

Inspection of a good school: Whalley Range 11-18 High School

Wilbraham Road, Whalley Range, Manchester M16 8GW

Inspection dates:

27 and 28 April 2022

Outcome

Whalley Range 11-18 High School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

In this all-girls' school, pupils, including those students in the sixth form, come from many different backgrounds. They all benefit from learning about each other's cultural differences. The diverse school community supports pupils' understanding of tolerance and respect.

Staff expect high standards of conduct. Pupils are well behaved in lessons and around the school site. Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe and that they know whom to speak to if they are worried or upset. Pupils told inspectors that bullying of any sort is not common. They said that on most occasions staff handle these incidents well when they do occur.

Trustees, governors and leaders have high expectations of what pupils and students should achieve. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who speak English as an additional language, receive a strong quality of education and they achieve very well.

Pupils, and students in the sixth form, benefit from a wide-ranging personal development curriculum. They gain the knowledge and skills they need to live safe and happy lives. Staff go out of their way to offer pupils new and enriching experiences. For example, recently all Year 9 pupils visited a theatre in Manchester to see a play related to their English curriculum.

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

Leaders, governors and trustees have worked well together to develop the curriculum so that it is broad, balanced and ambitious across all key stages. Pupils at key stage 4 and at key stage 5 can choose from a range of subjects that meet their interests and needs. The sixth-form curriculum allows students to study a mixture of academic and vocational subjects. This flexibility has helped the sixth form to grow rapidly in size over recent years.

Subject leaders have designed the subject curriculums well. They ensure that pupils develop their knowledge in a logical order. Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They design learning carefully so that pupils can build their knowledge gradually and without feeling overwhelmed.

Most teachers make effective use of assessment information to form a helpful picture of what pupils know and understand. However, some teachers miss opportunities to check that all pupils have fully understood the essential knowledge defined in the subject curriculums. This affects how well some pupils progress through the curriculum.

Pupils behave well around the school site. Staff, pupils and students in the sixth form told inspectors that recent changes to the organisation of the pastoral system have led to a calmer school. The vast majority of pupils told inspectors that pupils treat each other with respect. However, a small minority of pupils did not feel this way. They did not always understand the way the behaviour policy was carried out or some of the decisions taken by staff when dealing with behaviour incidents.

Leaders accurately identify the needs of pupils and students with SEND. Since the previous inspection, leaders have ensured that all staff understand the specific needs of their pupils and students. This helps pupils and students with SEND to progress through the same ambitious subject curriculums as their peers.

Staff carefully assess the needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language. These pupils receive effective individual support from specialist teachers. Consequently, pupils who speak English as an additional language quickly gain an understanding of the English language. This enables them to make the progress that they should through the curriculum.

Leaders understand the importance of their pupils becoming fluent and confident readers. In each subject, teachers support pupils to develop their reading abilities. They encourage pupils to widen their specialist vocabulary. In lessons, pupils read out loud with ever-growing confidence. Leaders also encourage pupils to read widely and often, and this habit is becoming increasingly well established in the school. There are suitable arrangements in place to support those pupils at the early stages of reading.

Leaders have an effective personal development curriculum in place. Pupils, and students in the sixth form, receive appropriate relationships and sex education and health education. Experts are invited into school to deliver some of the most sensitive subjects, and pupils told inspectors that they really value these lessons. Leaders ensure that pupils, and students in the sixth form, receive suitable careers advice. Staff set high expectations for their pupils, and an increasing number are aspiring to staying on in the sixth form and moving on to higher education.

Staff appreciate how leaders and governors are developing ways to protect them from excessive workload. Leaders value the support that they receive from the trust and the local authority in improving further the quality of education in the school. Governors are well informed about the school and hold leaders to account effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong safeguarding culture across the school. Leaders are knowledgeable about the issues that pupils in the school may face. Staff are kept up to date through regular training and weekly briefings. Staff know what to do if they have concerns about a pupil.

Leaders work very well with external agencies to ensure that pupils and their families get the timely help they need.

Pupils are knowledgeable about the potential dangers they may encounter either online or in the local community.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes, some teachers do not use assessment strategies well enough to check whether pupils have fully understood the essential knowledge in the curriculum. This means that some pupils' learning is uneven. Leaders should ensure that all teachers understand how to use assessment strategies effectively to ascertain how well pupils have understood the curriculum. This is so that all pupils can build a rich body of knowledge across all subjects.

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 October 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	141264
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	10226220
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,644
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	296
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Elaine Ferneley
Headteacher	Jacqueline Fahey
Website	www.wrhs1118.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	19 April 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision at one registered alternative provider.
- The school is one of three secondary schools in the Education and Leadership Trust.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection that 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 held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders and subject leaders.
- The lead inspector met with trustees, governors and the acting chief executive officer of the Education and Leadership Trust and spoke to a representative of the local authority.

- Inspectors reviewed the school's records of safeguarding checks and referrals to the local authority. Inspectors spoke with staff about how they keep pupils safe. Inspectors also asked the pupils how they keep themselves safe and what they do if they have concerns.
- Inspectors held discussions with staff and considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils from all year groups and considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils.
- Inspectors considered the views of the parents who responded to Ofsted Parent View. This included the free-text responses.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, science, history and sociology. Inspectors met with subject leaders, discussed the curriculum, visited lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

Inspection team

Timothy Gartside, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
David Roberts	Ofsted Inspector
Dawn Farrent	Ofsted Inspector

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