

Inspection of Waddesdon Church of England School

Baker Street, Waddesdon, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire HP18 0LQ

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 December 2021

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Waddesdon Church of England School changes pupils' lives for the better. Leaders, governors and staff share a united vision to provide academic success coupled with exceptional personal development. Naturally, pupils and sixth formers love coming here and are inspired to achieve. Parents enthuse about the school. As one described, 'The school is a very special community.'

The curriculum meets pupils' needs very well. The wide range of subjects on offer gives everyone a chance to shine. Leaders ensure that the promotion of pupils' mental health and well-being is at the heart of school life. Excellent classroom learning is extended through a wide range of stimulating clubs, trips and visits. Pupils, staff and parents are rightly proud of their school. Grateful for all that the school has offered them, sixth formers genuinely want to give something back and make a difference to the school community, and they do.

Pupils are thoughtful and polite, and behaviour is first-class. There are warm relationships between staff and pupils and a range of support services. Older pupils support younger ones here. Any form of bullying or unkindness is not tolerated. Waddesdon is a very supportive and safe place to learn.

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

The headteacher, governing body and senior leadership team are inspirational. Together they ensure that the school's ethos of 'dignity and respect for all' underpins daily life and the outstanding provision here. It would be hard not to be inspired by the exceptional whole-school assemblies, which promote ambition, aspiration and celebrate success particularly well. Staff share the senior leaders' vision and passion to enable each pupil to flourish academically and socially during their time at school and beyond. Every pupil at Waddesdon is valued as an individual. Leaders continually refine systems and improve the curriculum provision to meet pupils' needs.

Leaders have crafted a very broad, rich and relevant curriculum that stimulates and challenges pupils and sixth formers particularly well. They are implementing plans to encourage more pupils to study modern foreign languages and so boost the numbers achieving the suite of qualifications known as the English Baccalaureate still further. Across all subjects, teachers have access to high-quality research-led training and resources. In addition, staff network well with other schools and subject networks, to develop their subject expertise. Working together, subject leaders and teachers apply this expert subject knowledge to carefully sequence the order in which pupils learn new things and to bring their subjects to life. Teachers know what pupils should learn and the goals they are working towards.

Staff have high expectations and pupils rise to meet them. Pupils take pride in their work and engage enthusiastically in lessons. Teachers know their pupils well and

target their use of questioning very effectively to inspire, motivate and challenge them. Pupils value revisiting their prior learning to refine and improve their knowledge. Pupils and sixth formers are supported to become independent learners who achieve well across their chosen subjects. Any who fall behind, or need further help, are provided with tailored support to address concerns and build resilience.

Highly effective leadership of the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils ensures that they flourish. Teachers and teaching assistants are highly skilled at adapting the curriculum to meet pupils' needs. Leaders, teachers and support staff also work together to meet these pupils' pastoral needs very well.

Reading is promoted well across the school. Pupils in younger years have regular opportunities to develop their reading skills. Older pupils are challenged to read a range of texts in and out of lessons. Pupils who are at the earlier stages of reading receive bespoke support from staff. Some sixth formers act as reading mentors, helping to provide additional support to younger pupils who are less confident readers.

The provision for pupils' personal development is first class. High-quality personal, social and health education builds pupils' self-esteem and confidence. Over time pupils are supported to become caring, respectful and responsible citizens. Pupils speak with conviction about the importance of mental health, respect and equality. They show respect to each other, adults and visitors.

Leaders ensure that learning extends well beyond the classroom. Pupils and sixth formers benefit from exciting opportunities, including visiting speakers, residential trips and access to the many performing arts, sporting and activities-based clubs on offer. Pupils are encouraged to develop leadership skills, proudly taking up opportunities to support others. A structured programme of careers education ensures that all are very well-prepared for their next steps beyond school or sixth form.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Waddesdon offers an exceptionally caring community where pupils' safety, welfare and well-being are given top priority. Pupils feel safe and happy here and parents confirm this. Leaders ensure regular staff training on safeguarding. Very well-managed systems help staff to record and share any concern they may have about pupils.

Leaders' records demonstrate how swiftly and effectively the school supports vulnerable pupils. Diligent safeguarding leaders proactively seek and secure support from external agencies, when necessary, to ensure that pupils get the help they need. Recognising the impact of the pandemic on pupils and their families, senior leaders are wisely expanding the safeguarding team due to an increased workload.

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	137355
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10199280
Type of school	Secondary modern
School category	Academy converter
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	1015
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	299
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Andrew Howard
Headteacher	Matthew Abbott
Website	www.waddesdonschool.com
Date of previous inspection	19 September 2006, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Waddesdon Church of England School converted to become an academy school in September 2011. When its predecessor school, with the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- The school currently uses one alternative provider.
- 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 educational 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 the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Deep dives were conducted in art, geography, mathematics, modern foreign languages and science. As part of these, inspectors met with subject leaders, visited lessons, talked to pupils about their work and met with teaching staff to talk about their approach to designing and delivering the curriculum. In addition, meetings were held with the leaders of personal, social and health education to discuss curriculum plans and provision in this area.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, SENCo and other members of teaching and support staff.
- A meeting was held with four members of the governing body and a remote meeting was held with two representatives from the diocese.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils and sixth formers to discuss their views about many different aspects of their school. Inspectors also held informal conversations with pupils at breaktime and lunchtime.
- The views of pupils, parents and staff represented in meetings and the responses to Ofsted surveys were considered.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's policies and practices and met with safeguarding leaders to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding. Records of safeguarding incidents were scrutinised and discussed. Inspectors also reviewed the school records of the recruitment checks made on adults working in the school.

Inspection team

Matthew Newberry, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jane Cartwright	Ofsted Inspector
Mary Davies	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Marande	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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