

# Inspection of Wolverley CofE Secondary School

Blakeshall Lane, Wolverley, Kidderminster, Worcestershire DY11 5XQ

---

Inspection dates: 9 and 10 November 2021

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

---

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Sixth-form provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

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

The headteacher has fostered a culture where staff routinely encourage pupils to have high aspirations. The school's ethos of 'ambition unlimited' is reflected in all aspects of school life. Teachers have high expectations. They expect pupils to try hard and behave respectfully. Pupils consistently meet these expectations.

Relationships between teachers and pupils are strong. This supports learning well. Teachers are caring. They take the time to get to know pupils. Pupils appreciate this. Many pupils and staff describe the school as 'a family'.

The school environment is calm. Pupils behave well in the vast majority of lessons and at other times of the day. Little learning time is lost. Pupils are confident and polite. They go out of their way to welcome visitors to the school. If bullying happens, adults take it seriously. Pupils feel safe. Most have confidence in their teachers to sort out problems.

Adults strongly commit to ensuring pupils have the opportunity to develop their talents and interests. Most pupils enjoy taking part in an impressive range of lunchtime and after-school clubs, along with a variety of local, national and international trips. There is something for everyone.

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

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). All pupils from Year 7 to Year 9 learn a broad range of subjects in depth. This means pupils are well prepared to study the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) in Year 10 and Year 11. The number of pupils studying the EBacc is well above the national average. In addition, the school offers a wide range of qualifications in Year 10 and Year 11. These qualifications match well to pupils' interests. For example, some pupils study animal care in the school's on-site animal centre. They told inspectors how much they enjoyed this. In the sixth form, there are a range of suitable courses to suit the aspirations of students.

Teachers know how to support pupils with SEND well. For some pupils with SEND, leaders adapt the curriculum. For example, in Year 7 and Year 8, some pupils are part of the 'step up' group. As part of this, they learn all of the subjects in a smaller group with specialist teachers. Pupils also receive additional support to develop their social skills. These adaptations work well. For instance, they support pupils to cooperate maturely and learn how to resolve conflicts appropriately.

Subject leaders ensure that pupils learn content in a sensible order. For instance, in Spanish, pupils learn how to form verbs in the present tense before learning how to form them in the past tense. In addition, teachers give pupils lots of opportunities to go over important knowledge they have learned in the past. For example, in

mathematics, teachers use quizzes to recap previous learning at the start of lessons. These strategies help to build pupils' confidence in a wide range of subjects.

Teachers, including those in the sixth form, are knowledgeable about their subjects. They explain subject content clearly. In the sixth form, teachers check students' understanding in lessons effectively. This means teachers can provide the right support for students quickly and stop them from falling behind. However, in Years 7 to 11, some teachers do not check pupils' understanding in lessons well enough. This means that teachers do not always know which pupils are stuck, and the reasons for this.

Leaders have a clear strategy for supporting all pupils to become confident readers. They make suitable checks to identify pupils who need extra help. Leaders act quickly to ensure that pupils get the help they need from well-trained adults. As a result, these pupils are catching up.

The school's behaviour policy places a strong emphasis on rewarding positive and respectful attitudes. Teachers implement this policy consistently. As a result, interactions between teachers and pupils are friendly and encouraging. Pupils enjoy school and are rarely late. Most attend well. However, the number of pupils who are persistently absent has slowly increased over several years.

The school's personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum is a strength. The curriculum, which is taught by specialists, ensures that pupils get the information they need at the right time. For example, in Year 10, students learn about the signs of domestic violence and unhealthy relationships. In addition, the school ensures that pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities to engage with local employers and training providers. This prepares pupils well for their next steps. Many have a clear view on the career paths they want to follow.

Staff and leaders work together well. Leaders take account of the main pressures on staff when designing new policies and approaches. Staff appreciate this. Morale is high.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know pupils well. This means they are alert to the signs that a pupil may need help. Leaders have ensured that staff pass on any concerns about a pupil, 'no matter how small', to the school's safeguarding team. Leaders work effectively with external agencies to ensure pupils who need help get the specialist support they need.

As part of the PSHE curriculum, pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. They learn, for instance, about how to stay safe when using the internet.

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

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

- In Years 7 to 11, some teachers do not check all pupils' understanding within lessons well enough. This means teachers do not always know which pupils need additional help. Leaders should ensure that teachers know how to check learning effectively in their subjects, so that all teachers are able to give all pupils the help they need.
- Persistent absence has been steadily rising over a number of years. This limits some pupils from reaching their potential. Leaders should continue to work with families to improve the attendance of pupils who are regularly absent from school.

## 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.

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>	135061
<b>Local authority</b>	Worcestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10199881
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	814
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	65
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Karen McGrath
<b>Headteacher</b>	Bryn Thomas
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.wolverley.worcs.sch.uk">www.wolverley.worcs.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	22 and 23 June 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school uses one registered alternative provider and one unregistered alternative provider.
- The school is part of the diocese of Worcester. The school's last section 48 inspection was in 2016.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause. This means that pupils in Years 8 to 13 receive information about the full range of education and training options open to them. This includes opportunities for a range of education and training providers to speak to pupils about technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteachers and other senior leaders. They met with representatives of governance, including the chair and vice-chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors did deep dives in mathematics, science, history, geography and Spanish. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders and teachers, visited a sample of lessons, reviewed pupils' work and spoke with some pupils about their learning.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents. These included school policies, safeguarding records, curriculum plans, pupils' attendance and behaviour records.
- Through discussions with leaders, pupils and staff, inspectors considered how effectively pupils are safeguarded. An inspector also looked at documents related to safeguarding, including the school's single central record of checks on staff.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in a range of different classes and at different times of the day. They talked to pupils informally about bullying, behaviour and extra-curricular opportunities.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. This included free-text comments. Inspectors also looked at responses to Ofsted's online staff survey and pupil survey.

## Inspection team

Christopher Stevens, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Huw Bishop	Ofsted Inspector
Kate Ireland	Ofsted Inspector
Sal Yunus	Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2021