

Inspection of Walton High

Fyfield Barrow, Walnut Tree, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire MK7 7WH

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 Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils attending Walton High are well cared for because staff prioritise getting to know them. Pupils learn a carefully considered curriculum that teaches them the skills they need to be successful in life. Pupils are ambitious and want to do well because staff help them see their potential. Teachers carefully remove barriers that may prevent pupils from achieving their best.

The two school campuses are calm and purposeful. Most staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Relationships between members of the school community are largely positive. Pupils speak highly of the peer mentorship they receive from the students in the sixth form. They show care and consideration for their school and the people in it. Pupils show emotional resilience and can deal with minor disputes themselves. When needed, they trust staff to help them resolve conflicts, should this be requested.

Opportunities for pupils to extend their learning outside of the classroom are extensive. The 'Advanced Learning Days' help pupils focus and apply their learning from all their subjects. For example, a visit to local Bletchley Park helped pupils apply their mathematical and computing knowledge and to learn about the importance of human endeavour.

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

Leaders are implementing an increasingly ambitious curriculum. In the past, uptake of a foreign language has been low. To overcome this, leaders have increased the number of languages pupils can study, including Mandarin and Latin. All pupils now learn two languages in key stage 3. Leaders also offer a wide range of academic and vocational courses at key stages 4 and 5. Most pupils continue their education in the oversubscribed school sixth form because of the clear pathways within each subject. These routes help pupils plan for future career goals and ambitions. Leaders' thoughtful actions also ensure the curriculum is equally accessible to all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

The knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn have been carefully identified and ordered. Leaders continuously review the curriculum to provide pupils opportunities to recap what they have learned. Teachers use their expert knowledge to teach with clarity and precision. This includes teachers using information from 'Pupil Profiles' to adapt learning to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. However, not all teachers check that all pupils have retained learning before moving on to new topics. Consequently, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge, meaning they struggle to remember what they have previously learned over a longer period of time.

Leaders promote a love of reading through their 'Read to Succeed' curriculum. Within tutor time, pupils routinely enjoy a wide range of well-selected texts, which are representative of the rich cultural diversity within the pupil cohort. Leaders

regularly check pupils' reading skills and provide effective support for those that need additional help to catch up.

Lessons are typically calm. This enables pupils to focus on learning. When needed, leaders put thoughtful support in place to help pupils that struggle to regulate their behaviour. Most pupils are improving their attendance following the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The school's family support team work closely with pupils and their families to remove barriers preventing pupils from attending school well. This has been particularly impactful for pupils with SEND. Leaders have robust plans for further improvement.

Opportunities to learn outside of the classroom are extensive. Pupils celebrate their differences through 'Diversity Day'. An empowered student leadership arrangement ensures that pupils can have a say in how parts of their school operate. An array of clubs and activities help pupils develop new skills and hobbies.

Students in the sixth form get the help they need to apply for future education or employment. However, leaders recognise that not all pupils have a full awareness of the career options open to them when they leave school. Rapid improvements are currently being made to the careers curriculum. This is to ensure that pupils will have a more secure understanding of the world of work through encounters with employers and experiences of the workplace.

Trustees, governors and leaders have a clear vision to provide all pupils with a well-rounded education. There are improved lines of accountability to ensure trustees and governors assure themselves that leaders are developing and improving provision. Leaders recognise there is work to do to communicate more effectively with parents. They are refining processes to do so. Most staff feel well supported by leaders' consideration of workload. They receive regular research-informed training, which helps them deliver the curriculum in an impactful way.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are knowledgeable about the risks that pupils may face. They regularly communicate with the police, local authority and other external agencies to keep abreast of any local concerns. Regular training and updates help staff know how to spot the signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Detailed records show the swift and effective action that leaders take when concerns are raised.

Leaders regularly update the personal, social and health education curriculum, so that pupils know how to take care of their personal safety and mental health. For example, pupils learn about societal issues, such as child criminal exploitation.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers do not check that all pupils have a secure understanding of concepts before moving on to new topics. Consequently, some pupils struggle to link new learning to prior knowledge, making it harder for them to retain knowledge over time. Leaders must ensure that teachers have the training needed to regularly check the extent to which pupils understand important concepts before moving on to new learning.
- The new careers programme is not yet fully developed. As a result, not all pupils have access to the important experiences and knowledge that they need to make informed decisions about their future. Leaders must ensure that they rapidly implement the new careers programme, so that pupils have the knowledge they need about possible next steps.

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	136842
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	10268900
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	2985
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	503
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Penelope Dent
Principal	Michelle Currie (Executive Principal)
Website	www.waltonhigh.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 and 9 June 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Milton Keynes Education Trust.
- The school uses one registered and two unregistered providers of alternative provision for a small number of pupils.
- The school does not yet meet the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information about approved technical educational qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school is based on two campuses called Walnut Tree campus and Brooklands campus. Each campus has its own principal.

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 principals of both the Walnut Tree and Brooklands campuses, senior leaders, subject leaders, the leader responsible for pupils with SEND, teachers and support staff.
- The lead inspector met with governors and trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, social sciences, modern foreign languages and art and design. Inspectors met with subject leaders, visited lessons and spoke to teachers. They looked at curriculum plans and pupils' work. They met with pupils to discuss their learning.
- Inspectors scrutinised safeguarding arrangements, including the school's central record of recruitment checks. Inspectors spoke to a variety of staff to check how well safeguarding referrals and systems work.
- Inspectors observed pupils around the school site during lunchtimes and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils and groups of staff to hear their views. Inspectors also spoke to pupils and staff informally around the school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the confidential Ofsted surveys for staff and pupils and Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Michelle Lower, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Ed Mather	His Majesty's Inspector
Sam Robinson	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Brinkley	Ofsted Inspector
Martin Smith	His Majesty's Inspector

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