

Inspection of a good school: Weobley High School

Burton Wood, Weobley, Hereford, Herefordshire HR4 8ST

Inspection dates:

24 and 25 January 2023

Outcome

Weobley High School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Happiness is central to daily life at Weobley High School. Almost every pupil enjoys school. They know they belong to an inclusive community where people respect and care for each other.

Pupils talk to each other, staff and visitors with respect and good humour. They are open when sharing their views and opinions because school leaders have created opportunities for them to be heard. Pupils feel safe in school. If bullying happens, leaders deal with it promptly.

Pupils enjoy learning a wide range of subjects. They appreciate the way teachers help them to learn and are confident that they will be successful. The curriculum is carefully thought out in most subjects, but there are a few subjects where the curriculum is not as strong. Pupils are well-prepared for their next steps in education and beyond.

Most pupils take advantage of the clubs and activities the school provides beyond the curriculum. From rugby to drama to cooking, there is usually an extra-curricular opportunity that will appeal. Younger pupils enjoy the variety of the workshops they have on 'Enrichment Tuesdays', including animation and philosophy. Older pupils value contributing to the school community through being prefects and buddy readers.

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

Leaders believe that a happy pupil will enjoy their learning and be more successful. They have shaped a curriculum that is not only broad, but is also flexible from one year to the next. There is a lengthy process of consultation with Year 9 pupils and their parents and carers to ensure that the offer for key stage 4 is well-matched to the pupils' needs and interests wherever possible. For example, the school employs a part-time dance teacher to provide GCSE Dance for a small number of pupils. There is clear ambition behind the curriculum. This extends from ensuring that pupils with special educational needs and/or

disabilities (SEND) have full access to the same curriculum as their peers, to the academic depth of learning that takes place in the 'express groups' lessons.

The curriculum in each subject has been logically planned to build pupils' knowledge from the start of Year 7 to the end of Year 11. Sometimes, the structure of the curriculum weaves together the important content and the subject-specific skills required for success very well. For example, pupils understand how they are becoming more sophisticated writers in English from one year to the next, regardless of the topic they are currently learning about. This skilful curriculum planning is not as secure in a few subjects.

Lessons at Weobley are characterised by teachers sharing their strong subject knowledge clearly so that pupils learn well. They use several questioning techniques and pupils are keen to contribute answers. Teachers make good use of different types of assessment strategies to help pupils to improve their knowledge and understanding. This helps pupils to make good progress.

Pupils with SEND represent a significant proportion of the pupil cohort, yet leaders have ensured that their individual needs are met at a very personalised level. This is because leaders take a rigorous approach to identifying and supporting any pupils who may have SEND. These pupils enjoy their learning and value the extra support they receive. Leaders have rightly prioritised reading as an area of focus this year. There are strong programmes in place to help the weakest readers make rapid progress.

Leaders are justifiably proud of the culture they have created around behaviour. Pupils help each other to work hard in their lessons and do not disrupt learning. Pupils are happy to socialise across year groups. Social times are calm, with pupils enjoying each other's company appropriately. When the occasional pupil does not meet this expectation, it is responded to quickly and fairly.

Pupils' personal development is a strength. Leaders have mapped a cohesive programme that is covered via form time, assemblies, lessons and 'consultation days'. The school runs a wide extra-curricular programme and the work that is done to ensure non-local pupils can attend these opportunities is both creative and deeply caring. Pupils learn about careers in a well-structured way and all Year 10 pupils go on work experience for a week.

Leaders and governors know their school well and take a pupil-centred approach to their decision-making. Staff know that leaders also care about them, their workload and their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. Leaders provide comprehensive safeguarding training for staff. Staff know the pupils well and spot any small changes in behaviour that suggest a pupil may be at risk of harm. They pass on concerns promptly and leaders act in a timely way to ensure that pupils get the help and support they need.

Records of concerns are now stored online but not all staff are using this system consistently.

Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe through the school's personal development curriculum. This includes topics such as online safety and consent.

Leaders ensure that appropriate recruitment checks are carried out before staff begin working at the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school has moved to an online system for recording safeguarding concerns. This system is not yet being used consistently by all staff. As a result, it is not always easy to identify the actions that have been taken when reviewing records of concerns. Leaders should ensure that all staff have a full understanding of how to use the system and are using it properly.
- Some subjects have not mapped subject-specific (disciplinary) knowledge and skills as effectively as others. This means that pupils are not consistently able to apply their subject knowledge as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum is planned so that pupils gain equally strong subject-specific (disciplinary) knowledge in all subjects.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 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.

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	116952
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	10256996
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	536
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Marcus Williams
Headteacher	Dean Williams
Website	www.weobleyhigh.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	21 and 22 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Weobley Schools' Federation, which contains two schools.
- The school makes use of two registered and two unregistered alternative providers for a small number of pupils. The latter are used for part-time provision.
- The school meets the requirement of the provider access legislation (Baker Clause), which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement 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 carried out deep dives in the following subjects: English, history and modern foreign languages. Inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and talked with pupils and teachers about the way these subjects are taught. They also looked at other subjects to check the curriculum and how they are taught.

- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents. These included information about behaviour, the curriculum and improvement planning. The school's website was also checked.
- Inspectors talked to staff and leaders about safeguarding arrangements. They examined how leaders make employment checks on staff and scrutinised safeguarding records. They also asked how incidents reported by pupils are recorded and analysed. Inspectors spoke to pupils about safeguarding and how they learn to keep themselves safe.
- Inspectors observed informal times of the day to evaluate safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors held meetings with governors, the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers and pupils. They also talked informally to pupils and staff to gather general information about school life.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and free-text comments. Inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Nicola Beech, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Richard Sutton

Ofsted Inspector

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