

Inspection of Withernsea High School

Hull Road, Withernsea HU19 2EQ

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 November 2021

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at this school are welcoming. A strong sense of tolerance and respect for others develops through the curriculum of the 'head, hand, and heart'. Activities during Pride Week and Black History Month are valued by pupils. During the inspection, pupils were involved in remembrance activities in recognition of Armistice Day. These carefully planned activities broaden pupils' horizons and knowledge of the world.

Pupils are happy and respond warmly to visitors at the school. Relationships between adults and pupils are friendly and respectful. Pupils told inspectors they feel safe at school and are confident that adults will help them on the rare occasions bullying occurs.

Pupils are focused in lessons. Teachers deal quickly with rare instances of off task behaviour. Pupils respond to teachers' instructions well. At social times, pupils' behaviour is calm. There are clear rules and routines which pupils understand and follow. Expectations of pupils are high. Staff on duty are highly visible. Pupils know that they can speak to teachers if they are worried about anything.

Pupils' varied needs are met through the school's flexible provision. This is a space in the school where pupils who need it, including those who are vulnerable, receive additional support. Pupils were positive when they spoke to inspectors about this. Many saw it as a 'safe space' in the school.

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

There has been significant change in the curriculum since the appointment of the current headteacher in 2018. The curriculum is sequenced to ensure that pupils learn the most important knowledge. For example, in English, leaders' plans show how they want pupils to develop knowledge about inference as they move through the school. The number of pupils taking the English Baccalaureate has risen since the previous inspection because of the focus on curriculum development.

Teachers carefully plan activities for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to ensure that they gain the same knowledge as other pupils. The information that teachers receive helps them to adapt their planning for pupils with SEND. Sometimes, however, the information in these plans is not updated regularly enough.

Pupils' work in their books shows that they understand what they learn. Some pupils were not always able to recall previous learning when they spoke to inspectors. This is because assessment is not yet consistently developed across the school. In most subjects, leaders use retrieval tasks to check what pupils have learned and remembered. In a small number of subjects, activities to help pupils remember what they have learned are not fully embedded.

Pupils are encouraged to read during tutor time activities. There are 'recommended reads' on display in the school library which regularly change. The small number of pupils at the early stages of learning to read are clearly identified by leaders. These pupils receive phonics teaching. Leaders have plans to train more teachers to teach phonics. Leaders have appointed a literacy leader to develop a school-wide approach to literacy.

Leaders analyse behaviour records carefully. They use this information to help pupils stay on track. Behaviour around school is respectful and calm. Pupils' attendance has been affected by the pandemic. Leaders know that absence and persistent absence are higher than they were before the COVID-19 pandemic, and they are working on strategies to improve this.

Leaders have identified key aims in the curriculum. These include helping to 'broaden horizons' for pupils. The personal development curriculum has been carefully planned to achieve this aim. One pupil told inspectors that an important aim of the school was 'to make people feel welcome, no matter who they are'. Many pupils who inspectors spoke with shared this view. Pupils clearly understand what makes a good friend. Some pupils told inspectors it is important to be kind and loyal. Older pupils have a detailed understanding of consent.

Leaders have planned carefully for the closure of the school's sixth-form provision. Careers information and guidance helps pupils move into further education and training that is right for them. Leaders plan opportunities for pupils to work with external agencies. For example, the Royal Air Force is delivering a team building programme.

Governors have a clear understanding of the work of the school to improve the curriculum. They receive regular updates from subject leaders. Governors' minutes show that they ask challenging questions. This is leading to improvements in the curriculum. Governors do not have clear enough oversight of plans for pupils with SEND. This is because leaders do not regularly present this information to governors. In Ofsted's Parent View survey, some parents told inspectors the school was very supportive during the pandemic.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders of the personal development curriculum meet external partners to talk about local issues. This means the curriculum is carefully planned so that pupils learn about local safeguarding risks.

Staff receive regular updates from safeguarding leaders about developing issues. Staff with whom inspectors spoke had a clear understanding of the processes for raising concerns. Staff recall recent training clearly, for example around peer-on-peer abuse.

Record-keeping is clear and consistent. Leaders involve external agencies appropriately to ensure that pupils receive the help they need.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Plans for pupils with SEND sometimes do not contain the most important and up-to-date information. This means that sometimes teachers do not know how to make the most appropriate adjustments for these pupils. Leaders should ensure that plans for pupils with SEND are regularly reviewed and updated. Governors should ensure that they have clear oversight of these plans.
- Assessment across the school is not consistent enough. In some subjects, teachers do not always check on the important component knowledge that pupils have remembered. This means that some pupils cannot recall prior learning. Leaders should ensure that assessment across the school is consistent.
- Pupils' attendance has been affected by the pandemic. Absence and persistent absence are higher now than before the pandemic. Leaders should ensure that they continue to develop and embed strategies to monitor attendance. They should continue to take swift action to ensure that attendance and persistent absence return to pre-pandemic levels.

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

Unique reference number	118075
Local authority	East Riding of Yorkshire
Inspection number	10200292
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	757
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair of governing body	Caroline Philome Heaton
Headteacher	Mark Crofts
Website	www.withernseahigh.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	1 and 2 November 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the sixth-form provision has closed. The school is now an 11 to 16 provider.
- The current headteacher was promoted from deputy headteacher in 2018. The current deputy headteacher was promoted from assistant headteacher 2019. A new assistant headteacher was appointed in 2019. This was an external appointment. In 2020, a deputy headteacher retired and an assistant headteacher was internally appointed.
- New leaders in English, history, modern foreign languages, mathematics and science have been appointed since 2019. The school appointed a reading and literacy leader in September 2020. A new special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) was appointed in September 2020.
- A new faculty of creative arts was created in September 2021, with a new head of creative arts. Drama has been added to the curriculum.
- The school has a very small number of pupils in alternative provision at The Hub School.

- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved 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 spoke with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, assistant headteachers and senior business manager of the school. They also spoke with representatives from the local authority and members of the governing body, including the vice-chair of governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders in physical education and creative arts.
- Inspectors spoke with leaders with responsibility for reading and literacy.
- Inspectors reviewed records of behaviour and attendance and spoke with leaders responsible for these areas.
- Inspectors spoke with leaders responsible for pupils with SEND, including the SENCo. They also looked at plans for pupils with SEND, including education, health and care plans, and visited lessons to check the implementation of these plans.
- Inspectors spoke to leaders with responsibility for safeguarding and reviewed records of safeguarding. They also spoke with pupils and staff about safeguarding and checked how leaders include aspects of safeguarding in the school curriculum.
- Inspectors looked at plans for the personal development curriculum and careers information and guidance. They also spoke with leaders responsible for designing the careers and personal development programmes.
- Inspectors spoke both formally and informally with groups of pupils, including single-sex groups.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents, staff and pupils through surveys, including Ofsted's Parent View.

Inspection team

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