

Inspection of a good school: Wellacre Technology Academy

Irlam Road, Flixton, Urmston, Manchester, Lancashire M41 6AP

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 June 2022

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are confident and polite. They said that they feel cared for, happy and safe at school. They understand that leaders have high expectations of their behaviour. Typically, pupils behave well around the school and in their lessons. Pupils are knowledgeable of and value differences between people and communities. They told inspectors that staff will resolve any bullying incidents quickly.

Pupils' learning of the curriculum varies. This is because leaders' ambitious vision for the academic curriculum is not fully realised. Some curriculums are well organised and implemented. However, other subject curriculums are not designed or delivered so effectively. Some staff assess pupils' knowledge and implement the curriculum less successfully. As a result, some pupils, including some of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), do not achieve as well as they should.

All pupils benefit from the wealth of clubs that leaders and staff provide. Pupils flourish through their participation in activities each week, such as eco-activities, cadets and a variety of community projects.

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

Governors and senior leaders are determined to provide a broad and ambitious curriculum for all pupils, including those with SEND. For example, they are aware that few pupils choose to study the subjects at key stage 4 that make up the English Baccalaureate. Leaders are ambitious and doing whatever they can to ensure that more pupils study a suitable range of subject options.

The achievement of pupils is uneven. This is because the organisation of curriculums varies between subjects and from class to class. Some subject leaders have designed

effective subject curriculums. These curriculums cover the important knowledge that staff need to teach. They order learning well so pupils can connect ideas and concepts across lessons. However, in some other subjects, leaders organise subject curriculums less effectively.

Staff's implementation of the subject curriculums is variable. Some staff are adept at spotting gaps in pupils' subject knowledge. They reteach pupils the knowledge that they did not learn securely first time around. However, some other staff misjudge when pupils are ready to move on in their curriculum knowledge. This prevents some pupils from securing the knowledge that they need before tackling new learning. Additionally, some staff do not provide pupils with the most suitable activities to build pupils' knowledge and help them to remember their previous learning. Consequently, some pupils lack the detailed subject knowledge that they need.

Leaders quickly identify any pupils who find reading difficult. Skilled staff provide effective support for this group of pupils so they catch up quickly in their reading. Additionally, staff provide pupils in all year groups with meaningful opportunities to read regularly and widely. This helps pupils to become more confident readers.

Leaders have appropriate systems in place to identify the needs of pupils with SEND. Staff receive useful information and training from leaders to help them to ensure that pupils with SEND learn the same curriculums as their peers. However, due to the variation in the subject curriculums, these pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

Pupils arrive to lessons on time and ready to learn. They behave sensibly and are keen to develop new knowledge. Their learning is not disrupted by poor behaviour in lessons.

Leaders provide pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those with SEND, with a rich range of activities that support their personal development. Pupils told inspectors that clubs and activities provide them with beneficial learning. Leaders ensure that through the curriculum staff help pupils to participate and succeed in life in modern Britain. More than one hundred pupils enjoy their roles as pupil leaders. Pupils also receive clear and impartial careers advice and guidance.

Staff told inspectors that they appreciate leaders' efforts to support their well-being and to ensure that they have a reasonable workload.

Governors provide the expertise and ambition required to fulfil their statutory duties and to help strengthen the weaker aspects of the curriculum.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that staff are trained and kept up to date with any risks that pupils may face. Staff know how to spot the signs that pupils may be at risk of harm. They are vigilant and report concerns quickly. Leaders make sure that any concerns about pupils' safety and well-being are acted on promptly.

Leaders quickly identify whether pupils require additional support from external agencies. They ensure that pupils get the timely help that they need.

Pupils learn about a range of risks to their safety and how to avoid them. They are confident in seeking help from staff when they need it.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the organisation of the curriculum is not fully developed. This hinders teachers in designing learning that provides pupils with sufficient knowledge. Leaders should ensure that teachers in these subjects are clear about the important and detailed knowledge that pupils require. This is so pupils know and remember more over time.
- Some staff do not identify the most suitable activities in order to implement the curriculum. This means that some pupils, including some pupils with SEND, do not deepen their knowledge and understanding of subjects well enough. Leaders should make sure that teachers understand how to deliver the subject curriculums well. This will help pupils to build on their prior learning and develop a rich body of knowledge.
- In some subjects, some teachers do not check that pupils' knowledge is secure before moving on in delivering the curriculum. This means that some pupils move on to new learning before they are ready. Consequently, this hampers their progress through these curriculums. Leaders should ensure that teachers assess pupils' understanding before introducing new knowledge.

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 May 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	136378
Local authority	Trafford
Inspection number	10226314
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	625
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Young
Headteacher	Julie Sharrock
Website	www.wellacre.org
Dates of previous inspection	9 and 10 May 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision at one registered external provider.

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 school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders and subject leaders.
- The lead inspector met with a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- The lead inspector spoke with 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 pupils how they learn to keep themselves safe and what to do if they have any concerns.

- Inspectors held discussions with staff and considered the responses to Ofsted's survey for staff.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils from all year groups and considered the responses to Ofsted's survey for pupils.
- Inspectors considered the views of the parents and carers who responded to Ofsted Parent View. This included the free-text responses. Inspectors also considered the views of a parent who requested a conversation by telephone.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, history and mathematics. In these subjects, inspectors met with subject leaders, considered subject curriculums, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at samples of pupils' work from some other subjects.

Inspection team

Stephen Ruddy, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Fiona Burke-Jackson

Ofsted Inspector

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