

# Inspection of The Wensleydale School & Sixth Form

Richmond Road, Leyburn, North Yorkshire DL8 5HY

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Inspection dates: 25 and 26 May 2022

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Sixth-form provision	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Previous inspection grade	Good

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

Leaders have strong ambitions for pupils at the school. There are high expectations for behaviour and conduct. Staff share this vision and ensure that every pupil has the opportunity to flourish. Pupils speak with pride about the inclusive nature of the school, telling inspectors 'We are a tight-knit community.'

Relationships between adults and pupils are respectful. A strong, caring culture permeates all aspects of school life. As a result, pupils told inspectors they feel safe and supported.

Instances of poor behaviour, bullying and derogatory language have decreased over time. Pupils are kind and supportive of one another.

Pupils have the opportunity to attend lots of extra-curricular activities. These include, a Combined Cadet Force (CCF), walking club, Japanese puzzle club and a dedicated group that tends to the school's memorial garden. Pupils that inspectors spoke to were positive about these opportunities and experiences. A large proportion of the parents who responded to Ofsted's inspection questionnaire said they would recommend the school. Many spoke positively about the pastoral care the school provides.

Leaders ensure that pupils develop a strong sense of community responsibility. They raise money for charities, create links with local businesses and carry out voluntary work. The curriculum pupils follow extends well beyond the academic. It ensures pupils have opportunities to develop into responsible, caring and well-rounded adults.

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

Leaders have constructed a carefully planned and appropriately sequenced curriculum. They have considered what pupils need to learn and in what order. Teachers question pupils skilfully to develop their understanding. Where this curriculum is strongest, lessons are exciting and engaging for all pupils.

Some staff do not teach the curriculum so that pupils understand it well. Staff have detailed subject knowledge and know what they want pupils to learn. However, teachers' explanations can sometimes lack clarity. This leads to misconceptions in pupils' understanding in some subject curriculum areas.

Assessment is used well in many subjects. For example, in science, teachers' checks on pupils' understanding are thorough. However, the use of assessment across the curriculum varies in its effectiveness. In some subjects, teachers are less clear on what pupils know and can do.

The curriculum that most pupils study is ambitious. However, in the sixth form the limited curriculum does not allow students access to a broad and balanced range of subjects. In key stage 3 and 4, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. Pupils who attend the hub are supported to access the school's wider curriculum with their peers.

The school carefully identifies pupils who need additional reading support. Older students act as 'reading buddies' to support weaker readers. Leaders carefully monitor the progress of this programme. They plan further support for pupils when it is needed to help them read fluently and with confidence.

The school has a high proportion of pupils with SEND. In some subjects, lessons are planned with SEND pupils in mind. However, some staff require further training to suitably adapt their teaching to meet all pupils' needs. Leaders have not monitored the impact of SEND training over time.

Pupils contribute to discussions with enthusiasm. They are keen to answer many of the questions asked in class. Staff skilfully bring lessons to life, for example in science by physically demonstrating the earth's rotation. In other lessons pupils are not as motivated to learn. This leads to some low-level disruption at times.

Rates of attendance are stable. Leaders target those who are persistently absent and put appropriate actions in place to help improve their attendance. Rates of attendance in the sixth form are less strong.

The school day is carefully structured to provide dedicated time for personal development. Timetabled enrichment activities are open to all year groups. The community ethos created by these activities is tangible. 'Life and society' lessons help pupils prepare for life beyond school and include opportunities for debating, first aid and learning about other faiths. Careers provision is clearly planned and the Baker Clause is met. The Baker Clause requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships. Work experience opportunities take place for Year 10 pupils.

Leaders are unwavering in their commitment to the school and community. Parents praised leaders for their support during the pandemic. Leaders at all levels have a shared vision and ambition for pupils. Staff share leaders' aspirations for the school and appreciate the support they are given. However, leaders need to ensure consistency across the curriculum in areas such as assessment.

Several new governors have recently been appointed. They have worked quickly to develop an overview of the school's strengths and areas for development. However, some governors require additional training to ensure they can effectively support and challenge school leaders. The governing body is proactive in seeking new members with the right skills to further drive school improvement.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Those responsible for safeguarding constantly seek new ways to support the pupils in their care. They have worked hard to ensure excellent relationships with external agencies. This means that vulnerable pupils and their families are well supported.

Leaders keep detailed records of incidents that might place pupils at risk. They act on these in a timely manner and communicate clearly with parents and carers about next steps. Staff at the school are clear about safeguarding practice and know pupils well. Pupils' welfare is a priority for everyone at the school. Governors are also proactive in developing their knowledge of the risks posed to young people.

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

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

- Leaders do not effectively evaluate the impact of their work on pupils' learning. As a result, areas such as assessment remain underdeveloped. Leaders must refine and develop key strategies aimed at improving the quality of education pupils receive. In addition, they must plan ongoing professional development for curriculum leaders to ensure they have the skills and knowledge to further develop subject curriculum areas.
- Some staff who support pupils with SEND do not have the skills they need to do so effectively. Learning is not always suitably adjusted to meet the needs of all pupils. Consequently, the quality of education for pupils with SEND is not as strong as it could be. Leaders and governors must plan training which addresses these weaknesses. They must evaluate the impact of this work to assure themselves of its effectiveness.
- Over time, and in part due to financial constraints, the curriculum in the sixth form has narrowed. As a result, an ambitious and appropriately balanced curriculum is not in place to meet the needs of current and prospective students. Leaders must ensure the curriculum offer in the sixth form is expanded or reviewed to provide a sustainable curriculum for the future.

## 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>	121679
<b>Local authority</b>	North Yorkshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10227993
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	335
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	9
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Stephen Hanscombe
<b>Headteacher</b>	Julia Polley
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.wensleydaleschool.net">www.wensleydaleschool.net</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	7 February 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school has additional resourced provision for pupils with autism spectrum disorder.

## 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 of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: science, mathematics, history and business studies. For each deep dive inspectors discussed the

curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors met with governors, the head of school and senior leaders. They spoke to teaching and support staff. One inspector met with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders responsible for SEND provision and literacy across the school. The listened to a selection of pupils read and spoke to leaders about the assessment process across the school.
- Inspectors spoke with those staff responsible for safeguarding, and checked records and procedures for keeping young people safe, as well as speaking to staff and pupils. One inspector checked the single central record to ensure all adults on site were subject to appropriate safeguarding checks.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including any free-text responses. Inspectors also considered responses to the staff survey.

### **Inspection team**

John Linkins, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Janice Gorlach

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