

Inspection of The John Warner School

Stanstead Road, Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire EN11 0QF

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 October 2022

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Inadequate

Personal development

Inadequate

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Sixth-form provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Most pupils have high aspirations for themselves and value their education. However, many are disappointed by the unacceptable experience they receive at the school. They are particularly frustrated by regular disruptions to learning and the poor behaviour of a significant minority of pupils. Students in the sixth form have similar frustrations about the way poor behaviour affects their school experience.

A large proportion of pupils told us that they do not feel safe at the school. Many pupils recounted their unpleasant experiences and expressed worries about school. These include teasing about personal characteristics such as ethnic background and gender, being victim of or having to witness violence, and being prevented from using toilets due to the poor conduct of others. One in three pupils reported on Ofsted's survey that bullying happens at the school and teachers are not good at resolving it. Many parents and staff share similar concerns about pupils' safety.

Over the last 12 months, pupils have experienced many changes in teachers and leaders at the school. This has led to varied expectations by staff of what pupils can learn and do, and an inconsistent standard of teaching.

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

Leaders' curriculum has many elements that are well planned and delivered. This, however, is not consistently the case. In some areas of the curriculum, teachers try to teach too much at the same time. In other areas, teachers are unclear about what pupils must know and understand, so do not deliver exactly what pupils need. Teachers do not check well enough whether pupils have learned what they need to in order to understand what is to be taught next. While these features of the curriculum are also found in the sixth form, improvements are more advanced than in the rest of the school.

Support for pupils who find reading hard is not fully developed. Leaders have in place the mechanism to assess how well pupils can read, but have not yet done so for all pupils. Leaders also have not provided training for all staff to give the support pupils need when they find reading difficult. As a result, some of the weakest readers receive effective support to improve, but many others who also need help do not.

Leaders identify and provide detailed and accurate guidance for teachers when planning and delivering learning activities for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). When teachers use this information, pupils learn more confidently and effectively. However, teachers do not always use this information. Also, teachers do not demonstrate the expertise needed to support pupils with SEND consistently well. Many teachers unsuccessfully try to support pupils to overcome their challenges and learn what they need.

The behaviour policy is not achieving what leaders intend. Staff do not follow the behaviour policy consistently, partly because some staff do not agree with leaders' chosen approach. This means that staff have different expectations of what is acceptable behaviour and attempt to manage unwanted behaviour differently across the school. In lessons, too many pupils disrupt the learning of others.

Leaders have not improved pupils' attendance to an acceptable level. An alarming number of pupils in Years 10 and 11 are regularly absent and miss large parts of the curriculum.

Leaders and staff have not been successful in teaching pupils how to respect others' differences. In 2021, leaders conducted a survey of pupils and found that most pupils in Year 9 and Year 10 heard sexist language on a regular basis. Leaders' survey of staff showed that nearly all staff heard sexist name calling on a regular basis. In response, leaders set out plans to improve the personal, social and health education (PSHE) provision at the school. Teachers now teach leaders' new curriculum for PSHE. Ofsted's survey and discussions with pupils during this inspection show that racist, sexist, homophobic and transphobic language continues to be unacceptably prevalent.

Leaders' provision for careers education, advice and guidance supports pupils well to make informed decisions about next steps in employment, education or training. Leaders have ensured that the school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause.

Leaders have not engaged with stakeholders well enough to make the improvements the school needs. Many staff, parents and pupils told us that they do not have confidence that leaders will make the necessary changes to the school. Since the previous inspection, elements of the school's provision have got worse. Trust leaders and trustees have not supported governors effectively. Governors do not get the information they need to know the strengths and weaknesses of the school and hold leaders strictly to account.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Too many pupils feel that the school is not safe. Parents and staff agree. Only just over half of pupils that replied to Ofsted's pupil survey reported that there is an adult at school they can talk to if something is worrying them.

Staff know the signs of harm and neglect. They respond quickly and appropriately when concerns arise. They do not, however, have measures in place to prevent some of the safeguarding incidences that happen at school. School records show concerning events, demonstrating that leaders need to secure pupils' safety with urgency.

When allegations are raised regarding the conduct of adults at the school, leaders unnecessarily delay contacting the Local Authority Designated Officer to ensure that

the right steps are being taken in dealing with the issue. Leaders ensure that all adults are checked for suitability to work with children prior to joining the staff.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not created a school environment where pupils are safe and feel safe. Pupils, parents and staff worry about the violence and nastiness that pupils experience at school. Too many pupils do not feel that they can talk about their concerns with staff at school. Leaders need to create a safe environment where pupils feel that they are well looked after and able to find help at school when concerns arise.
- Leaders have not developed a school ethos where pupils behave well and focus on their learning. This is because staff are not unified in their approach, acting inconsistently when managing pupils' behaviour. Leaders must clarify their behaviour policy and procedures, and train staff so that they understand the agreed approach. Leaders must ensure that staff manage pupils' behaviour using leaders' behaviour policy and procedures.
- Pupils experience discriminatory language far too often and this is significantly affecting the well-being of some pupils. Leaders need to improve how staff support pupils' personal development so that they are prepared for life in modern Britain, living alongside people with different backgrounds and lifestyles.
- Leaders have not enabled teachers to support pupils with SEND and those who find reading hard effectively. This results in these pupils not overcoming the challenges they face or learning as well as they could. Leaders need to train staff how to adapt their teaching to support pupils with SEND and those who struggle with reading.
- Leaders have not planned the whole curriculum well enough. They need to clarify exactly what pupils must know and understand. Leaders must also ensure that teachers teach the intended knowledge in ways that help pupils remember what has been taught.

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.

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 | 136607 |
| Local authority | Hertfordshire |
| Inspection number | 10227778 |
| Type of school | Secondary Comprehensive |
| School category | Academy converter |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 18 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 1285 |
| Of which, number on roll in the sixth form | 184 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | David Kennedy |
| Headteacher | Jeremy Scott |
| Website | www.johnwarner.herts.sch.uk/ |
| Date of previous inspection | 6 and 7 February 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- The school currently uses two registered alternative 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

The inspector(s) carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons

responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

- Inspectors held discussions with trustees, governors, the chief executive officer, the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, the special educational needs coordinator, teachers, members of support staff, parents and pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: business studies, English, history, mathematics, modern foreign languages, physical education, science, and religious education. 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 also looked at curriculum documents and samples of pupils' work, and visited lessons in some other subjects.
- When inspecting safeguarding, inspectors held discussions with the designated safeguarding lead, teachers, members of support staff and pupils. Inspectors also looked at school policies regarding safeguarding, child protection records and the central record of background checks made to ensure adults at the school are suitable to work with children.
- Inspectors considered the responses from 84 staff, 325 pupils and 204 parents to Ofsted's online surveys for this inspection.

Inspection team

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Al Mistrano, lead inspector | His Majesty's Inspector |
| Karen Kerridge | Ofsted Inspector |
| Sue Pryor | Ofsted Inspector |
| Carole Herman | Ofsted Inspector |
| Alastair Ogle | Ofsted Inspector |

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022