

William Brookes School

Farley Road, Much Wenlock, Shropshire TF13 6NB

Inspection dates

17–18 October 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Senior leaders and governors are committed to providing high-quality education. Consequently, pupils achieve well academically and benefit from a wide range of broader opportunities. The school has improved in recent years and continues to improve.
- Leaders use information about pupils' attainment very well to identify and support pupils who need extra help.
- The governing body possesses considerable expertise. It uses this well to support and challenge the school's leaders.
- Although the school has several highly effective middle leaders, some currently lack the skills or expertise to fully lead the improvement of teaching in their subjects.
- Pupils make good progress in almost all subjects. By the end of Year 11, they achieve standards above those seen nationally. They are well prepared for their next stage of education or training.
- The school's promotion of literacy is effective. Pupils read regularly. Those who join the school with weak basic skills catch up quickly.
- Teaching is strong in most subjects, including English, history, geography and French. Teachers work closely together to produce engaging resources and activities.
- Teaching is of a more variable quality in a small number of subjects, including mathematics. Here, teachers' planning and expectations are not all of a consistently high standard.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and at social times. They are sensible, courteous and polite. They have good attitudes to learning and are keen to do well.
- Most pupils enjoy school and attend very regularly. Attendance is consistently higher than the national average for secondary schools. However, a small number of disadvantaged pupils do not attend regularly enough. Although the attendance of disadvantaged pupils has improved, it remains lower than that of other pupils.
- Pupils feel safe and well cared for in school. Safeguarding procedures and systems are strong. All staff know that keeping pupils safe is their top priority.
- The sixth form provides strong teaching and this is reflected in students' consistently good progress. Students value their teachers' support and the large number of opportunities to serve and volunteer in the school. However, careers guidance is not as well coordinated as other aspects of the 16 to 19 study programmes. Recent changes have yet to have an impact.

Full report

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching in key stages 3 and 4 in the few subjects where it is of variable quality, including mathematics, to match the consistent high quality evident elsewhere, by ensuring that all teachers:
 - plan activities that are well matched to pupils' abilities and needs
 - have high expectations of the quality and quantity of work that pupils produce in lessons.
- Accelerate the improvement in attendance of disadvantaged pupils, by better targeting extra support to parents who struggle to ensure that their children attend school regularly.
- Sharpen the impact of leadership by ensuring that all:
 - middle leaders have the skills and expertise to lead the improvement of teaching in their subjects
 - sixth-form students receive high-quality, well-planned careers advice and guidance.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors are relentless in their commitment to improve the school. They are determined to provide the best possible broad education for the school's pupils. Pupils, staff and parents appreciate their leadership. The great majority of parents who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, said that the school is well led and managed and that they would recommend it to another parent.
- Leaders know the school well and act quickly to address weaknesses. Consequently, in recent times, outcomes, teaching, behaviour and safeguarding have all improved. Leaders' plans to tackle the school's few remaining weaknesses are clear, concise and well-focused.
- Systems for tracking pupils' progress are strong. Senior leaders use teachers' accurate assessments of pupils' attainment extremely well to identify any pupils, or groups of pupils, who are falling behind with their work. They then provide extra help for those who need it. Consequently, groups of pupils such as disadvantaged pupils are now making much better progress than they have in the past.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching across the school. Their focus on sharing good practice has seen teachers make good use of ideas from their colleagues. For example, a teacher shares an idea with colleagues each week in a 'Wicked Wednesday' training session. Leaders set teachers targets that are well focused on improving teaching and pupils' progress. Teachers appreciate the training and support that they receive.
- The school makes good use of additional funding for special educational needs. The relatively new leadership of this area is already proving effective. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are increasingly well taught because of the training and guidance that their teachers receive. Teachers and teaching assistants provide effective extra help, outside of lesson time, for pupils who need it.
- Pupil premium funding is used well to support disadvantaged pupils' academic progress. Most teachers make these pupils a high priority when planning lessons and providing feedback. Rigorous data analysis enables leaders to identify any pupils who are falling behind. Additional support then helps them to catch up. Disadvantaged pupils are now making strong progress in many subjects, including English. Their progress is improving in other subjects, including mathematics. Leaders' use of the pupil premium to improve disadvantaged pupils' attendance has resulted in some improvement. However, the attendance of this group remains lower than that of other pupils.
- Literacy and numeracy catch-up funding is used well to support pupils who join the school with weak basic skills. These pupils catch up quickly in literacy because of extra help and the school's common approach to developing reading. They also catch up in numeracy as a result of extra lessons that they receive.
- The school's curriculum contains an appropriate range of subjects in both key stage 3 and key stage 4. Leaders regularly evaluate its effectiveness and make changes when

they feel that they are in the best interests of pupils. For example, leaders have introduced additional literacy and numeracy lessons for some pupils in Years 7 and 8. They have introduced Spanish into key stage 3 and they provide off-site vocational courses for some pupils in key stage 4. The sixth-form curriculum comprises mainly academic subjects because leaders recognise the wide choice of vocational options available at local colleges.

- Leaders have resisted any temptation to narrow the curriculum in response to published accountability measures. Some pupils take accredited vocational qualifications, which do not contribute to published statistics. These courses help to motivate pupils, and several pupils move into these vocational areas when they leave school. Performing arts and sport are particularly strong in the school. For example, the school has been awarded the 'Schools Games Mark Gold' on five consecutive occasions. It has recently been invited to apply for 'Platinum' status, one of only 120 schools nationally invited to do so.
- A very wide range of extra-curricular clubs, activities and off-site visits supplements the taught curriculum. These include many sporting and performing arts activities such as an annual school performance and a sixth-form pantomime. Off-site visits range from day-long field trips to residential foreign visits. Many pupils take part in the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme. The school belongs to the worldwide network of 'Coubertin schools'. Its Olympic ideals are writ large around the site and a group of sixth-form students travels to a Coubertin International Youth Forum every two years, most recently in Ulenurme in Estonia in 2017.
- Together, the school's formal curriculum, its wide range of enrichment opportunities and its Olympic ethos contribute well to pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Consequently, pupils are equipped for life after school with well-developed skills and mature, sensible and caring attitudes.
- The school has several highly effective subject leaders who autonomously lead developments within their subjects. However, some subject leaders are new to post or lack the expertise to lead the improvement of teaching in their areas. They are reliant on senior leaders for advice and guidance.

Governance of the school

- Governors are very committed to the school and to doing the best job they possibly can. They are reflective and have successfully sought to ensure that there are no gaps in their knowledge. To that end, they have recruited additional governors with particular expertise. The governing body now has considerable expertise in several areas including education, safeguarding, finance and special educational needs.
- Governors carefully hold leaders to account for the school's performance. Wherever possible, they source external perspectives to check the information presented to them by leaders. Consequently, they know the school well including its many strengths and few weaknesses. They regularly check on the impact that improvement plans are having.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders place the highest priority on safeguarding. They have planned a curriculum for safeguarding that helps pupils understand how to stay safe. Pupils learn about the rights that all people have to enjoy a safe and secure way of life. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe online and understand other potential dangers including those arising from people with extreme views.
- Leaders are meticulous in their management of any concerns raised by staff or pupils. Records are well organised and stored securely. Actions taken by staff when following up concerns, including meetings and phone calls, are carefully logged. All staff are well trained and regularly updated about safeguarding issues. Staff take appropriate action when they have any concerns about pupils.
- Vetting checks for staff, on appointment to the school, are completed carefully and comply with statutory guidance. Staff are well trained on induction to the school to make sure that they know how to put the school's child-protection policies into practice. The strong safeguarding team works well together. It meets regularly to discuss any cases of concern. It plans and reviews any support that has been given to a pupil, changing the support when necessary.
- The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to Ofsted questionnaire Parent View said that their children feel safe in school. All pupils who spoke to inspectors during the inspection also said that they feel safe in school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching is consistently strong in most subjects, including English, history, geography and French. Even in those subjects, including mathematics, where teaching is not of a consistently high quality, some teaching is very effective.
- Teachers know their subjects well. Most use their expertise to plan activities that are well matched to pupils' abilities and needs, and take into account any special educational needs and/or disabilities that pupils might have. Staff in most departments work together closely to coordinate teaching approaches and to produce high-quality, shared resources.
- Expectations are high in most classrooms. Teachers plan challenging activities and they expect pupils to work hard. Pupils typically rise to the challenge, enjoy their lessons, try their best and take pride in their work. For example, in English, pupils read challenging texts and are regularly expected to write at great length.
- Assessment is a strength of teaching at William Brookes. Most teachers accurately assess what pupils know and can do. Moreover, they skilfully help pupils to understand what they need to do to be able to improve their work. Consequently, pupils know how to be successful learners and make good progress.
- Teachers and other adults promote pupils' literacy skills well. Teachers model complex vocabulary and expect pupils to speak correctly, in full and detailed sentences. A whole-school approach ensures that pupils' literacy is developed in many subjects. For

example, inspectors observed a mathematics lesson where the problem-solving focus was on vowels and consonants. Pupils read regularly in school. They make good use of the attractive and well-stocked library. Pupils who join the school having struggled with reading receive extra help and most catch up with their peers during Years 7 and 8.

- Teaching in the sixth form is consistently effective across subjects. Weaknesses evident in some teaching in the main school are not present in the sixth form. Students recognise and value their teachers' high levels of subject expertise.
- Teaching assistants provide valuable support in lessons for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. In many subjects, they work closely with teachers to make sure that they provide the right level of support.
- In a small number of subjects, teaching is not of a consistently high standard. Here, teachers do not always effectively take into account what pupils already understand, know or can do. Consequently, work is sometimes too difficult and pupils are unable to start it. Occasionally, this leads to some low-level poor behaviour where pupils chat and become distracted. Additionally, and in contrast with most lessons, teachers sometimes do not expect pupils to work hard in class. When this is the case, some pupils produce little or no work, or work that is poorly presented.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are confident. They know how to form healthy relationships and how to help others. There is a sense of calm and purpose in lessons and social times. Pupils enjoy each other's company and treat one another with courtesy and respect.
- Pupils feel safe in school. All pupils who spoke to inspectors confirmed this. They also said that bullying is rare in school and that they trust adults to deal with any that does happen. They have positive attitudes to their learning. They work well in groups, taking turns when speaking and listening. They enjoy taking part in, for example, sporting activities, theatre trips and musical performances.
- Pupils receive independent careers education, information and guidance. They speak confidently of what they want to become in later life. The proportion of pupils who move on to education or training when they finish Year 11 is consistently higher than the national figure.
- Pupils are rewarded for putting extra effort into their work and for succeeding in learning that they find difficult. As a result, they value their learning. There is healthy competition between tutor groups for house points. The house system helps pupils feel part of a supportive team, building on the school's commitment to the Olympic spirit.
- A small number of pupils study a vocational course in construction, motor-vehicle maintenance or hair and beauty for one day a week at one of two local schools. The school transports them to and from their placement and a teaching assistant supervises them. Pupils attend regularly and behave well, and all complete their courses successfully. Several pupils move to these providers full-time when they leave the

school at the end of Year 11.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in most lessons and at breaktime and lunchtime. Pupils told inspectors how behaviour has improved over recent years. In lessons, pupils are polite and listen to one another. Very occasionally, when teaching is weaker, some pupils drift off task, chat and complete insufficient work.
- Pupils are typically thoughtful, considerate and well-mannered. Pupils like coming to school and are proud of their community. They are respectful and well cared for by the staff. One pupil, typical of the majority, told inspectors, 'I like school. I am happy and I wouldn't change a thing.'
- There is an orderly environment throughout the school. Pupils help each other in practical lessons such as physical education and drama. They encourage each other's reading and writing in English and geography lessons. They volunteer as librarians; they queue in a sensible manner at lunchtime and do not drop litter. Pupils are allowed throughout the school at social times and they help keep classrooms and displays neat and clean.
- Most pupils enjoy school and attend regularly. Consequently, attendance has been higher than the national average for secondary schools in recent years. However, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils has been low during the same period and, despite some improvement last year, it still lags behind the attendance of other pupils. Additional support for parents whose children do not attend regularly has not been well targeted in the past. Leaders are aware of this and have made changes this year. It is too soon to say whether their efforts have been successful.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- By the end of Year 11, most pupils make good progress from their starting points in almost all subjects. Standards of attainment at the end of key stage 4 are consistently higher than the national average. For example, unvalidated GCSE results for 2017 show that nearly 80% of pupils achieved standard passes in both English and mathematics, while nearly 60% achieved strong passes in both subjects.
- Outcomes are strong in English, history and French. Highly effective teaching and assessment mean that pupils develop secure knowledge and understanding of the material that they are studying.
- The most able pupils make good progress in all subjects. Teachers provide a high level of challenge in lessons. Pupils are well motivated and have very positive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress across almost all subjects. Where teaching is planned to meet their needs well, they thrive. For example, in a Year 11 English lesson, inspectors observed pupils reading confidently and talking enthusiastically about their learning. In lessons where teaching is less well planned, teaching assistants support pupils well to make sure that they can

attempt the tasks set.

- Disadvantaged pupils' progress is improving rapidly, having been weak in the past. It is now strong in several subjects, including English. Unvalidated GCSE results for 2017 show disadvantaged pupils making slightly better progress in English than other pupils nationally. They benefit from strong teaching and high-quality extra help when they need it. These pupils still make slower progress in some subjects where teaching is not consistently strong. However, even here, the picture is improving.
- Pupils make reasonable progress in mathematics. They progress at a similar rate to other pupils nationally with similar starting points. Disadvantaged pupils continue to make weaker progress than others, but this is improving. However, pupils' progress in this subject is markedly slower than in several other subjects. Although there is some highly effective teaching in mathematics, there is also some less effective teaching.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Students make good progress in most subjects, including English, mathematics, physics, geography and history, while they are in the sixth form. Their progress is a little slower in a few subjects, including biology and psychology, but, even here, leaders' actions are securing improvement. Attainment is rising, and unvalidated A-level results for 2017 suggest that it continues to do so.
- Teaching in the sixth form is consistently effective. Teachers use their expert subject knowledge to plan lessons that build well on what students already know. Their explanations are clear and precise. Relationships are strong and students value their teachers' expertise.
- Students enjoy being part of the sixth form. They value their friends and the support that teachers and other adults provide. Attendance, which was criticised in the previous inspection report, has risen considerably to be similar to the rest of the school. All students who spoke to inspectors said that they were glad that they had joined the sixth form.
- Almost all students who join the sixth form in Year 12 complete their courses at the end of Year 13. A small number leave during Year 12 because opportunities arise, such as apprenticeships or scholarships to performing-arts institutions. The proportion of students moving to employment or higher education when they finish Year 13 is consistently higher than that seen nationally, as is the proportion who move on to university.
- Very few students join the sixth form without having secured GCSEs in English and mathematics at grade 4 or C or higher. These students continue to study English and/or mathematics and almost all are successful in improving their grades when they resit their examinations.
- Leaders provide a wide range of high-quality, non-qualification activities in which students are expected to participate. Some mentor younger pupils or support them in lessons; some are lunchtime supervisors; and others help with sporting events. Many students take part in music, dance or drama, and several take part in the student-written and directed annual pantomime. Students obtain first-aid and safeguarding qualifications. They take part in charity fundraising, international visits and the Duke of

Edinburgh award scheme.

- All students are expected to undertake work-experience placements that are relevant to their career aspirations. Several students told inspectors that work-experience placements had been valuable in helping them decide which careers to pursue or not pursue.
- As with the rest of the school, safeguarding is effective in the sixth form. Students understand how to keep themselves safe and how to live healthy lifestyles. A recently revised tutorial programme includes topics such as anxiety and depression, drugs and alcohol, sexual health and financial management.
- The sixth form is well led. Leaders have acted to address previous weaknesses, including students' attendance, and understanding of potential risks. All requirements of the 16 to 19 study programmes are in place. However, careers guidance is not as well organised or coordinated as the other aspects of the study programmes. Some students are not clear about how to access careers guidance, despite the fact that leaders have employed an independent careers adviser.

School details

Unique reference number	139769
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	10037922

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	933
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	139
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Catherine Connery
Headteacher	Geoff Renwick
Telephone number	01952 728900
Website	http://williambrookes.com/
Email address	admin@williambrookes.com
Date of previous inspection	7–8 February 2017

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 is part of an international network of schools who work together to develop Olympic values in schools.

- The school specialises in the performing arts and includes an on-site theatre, a dance and drama studio, and a cinema, all of which are shared with the local community.
- Approximately 20 pupils at key stage 4 take part-time vocational courses at either Oldbury Wells School or 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 the progress of pupils by the end of Year 11.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in lessons, conducting some of these observations jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors met with four groups of pupils and talked to many others about their learning and their attitudes to, and opinions about, school. They observed pupils at breaktime and lunchtime and as they moved around the school.
- Inspectors visited afternoon tutor time and an assembly.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documents, including information relating to governance, attendance, behaviour, safeguarding, pupils' progress and the checks made on the quality of teaching.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, middle leaders, teachers and three governors, including the chair of the governing body. The lead inspector met with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors considered 314 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.

Inspection team

Alun Williams, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Gwendoline Onyon	Ofsted Inspector
Lynda Mitchell	Ofsted Inspector
Graham Tyrer	Her Majesty's Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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