

# Inspection of a good school: Warden Park Secondary Academy

Broad Street, Cuckfield, Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH17 5DP

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Inspection dates: 15 and 16 February 2022

## **Outcome**

Warden Park Secondary Academy continues to be a good school.

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

Staff and pupils greet each other respectfully. Pupils value the school's strong community ethos. They are welcoming towards visitors. They are happy and feel safe. They say that bullying is rare and is dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils benefit from studying a wide range of subjects. The school offers a wealth of additional opportunities for pupils.

The school has high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Low-level disruption is rare. Lessons observed during the inspection highlighted positive attitudes to behaviour and strong pupil engagement. The academic and pastoral curriculums are suitably balanced and equally valued.

The character supporting curriculum is a developing aspect of the school. Character traits, such as curiosity, kindness, ambition and pride, are valued and tracked. The curriculum supports pupils to be confident, resilient and independent learners. The careers programme ensures all pupils are well prepared for their future. A very high proportion of pupils proceed to sixth-form colleges and further education.

Leaders, governors and staff do all that they can to help pupils do well in school. Pupils know their teachers are passionate about their subjects. This encourages and motivates them to work hard. Senior leaders have a good understanding of the school because they are constantly to be seen around the school. They engage with pupils and appreciate the challenges facing them.

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

High aspirations, for all pupils, are at the heart of the school's ambitious curriculum. It is designed to give pupils the knowledge and understanding they need to succeed. The content covers the national curriculum and, in many areas, goes beyond. The school operates a two-year key stage 3 curriculum. Early option choices are suitably balanced, with extensive opportunities for additional subjects through twilight and extra-curricular provision, meaning pupils retain access to a broad curriculum.

A significantly high number of pupils take triple science, and the uptake of the English Baccalaureate is higher than the norm and improving. Literacy and subject-specific vocabulary are well supported across the curriculum. Reading is encouraged and additional reading support is offered to any pupils who fall behind. Pupils talk with confidence about their work. They can confidently articulate what they are learning.

The content of the curriculum builds successfully upon the primary curriculum. Continuity across phases is ensured through collaborative arrangements. Curriculum links post-16 are less well developed. The content builds well across lessons and years supported by schemes of work and regular recaps. Assessment is used very well to identify gaps, address any shortfalls and restructure the curriculum.

The curriculum suitably meets the needs of all pupils. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well known and well supported. These pupils, including those in the specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (specially resourced provision), make good progress, learning and remembering more. Higher attaining pupils are challenged through extensive additional content. This includes the 'ingenium course' offering an additional GCSE and aimed at developing pupils' research skills.

The 'Learning about Life' curriculum is suitably collated and hierarchically presented. The intention of this programme is very clear, although the implementation is still ongoing. The programme provides extensive and exceptional support for pupils' welfare and well-being. It is quickly responsive to issues or events that crop up such as consent and sexual harassment.

The leadership of the school is in good hands. Senior leaders and middle leaders are focused on further improvement to the curriculum and empowering pupils to develop personally, socially and emotionally. New staff are well inducted and positive about the support and training provided by the school. Leaders are responsive to suggestions for reducing staff's workload. Staff appreciate the support offered to reduce their workload.

Governors and trustees have a secure understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They visit the school regularly and actively engage with staff and pupils. They are supportive of leadership and sincerely committed to the success of the school. Leaders use effective strategies to support the mental health of staff and pupils. Staff and pupils are very positive about the support they receive.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong safeguarding culture throughout the school. Staff are suitably trained and receive regular updates. Safer recruitment practices meet statutory expectations. Appropriate checks are made on all staff, including those supporting pupils off site, in alternative provision. Information is recorded on a single central record. This record is checked regularly by leaders.

Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. For example, they learn how to stay safe online and they are knowledgeable about issues such as peer-on-peer abuse, upskirting and harmful sexual behaviour. Pupils know someone to talk to if they have any concerns. They say they will be taken seriously, and the matter will be dealt with in a timely and appropriate manner.

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

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

- While leaders have created a carefully planned and sequenced curriculum, this is not yet securely and consistently embedded across every subject. This means that further refinements are needed to ensure that implementation in all subjects is as good as the very best. Leaders should continue to share best practice and ensure that the curriculum intent and implementation are embedded securely and consistently across the school.

## **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 first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2017.

## **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>	137416
<b>Local authority</b>	West Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10200492
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1479
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Jonathan Ash-Edwards
<b>Headteacher</b>	Dom Kenrick
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.wardenpark.co.uk">www.wardenpark.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	19 and 20 January 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Warden Park Secondary Academy is a much larger-than-average 11 to 16, mixed school which is part of the Sussex Learning Trust.
- The school has a specially resourced provision, funded by the local authority, for pupils who have education, health and care plans to address their specific learning difficulties.
- In total, 14 pupils attend alternative provision at three registered education providers, two alternative provision providers and one tuition centre.
- 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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, science, geography and business studies. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a

sample of lessons, talked to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, as well as other staff in the school. They reviewed the procedures for safeguarding and looked at curriculum documents, school policies and attendance information. The lead inspector met with trustees and governors.
- Inspectors considered 225 responses to the Ofsted Parent View online questionnaire and 134 written comments from parents. They considered the survey responses from 369 pupils, alongside staff surveys undertaken by the school.

### **Inspection team**

Paul Metcalf, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Alan Johnson

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David Cousins

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