

Inspection of The Westwood Academy

Mitchell Avenue, Canley, Coventry, West Midlands CV4 8DY

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 November 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Sixth-form provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

'A thirst for learning' is the aim for all at The Westwood Academy. For lots of pupils, this is achieved. Leaders are committed to ensuring that all pupils get the best outcomes from their time at the school. Pupils are positive about how teachers challenge them to learn and expect lots from them. They feel that they are supported to be emotionally and physically healthy. For some pupils, lessons help them develop the knowledge they need over time. There remains some work to be done to ensure that the curriculum and the way it is taught ensure that pupils get the most from all lessons.

Pupils' conduct in lessons is generally strong. However, some pupils' attendance and attitudes to learning are not always positive. Pupils say that while bullying can happen, they are confident that staff act when this is reported to reduce the chance of it happening again. Inspectors agree.

Opportunities to prepare pupils for employment, higher education or training are given a high priority. The provision for careers is a real strength of the school. Pupils are positive about the support they get to be ready for their next steps. Sixth-form students enjoy their studies and do well.

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

Since the last inspection, there have been several significant changes at the school. Pupil numbers are increasing quickly over time, and there have been substantial changes to staffing. Leaders, governors and the multi-academy trust have a clear vision for the school. Their initial actions to improve attendance, provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and reading demonstrate the drive to ensure that all get the best outcomes from their time at Westwood. Leaders know that some things need to get better. Their actions demonstrate their commitment to doing this quickly.

Pupils study a broad curriculum to develop their knowledge in different subjects. In subjects such as history and art, pupils learn the knowledge they need to be creative or develop as historians. However, in some other subjects, leaders have not ensured pupils are taught the right knowledge at the right time. Leaders are currently putting in place new sequences of lessons to ensure that pupils have the essential knowledge they need to be confident for future learning.

Some pupils start at school not being able to read well enough to access all subjects independently. The school is currently developing its approach to ensuring all pupils are confident readers. For those who cannot read, there are targeted interventions provided by the inclusion department to teach phonics, decoding and comprehension. Lessons in English are highly focused on providing opportunities to build confidence in reading. However, this is not yet the case in most other subjects.

In some subjects, teachers regularly check that pupils get the most from each lesson. For example, pupils use whiteboards in mathematics to quickly demonstrate their understanding. Teachers then adapt the lesson to correct misunderstandings. However, in some other subjects, teachers do not systematically check on the knowledge of all pupils and adjust their teaching when needed.

For pupils with SEND, provision is improving. Pupils' needs are accurately identified by the SEND team, and support is put in place to meet those needs. This support takes place within the inclusion department. While this support is positive, it sometimes means pupils do not consistently access all other subjects. Leaders know there is more to be done in this area to ensure that all teachers are skilled in understanding SEND and adapting their lessons accordingly to ensure pupils with SEND consistently access a broad and balanced curriculum.

Students in the sixth form are rightly positive about the breadth and quality of the provision they access. Their lessons successfully build their knowledge over time. Study skills and opportunities to support charities are promoted. Students go on to higher education destinations, and feel this is due to the support and guidance they received in the sixth form. As a result of quality pastoral support and personal development in the sixth form, students are confident and aspirational about their futures.

Pupils inspectors spoke to are proud of their school and want to get the most from every opportunity available to them. However, some pupils are not as focused on learning as they might be and need too much prompting to stay on task in lessons. Some pupils who responded to the pupil survey raised concerns about behaviour during breaktimes or between lessons. Attendance is improving over time. However, there are still too many who do not attend school enough.

Getting pupils ready for life in modern Britain is a high priority at the school. Every day starts with mentoring sessions for all pupils. Sometimes, these are used to develop discussion and debate around important issues such as abuse, bullying and self-harm. However, this is not consistently the case. A significant number of pupils who responded to the survey suggest they do not have opportunities to develop their talents and interests.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Regular training and updates from leaders ensure that all staff know their responsibilities around reporting concerns when needed. When concerns are raised, those responsible for safeguarding move quickly to investigate and act. In the past, leaders have been too trusting that other external services share their commitment to keeping pupils safe, and have been reluctant to challenge those services. However, this is changing, and leaders' current actions show a commitment to make safeguarding even better at the school and to hold other services accountable.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The planned curriculum and implementation of that curriculum in some subjects do not always ensure pupils learn the critical knowledge and skills they need. In some cases, pupils are not prepared for the following stages of learning because they have not been taught certain content or do not understand previous lessons. Leaders need to ensure that the planned curriculum in all subjects and key stages is structured well and delivered as intended to teach pupils the knowledge they need to be ready for the next steps in learning.
- Not all teachers have a secure enough understanding of pupils' individual learning needs, particularly for those with SEND and those who are less able, and do not, therefore, adapt their lessons accordingly. This means some of these pupils do not get the most from the intended curriculum. Leaders need to ensure that all teachers understand the reasons for the additional needs of pupils in their classes and adapt their teaching accordingly when required.
- The strategies that leaders want teachers to use to teach pupils to be confident readers are not yet embedded across the curriculum. This means there are missed opportunities to develop reading skills and to practise those skills in other areas. Leaders need to develop a shared commitment across all subjects to ensure that all pupils develop as confident readers who can independently access all aspects of the curriculum.
- Leaders have not yet ensured that all pupils attend well, have positive attitudes to learning and interact appropriately in school. This means that some pupils do not get the most from lessons or wider experiences in the school. Leaders need to ensure that all pupils attend more regularly and develop positive attitudes to their learning and wider experiences in school.

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	137225
Local authority	Coventry
Inspection number	10242241
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	779
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	71
Appropriate authority	Local governing body
Chair of governing body	Emma Sharp
Headteacher	Helen Lawrence
Website	http://thewestwoodacademy.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	17 October 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The current headteacher took up post in September 2019.
- The school operates a joint sixth-form provision with the other school in the multi-academy trust. Students access a broad range of courses both at the Westwood site and the Kenilworth school site. Transport is provided for the students between both locations.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision.
- Programmes of study for older pupils meet the requirements of the Baker Clause. This means pupils in Years 8 to 13 receive information about the full range of education and training options. This includes opportunities for various education and training providers to speak to pupils about technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded 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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. Meetings were held with curriculum leaders and staff from the inclusion department. Inspectors also met with a range of other staff, such as staff from the sixth form.
- Inspectors met with representatives of the governing body. Meetings were also held with a representative of the multi-academy trust.
- Inspectors sampled the school's use of alternative provisions through a remote conversation with one registered alternative provider.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into these subjects: English, mathematics, history, science and art. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, talked to some pupils about their learning and looked at examples 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 to keep themselves safe. The lead inspector spoke to the safeguarding lead about reporting and recording any safeguarding incidents.
- Inspectors took account of parents' 'free-text' comments and the responses on Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors also considered the answers to the pupil and staff surveys.

Inspection team

Chris Pollitt, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Nicola Beech	His Majesty's Inspector
Helen Reeves	Ofsted Inspector
Jacqueline Newsome	Ofsted Inspector

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