

Inspection of a good school: Wilsthorpe School

Derby Road, Long Eaton, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire NG10 4WT

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 May 2023

Outcome

Wilsthorpe School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have high expectations of pupils at Wilsthorpe School. Pupils succeed because they understand and live out these expectations. Pupils demonstrate the school's values of ambition, teamwork and honesty. This prepares them well for life in modern society. The result is a vibrant school. Pupils are motivated to learn here and do their best. Pupils behave very well.

Relationships between staff and pupils are positive and respectful. Pupils feel safe. They know that they can talk to staff about any concerns they may have. Bullying is rare. Pupils are confident that, when bullying does happen, staff deal with it effectively.

Pupils are offered a wide range of experiences during their time at the school. They learn to play a musical instrument, play a variety of sports, raise money for a local charity and take part in school performances. They enjoy history and art visits. Many pupils take part in the Duke of Edinburgh's bronze award. They learn about future employment. Parents and carers value the work that the school does to support their children. One comment, typical of many, is: 'This is a wonderful school, with dedicated teachers. I cannot praise them highly enough.'

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

Leaders provide pupils with a curriculum that is ambitious and well organised. They have identified the key knowledge, skills and vocabulary they want pupils to learn from Year 7 to Year 13. Subject leaders have received training to develop their curriculum expertise. In most subjects, the curriculum is implemented consistently and effectively. However, in a few other subjects, this is not as strong as it could be. Teachers make frequent checks to find out what pupils know. This helps teachers to identify and deal with gaps in pupils' knowledge. For example, in history, 'memory tasks' enable pupils to revisit what they have learned. These tasks help pupils to know and remember more.

The number of pupils undertaking the English Baccalaureate qualification remains low. However, leaders are taking appropriate and decisive action to improve this.

Leaders have ensured that the curriculum for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) meets their needs. Leaders identify pupils with SEND promptly. Teachers receive effective training to support pupils with SEND well. As a result, pupils with SEND access the full curriculum and are successful.

Leaders have a clear vision for the sixth form. Students choose from a broad range of subjects. They progress well in most subjects. Leaders have designed a learning environment that helps students to study. Students learn about university, apprenticeships and employment. They also learn about basic first aid, online extremism, healthy relationships and sexual health. Leaders provide opportunities for students to develop their leadership skills. For example, some students deliver alcohol and LGBTQ+ awareness sessions at other schools. Students support younger pupils who need extra help with their reading and writing.

Leaders ensure that reading is a priority throughout the school. Leaders have carefully chosen texts in every subject to support pupils' reading. This helps pupils to gain and understand key vocabulary. Leaders identify pupils who may be falling behind with reading. These pupils receive extra, effective support, which helps them to catch up.

Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. They behave very well in lessons and around the school. They are respectful and show compassion to others in the school community. They take pride in their work and look after the school environment.

The curriculum to support pupils' personal development is exceptional. It is relevant and topical. Disadvantaged pupils gain many experiences that enrich their lives. The curriculum helps pupils to learn how to debate and consider different viewpoints. This helps pupils to empathise and be tolerant and respectful of all communities. For example, pupils consider the lives of refugees and why they have fled their countries. Pupils learn how to keep themselves physically and mentally fit. They learn about the dangers of drugs and peer pressure and about road, water and online safety. Pupils raise money for a local homeless charity and to make hampers for local food banks. Leaders have thought carefully about these wider opportunities. They are preparing pupils well for life in modern Britain.

Leaders consider the workload and well-being of staff. Staff, including those new to teaching, say leaders support them well to be successful in their roles. Leaders undertake appropriate checks, which helps to ensure that pupils who attend alternative provision are safe. The governing body and members of the trust support and challenge leaders well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, including the governing body, take their safeguarding responsibilities very seriously. The safeguarding and pastoral teams are well trained and take effective action

when staff or pupils raise concerns. Leaders make sure that all record-keeping is detailed and up to date. They also make sure that staff receive relevant safeguarding training. Staff understand how to recognise the risks pupils may face. They know how to report any safeguarding concerns they have. Leaders work well with external agencies. They ensure that pupils and their families have the help and support they need when required.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is well sequenced and that it identifies the core knowledge that pupils need to know and by when. However, in a few subjects, the curriculum is not implemented as securely and consistently when compared with others. This means that pupils are not as confident in what they have learned and do not recall the knowledge as effectively as they could. Leaders must ensure that the curriculum is implemented effectively across all subjects, enabling pupils to learn and remember more as they progress through the school.

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 predecessor school, Wilsthorpe School, to be good in November 2016.

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	146451
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10268467
Type of school	Secondary
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	1,196
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	132
Appropriate authority	Board of Trustees
Chair of Trust	Karen Potts
Headteacher	Derek Hobbs
Website	http://www.wilsthorpe.ttct.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 and 22 January 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school uses five alternative providers.

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 held meetings with leaders, including the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, curriculum leaders and the head of sixth form.

- Inspectors conducted deep dives in the following subjects: history, mathematics, modern foreign languages, art and physical education. To do this, they met with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and met with teachers and pupils. The lead inspector also observed some pupils reading to an adult.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the board of trustees and the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to the Ofsted online surveys for staff, parents and pupils. They considered the views of pupils throughout the inspection.
- To inspect safeguarding, behaviour logs, the single central record and safeguarding records were scrutinised. Inspectors conducted meetings with leaders to discuss the safeguarding of pupils.
- Inspectors considered pupils' behaviour at various times of day, including in lessons, around the school site and at lunchtime.

Inspection team

Stephen Long, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Sue Wood	Ofsted Inspector
April Wright	Ofsted Inspector
Teresa Roche	Ofsted Inspector

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