

Inspection of Wollaston School

Irchester Road, Wollaston, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire NN29 7PH

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 May 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Sixth-form provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Staff and pupils are proud of the school. The school's core values of 'kindness, community and ambition' are seen throughout the school.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils. Most pupils work hard, behave well and display positive attitudes towards their learning. Pupils benefit from both a well-planned curriculum and positive relationships with their teachers.

Pupils and students in the sixth form are polite and respectful. The ethos of the school is inclusive. All pupils know that any form of discrimination, derogatory language or bullying is not acceptable. Pupils benefit from strong pastoral care. They feel safe in school. They know that there are staff who they can talk to if they have any concerns.

Pupils have a wide range of opportunities to be leaders and have influence in their school. These include being on the school council and being ambassadors for diversity, learning, well-being and the community. Pupils know that they are raising awareness in their roles, communicating more and supporting charities.

A range of clubs and activities are available for pupils. Many pupils enjoy participating in clubs, including sports clubs, a coding club, a fantasy role-playing game club and a book club. Some pupils complete the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

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

Leaders have designed a broad and ambitious curriculum. Pupils study a wide range of different subjects. In most subjects, leaders have thought carefully about what they want pupils to learn and when. The order in which pupils learn new knowledge provides them with effective opportunities to revisit and build on prior learning.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. Most teachers use assessment well to check pupils' understanding and identify gaps in their learning. Teachers use retrieval tasks, questioning and low-stakes testing. However, not all teachers consistently identify gaps and misconceptions in pupils' learning, so they do not always address them. The intended learning outcomes in lessons are ambitious. However, teachers' expectations of the work produced in some lessons are not always high enough to achieve those outcomes.

Most teachers give pupils feedback that helps them to improve their work. Pupils respond well to the feedback provided through 'fix-it' tasks.

Leaders know that reading is important. Staff encourage pupils to read widely. They make sure that pupils read a wide range of diverse, challenging texts. Leaders have recently introduced a whole-school approach to developing pupils' vocabulary and literacy. Pupils who need help to read more accurately or fluently get the right

support. The recent work that is happening around reading is helping to encourage and build a love of reading in the school.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). While leaders have improved the provision for these pupils, they recognise that there is still work to be done. Sometimes, the curriculum is not always adapted successfully to ensure that pupils are able to meet the curriculum goals.

Students in the sixth form are fully involved in the life of the school. They are positive role models. Students enjoy their sixth-form experience. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and provide supportive feedback. Students enjoy positive relationships with their teachers. They are proud of their school and would recommend the sixth form to others. Sixth-form students are well prepared for future success.

Leaders have implemented a clear behaviour policy. Most staff apply it consistently and pupils appreciate this. Low-level disruption is usually dealt with swiftly and fairly. Pupils who sometimes make the wrong choices are supported to meet the school's expectations. As a result, pupils participate well in lessons and behave appropriately around the school site.

The curriculum goes beyond the academic and is well planned and sequenced. All pupils have one lesson a week of personal, social and health education. This includes lessons connected to healthy relationships and lifestyles. Pupils' personal development is well catered for. Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of relationships and how to stay safe.

Leaders have established a detailed programme of careers advice and guidance. It is of a good quality, and pupils spoke positively about it to inspectors. Leaders have carefully considered the context of the school and the needs of pupils. Pupils have a wealth of information to prepare them for life beyond school.

Governance is strong. The governors and trustees are knowledgeable and hold leaders to account effectively. They also provide effective support. Staff are proud and motivated to work at this school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff receive high-quality training in safeguarding and regular updates from experienced safeguarding leaders. Staff understand their responsibility to report any concerns. Leaders keep accurate records. They use this information to ensure that pupils get the help they need.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. This includes when they are online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders are aware that some aspects of the curriculum need further refinement, especially ensuring that teachers' use of formative assessment consistently identifies gaps and misconceptions in pupils' knowledge and that expectations are consistently high. Leaders must ensure that assessment processes and the delivery of the curriculum in all subjects are of equally high quality so that pupils learn as well as they should.
- Some pupils with SEND are not supported well enough. Consequently, these pupils are unable to progress through the curriculum as well as they should. Leaders should ensure that teachers use the information about pupils with SEND to adapt how they deliver curriculum content.

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	146489
Local authority	North Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10268770
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	1,406
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	221
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Margaret Clements
Headteacher	Simon Anderson (Head of school)
Website	www.wollastonschool.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Nene Valley Partnership.
- The school uses two registered and two unregistered alternative provisions.
- 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 education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Wollaston School converted to become an academy in April 2019. When its predecessor school, Wollaston School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- 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.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in English, history, science, art, modern foreign languages and mathematics. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils, and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also visited a range of lessons in other subjects.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for behaviour, personal development, and the provision for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils from key stages 3, 4 and 5.
- The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead to discuss the actions taken to keep pupils safe. She reviewed a range of documents and the single central record.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- The lead inspector met with governors and trustees.
- Inspectors observed pupils around the school at breaktime and lunchtime.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and considered the results of the Ofsted staff and pupil questionnaires.

Inspection team

Dawn Ashbolt, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Paul Sweeney	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Rhatigan	Ofsted Inspector
Alison Davies	Ofsted Inspector
Jane Burton	Ofsted Inspector
Derek Hobbs	Ofsted Inspector

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