

# Inspection of a good school: Weaverham High School

Lime Avenue, Weaverham, Northwich, Cheshire CW8 3HT

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Inspection dates:

10–11 March 2020

## **Outcome**

Weaverham High School continues to be a good school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

The pupils who we spoke to said that Weaverham High School is a wonderful place to learn. They told us that there is a happy, friendly atmosphere at the school. They said that people are kind to each other. Pupils feel safe, cared for and well supported.

Pupils enjoy learning and they work hard. They listen to each other's points of view in lessons and they work well together. In most subjects, pupils said that their teachers were ambitious for them. Overall, pupils achieve well.

Pupils feel like they belong to the school community. They said that the school's mantra of 'Safe, Ready and Respect' underpins pupils' good behaviour. They also said that the new behaviour system has improved further pupils' conduct.

Pupils shared no concerns with inspectors about bullying. They said that when bullying does happen, staff address any issues quickly. Pupils were full of praise for the support provided to them by the staff in the pastoral team.

Pupils' embrace the vast array of clubs, activities and visits that inspire them to widen their horizons. These include a range of leadership, musical and sporting opportunities. These activities help pupils to become accomplished and confident young people. Pupils willingly take on charitable work.

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

The headteacher, along with her senior leadership team, has fostered a culture of high expectations for staff and pupils at Weaverham High School. Leaders and governors have a clear insight into what the school does well and what needs to improve further.

Leaders have worked collaboratively to review and improve the curriculum for most pupils across the school. In many subjects, strong leadership is responsible for well-thought-out curriculum plans. These plans enable the majority of pupils to achieve well.

In history and art, for example, the curriculum is particularly well planned and delivered. Leaders have used their expert subject knowledge to consider carefully what they want pupils to learn and the order in which they should learn it. Teachers are adept at ensuring that pupils can link their prior learning with new knowledge to produce increasingly complex pieces of work. This enables pupils to be successful in external examinations at the end of key stage 4 in these subjects.

In a minority of subjects, while teachers have thought carefully about the order in which pupils should learn topics, they have not considered in sufficient depth how to revisit learning. This is to ensure that pupils remember key knowledge systematically. This is because sometimes teachers do not always give pupils enough time to practise what they have learned. Consequently, some pupils do not always connect new knowledge to other units of learning.

Across the school, leaders and teachers have thought carefully about how to adapt the curriculum for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The curriculum enables these pupils to achieve well. However, by the end of key stage 4, disadvantaged pupils have not always achieved as well as they should. Leaders are taking the necessary action to remedy the planning and delivery of the curriculum for these pupils. Current disadvantaged pupils are achieving more highly.

Leaders have recently introduced a new behaviour policy. Staff and pupils said that behaviour and conduct have improved further. Pupils show a great deal of respect for each other and their teachers. Pupils told us that bullying is rare, and that staff deal with it effectively. However, a small minority of pupils and parents responding to Ofsted's online survey expressed concerns with how well leaders dealt with bullying. We found no concerns.

While overall attendance is broadly in line with national averages, pupils who are disadvantaged and pupils with SEND still do not attend as highly as other pupils. Leaders are taking effective steps to address the underlying issues.

Pupils appreciate the vast range of leadership activities, local and overseas visits, sporting clubs, and drama and musical productions on offer. They talked with excitement about how the activities expanded their understanding of other cultures and broadened their skills. Pupils are particularly proud of the 'Endeavour Programme'. This programme encourages them to complete a series of challenges that showcase new learning. Leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils participate fully in these activities.

Leaders at Weaverham High School are perceptive and honest. They are determined that all pupils will 'Be the best version' of themselves. The headteacher has gained the confidence of staff, pupils and the wider community. Staff feel valued and listened to. Leaders take staff well-being seriously and listen to what staff have to say.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. They ensure that staff are well trained in how to recognise and report signs of abuse and neglect. Leaders also work collaboratively with a number of external agencies. As a result, they are skilled at anticipating and responding to issues that may be more prevalent within the school's local context.

Pupils told inspectors that through their curriculums they are taught how to keep themselves safe, including how to stay safe online.

Those responsible for governance are knowledgeable about risk. They take their safeguarding responsibilities seriously and hold leaders to account.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Although the attendance rates of pupils who are disadvantaged and those who have SEND are improving, they are not as high as they should be. This means that some pupils miss out on their learning and develop gaps in their knowledge and understanding. Leaders must continue to identify what the key reasons for absence are and take robust action to ensure that these pupils attend school more regularly.
- The quality of the school's curriculum is good overall. However, leaders are in the process of refining their curriculum plans in some subjects. This is because some teachers do not sequence subject content with precision in order to ensure that pupils remember even more. Leaders should ensure that all teachers benefit from subject-specific ongoing training. This is so that they are more adept in planning and sequencing learning so that all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, are helped to connect new learning to previously taught knowledge.

## **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 a section 8 inspection of a good or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged Weaverham High School to be good on 9–10 February 2011.

## 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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	111414
<b>Local authority</b>	Cheshire West and Chester
<b>Inspection number</b>	10110985
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1092
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Helen Newton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Clare Morgan
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.weaverhamhighschool.com">www.weaverhamhighschool.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	8 March 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The new headteacher was appointed in September 2018. Prior to becoming headteacher, she had worked in the school for several years.
- The school currently uses alternative provision for a number of pupils at Reaseheath College.

## Information about this inspection

- We held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders and subject leaders.
- We met with members of the governing body, including the vice-chair of governors.
- We met with the special educational needs coordinator and those with responsibility for safeguarding and disadvantaged pupils.
- We spoke with pupils and groups of pupils in key stages 3 and 4.
- We considered the views of the 164 pupils and 59 staff who responded to Ofsted's online surveys. We also considered the 183 responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. This included the comments made by parents using Ofsted's free-text facility.

- As part of the inspection, we did deep dives in: English, art, history and science. In these subjects we met with subject leaders, visited a range of lessons, spoke with pupils, looked at pupils' work and met with teachers. We also considered other subjects, including geography, mathematics and music.
- We reviewed a range of safeguarding documentation, including the school's pre-employment record of checks on staff.

### **Inspection team**

Alyson Middlemass, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

David Woodhouse

Ofsted Inspector

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