</a>
Date of previous inspection	24 November 2015

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- William Brookes School is a medium-sized secondary school with a small sixth form. It is the only 'Coubertin' school in the country, and part of an international network of schools who work together to develop Olympic values in schools.
- The school has a specialism in the performing arts and includes an on-site theatre,

dance and drama studio, and cinema which are shared with the local community.

- Twenty-three pupils at key stage 4 take part-time vocational courses at Oldbury Wells School and Idsall School.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils in the school is below the national average and the proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress of pupils by the end of Year 11.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in lessons, and observed some lessons with senior leaders. They observed pupils' behaviour before and after school, at social times, in lessons and in tutorial periods.
- Inspectors evaluated pupils' work in their books and during lessons across a range of subjects and all year groups.
- Inspectors held meetings with pupils, senior staff, subject and pastoral leaders, a representative of the local authority and governors.
- The views of parents were evaluated through 115 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and the school's own parent questionnaire.
- Pupils' views were considered through online questionnaires. Inspectors also met with pupils from all year groups formally in interviews and informally in lessons and at lunchtime. Inspectors evaluated a wide range of documentation such as records of training, personnel records, safeguarding case files, school policies, attendance records and the school's own assessment records for all year groups.

## Inspection team

Dan Owen, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Elaine Haskins	Ofsted Inspector
Lois Kelly	Ofsted Inspector
Russell Hinton	Ofsted Inspector
Deb Jenkins	Her Majesty's Inspector

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