

Inspection of a good school: WMG Academy for Young Engineers

Mitchell Avenue, Coventry, West Midlands CV4 8DY

Inspection dates:

7 and 8 June 2022

Outcome

WMG Academy for Young Engineers continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming here. They value the strong practical, technical and academic education they receive. One pupil told inspectors that they feel 'incredibly well prepared for the real world' because of their experiences here. Inspectors agree. Pupils, including those in the sixth form, are polite and courteous. Most exemplify the business-like values of the school in all that they do.

Pupils behave well in most lessons, particularly in the sixth form. When lessons are disrupted, most teachers deal with this effectively. Pupils told inspectors that issues such as bullying are rare. They get along well with their peers. They have faith in staff to tackle any inappropriate behaviour that does happen. Pupils build strong positive relationships with staff. Because of this, pupils feel safe here.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils. They have developed a broad and ambitious curriculum that extends far beyond the academic. For example, through the school's enrichment programme, many pupils represent the school, with great success, in national competitions such as the European Space Agency CanSat and the Royal Navy Engineering Challenge. These activities support pupils to develop their love of learning. They also help pupils to develop an understanding of employability skills such as teamwork and resilience.

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

The principal is passionate and dedicated. Her compelling vision, to provide a business-like and business-led academic and technical education, is shared by all staff and governors. This vision is being realised.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, leaders have made significant improvements to the school's curriculum. They have planned a detailed curriculum that outlines the important things that pupils need to know and remember. Across all subjects, they have carefully ordered this to make sure new knowledge builds effectively upon the things pupils already

know. This helps pupils to remember what they have been taught and make strong progress. For example, in computer science, students in the sixth form speak with confidence about challenging concepts such as computer code architecture.

While the curriculum is well considered, it is not always taught well. Some pupils struggle to remember the things they need to be successful. This is because some teachers do not use assessment well to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge. In some lessons, and particularly at key stage 4, teachers sometimes do not check that pupils have understood what has been taught before moving on. This leads to gaps in pupils' knowledge. This hinders their learning.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They make sure that all staff have the information they need to best support these pupils. Leaders check carefully that teachers use this information well. They provide strong support to teachers who need it. Consequently, teachers adapt their teaching effectively to ensure all pupils can access the challenging work given to them. Because of this, pupils with SEND, including those in the sixth form, make strong progress.

There is a developing culture of reading here. A growing number of pupils, including those in the sixth form, read often. The pupils make good use of the new library and are developing a love of reading. Pupils who struggle to read receive appropriate support to help them develop their fluency and comprehension. This work is beginning to show impact.

Pupils are polite and courteous. Most behave well in lessons. However, a small number of pupils do not always meet the high expectations that leaders have of them. When this happens, learning is disrupted. Most teachers challenge this effectively. However, some do not. This is because some teachers do not have high enough expectations of pupils' behaviour and conduct.

Leaders' work to promote pupils' wider personal development is impressive. They have skilfully woven elements of vocational learning into the curriculum so that it has become part of the fabric of the school. Pupils in all years benefit from a comprehensive range of work-related experiences. Consequently, pupils develop strong employability skills. When pupils leave the school, they move on to positive and appropriate destinations.

There is a broad range of opportunities for pupils at key stage 4 to develop their passions outside of the classroom. For instance, pupils regularly attend a range of sports clubs, such as rugby and football, as well as a jewellery production club and a robotics club. Leaders make sure that all pupils in key stage 4 benefit from these opportunities. Students in the sixth form told inspectors that they would value the same breadth of experience offered to pupils in key stage 4.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders take safeguarding seriously. They make sure that staff receive ongoing training to help them recognise pupils who are at risk of harm. Consequently, staff are vigilant. Leaders act quickly when concerns are raised. They do all they can to make sure pupils receive the support they need to stay as safe as possible.

Leaders have forged strong links with the local police. They use these to good effect to understand risks to pupils in their community. Leaders adapt the curriculum to make sure pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe from harm in a variety of situations, such as online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some teachers do not use assessment well enough to check pupils have understood what has been taught. This means that, on occasion, teachers do not identify gaps in pupils' knowledge before moving on. This holds pupils back. Leaders need to ensure that all teachers use assessment consistently well to check pupils' understanding and use this information to adapt their teaching and curriculum planning where necessary.
- Some staff do not have high enough expectations of pupils' behaviour and conduct. This means that unwanted behaviour is not consistently challenged well. Leaders should ensure that their expectations of pupils' behaviour and conduct are commonly understood and consistently applied by all staff.
- Some students in the sixth form do not benefit from a broad range of enrichment activities. Because of this, these students do not have the chance to develop their interests outside of the classroom. Leaders should ensure that the high-quality provision available for pupils in key stage 4 is broadened to encompass all students in the school's sixth form.

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 March 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

Unique reference number	140961
Local authority	Coventry
Inspection number	10226929
Type of school	Technical
School category	University technical college
Age range of pupils	14 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	483
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	225
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Stuart Baker
Principal	Kate Tague
Website	https://coventry.wmgacademy.org.uk/
Date of previous inspection	14 to 15 March 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is one of two schools that comprise the WMG Academy Trust.
- The school uses part-time alternative provision for a small number of pupils at two providers.
- 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 education 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 met with the principal and other senior leaders, including from across the multi-academy trust. Meetings were held with curriculum leaders and the special educational needs coordinator. Inspectors also met with a range of other staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, engineering and science. 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 scrutinised a range of safeguarding information, including the school's safeguarding policy, spoke to staff and pupils about safeguarding and looked at how pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. The lead inspector spoke to the safeguarding leaders about the reporting and recording of any safeguarding incidents.
- Inspectors took account of the parent free-text comments and responses to Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors also considered the responses to the pupil and staff surveys.

Inspection team

Alexander Laney, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Graeme Rudland

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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