

Inspection of a good school: Woodbridge High School

St Barnabas Road, Woodford Green, Essex IG8 7DQ

Inspection dates:

17 and 18 November 2021

Outcome

Woodbridge High School continues to be a good school. There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if we were to carry out a section 5 inspection now. The school's next inspection will be a section 5 inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel safe and thrive at this school. The school motto 'pride in achievement' resonates through all aspects of school life. All pupils study a broad and ambitious curriculum, and teachers expect a lot from pupils. Parents and carers appreciate the focus on both educational and extra-curricular opportunities. They value the personal and social development that happens throughout the school.

Pupils, parents and staff know 'The Woodbridge Way' and are proud to be members of the school community. The ethos of kindness, tolerance, respect and aiming for excellence is felt by all. The majority of pupils stay and continue their studies at the sixth form. Students like the diverse post-16 offer. They also value the strong working relationships they have with staff.

Pupils are polite and behave well in and outside of lessons. Leaders have embedded clear behavioural routines which everyone understands. If bullying does occur, leaders act swiftly to resolve issues. Staff provide careful support, over time, for all pupils. Pupils can train as anti-bullying ambassadors to offer well-being support to their peers.

The numerous clocks outside the building remind pupils how important it is to be punctual to lessons. Leaders constantly reinforce this message. Pupils are ready to learn.

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

The big curricular picture is ambitious and well thought out by leaders. They make sure that pupils can study a broad range of subjects throughout their time here. This offer is available to all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils appreciate the chance to study subjects like Russian and German. They

also value the additional curriculum time that leaders give to the arts. All pupils achieve well.

Curriculum plans are well thought out. Leaders make careful links to the wider world. They aim to make learning relevant, contemporary and interesting for all pupils. For example, in art, pupils had the opportunity to listen to a current London artist talk about their work. In English, pupils in Year 8 study the work of poets from different cultures.

Subject leaders provide academic opportunities to continually develop their teams. Teachers are knowledgeable about the subjects that they teach. Pupils can access new knowledge because it builds on existing knowledge. For instance, in drama, pupils use their previous learning about a Greek chorus to compose their own piece of drama. Students in the sixth form could access demanding poetic texts independently because of planned opportunities to study a wide range of poetry in the lower school.

Leaders sequence the curriculum so that pupils know more over time. For instance, pupils in history are confident in using concepts such as democracy and power. They study these in different contexts as they move up the school. Pupils demonstrate what they have learned and remembered over time. In Russian, pupils spend time in Year 7 learning the Russian alphabet. Pupils can then use their knowledge of the alphabet to read and write sentences.

Pupils behave very well in lessons and are attentive. Subject leaders decide what assessment checks are needed for their subject and when to use them. Teachers make timely checks on pupils' understanding in class. For example, in English, teachers made sure that pupils understood the term 'juxtaposition'. Pupils needed this to help them with their work on 'A Christmas Carol' by Dickens.

Reading is at the heart of the school. Pupils read widely and often. Leaders give them opportunities, such as in form time, to experience different types of literature. Pupils can describe their personal reading with enthusiasm. If pupils need additional support with reading, then this is provided. Leaders use a purposeful range of strategies to identify pupils with SEND. Teachers understand their role in this process. They tailor support so that all pupils can access the broad curriculum. Pupils' well-being is central to learning.

Leaders prioritise teaching pupils about diversity. They share their teaching around understanding sexuality and gender with other schools in the local area.

Students in Year 13 appreciate the support they receive from tutors on their next steps. In the lower school, pupils receive helpful information about careers education and guidance through the 'Life Studies' curriculum. Leaders are not complacent and aim to further strengthen the comprehensive careers offer. The 'Beyond Excellence' programme gives all pupils access to an extensive range of extra-curricular activities. This includes the climate crisis committee, astronomy club and the annual variety show. Leaders track pupils' involvement in extra-curricular activities. They encourage pupils to attend activities.

Leaders continually reflect on their practices. Staff value leaders' actions to reduce workload. Leaders and teachers worked together to produce the 'Workload Charter.' Leaders and governors provide numerous opportunities to support staff well-being. Staff know that leaders care.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are acutely aware of the local contextual safeguarding challenges, for example the risks associated with gang involvement. Well-established systems help to support pupils and their families over time. Leaders help to educate parents, pupils, governors and other local schools on what makes up harmful sexual behaviour. Pupils appreciate learning this timely age-appropriate knowledge in school.

Leaders work well with external agencies to keep pupils safe. This work is complemented by robust internal structures, for example family therapy and psychotherapists. Leaders regularly seek the views of pupils to check if they feel safe. They make changes to everyday practices as a result of pupils' views.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have identified where the careers education and guidance provision could be strengthened even further. They have plans in place for pupils to have further planned encounters with employers. Leaders should continue with this work.

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 outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2012.

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	102854
Local authority	Redbridge
Inspection number	10200320
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1877
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	400
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Co-chairs of the governing body	Pankaj Pathak and Phillip Reynolds
Headteacher	Steven Hogan
Website	www.woodbridgehigh.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 November 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up post in 2018.
- The school uses three registered alternative providers.
- The school manages an alternative provision centre on site, which is funded by the local authority. This offers places for pupils from other schools in the local authority who have social, emotional and mental health needs and are at risk of exclusion.

Information about this inspection

- 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, the designated safeguarding lead, the special educational needs coordinator, the clinical leader for well-being and other members of the leadership team. Inspectors also spoke to a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, history, art and physical education. 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 about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors listened to a sample of pupils reading and spoke to pupils about their reading experiences.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans for drama, music and the 'Life Studies' curriculum, which includes relationships and sex education. Inspectors visited lessons in science, drama, Russian, design technology and food technology.
- Inspectors observed behaviour in lessons and at lunchtime. Inspectors spoke to a range of staff about their views of behaviour, their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors met with pupils who act as anti-bullying ambassadors.
- Through discussion with leaders, pupils and staff, inspectors considered the effectiveness of safeguarding. Inspectors looked at records relating to safeguarding, including pre-employment checks and records of work with external agencies.
- Inspectors considered the 120 staff's responses and 410 pupils' responses to Ofsted's surveys.
- Inspectors considered the 241 responses to Ofsted's survey for parents, including free-text comments.

Inspection team

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