

Inspection of Wayland Academy

Merton Road, Watton, Thetford, Norfolk IP25 6BA

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 July 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

The culture of the school is defined by high expectations and underpinned by clear structures. From lining up at the end of lunch, to working quietly on 'starter activities', pupils know what to expect. They learn through well-established pedagogical teaching approaches. They benefit from the high levels of consistency in how staff behave and in what staff require of them. As a result, pupils' school experience is a safe and positive one.

Pupils usually behave well. They listen and work well in lessons and respond sensibly to the questions put to them. Around school, pupils treat each other, in the main, with respect. Some pupils have specific responsibilities to look after others. There does remain some unkind behaviour, such as name-calling. This is not usually a problem as it is not common and is often dealt with effectively. However, some pupils find that it is not, or lack confidence that it will be, dealt with well.

Pupils can join in with a broad and increasing range of activities outside lessons. There are multiple sports clubs and a recently re-introduced school production. More trips are available to pupils than in the past. Pupils can pursue their interests and experience new things.

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

The positive relationship between school leaders and the trust has driven improvements across the school. Working closely together, they have devised and implemented approaches which help pupils to learn different subjects well over time. Teachers follow leaders' plans, teaching subjects in a logical order and revisiting knowledge pupils need to learn to make sure it sticks in pupils' memories. Teachers check what pupils have learned and adjust what they teach accordingly. Pupils learn well.

A few subjects are slightly less developed than others. While clear plans are in place, and teachers follow them, some aspects of teaching are not as refined, such as in how well teachers ensure pupils know the purpose of their work. These things are developing, but there remain some gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) benefit from the way in which the curriculum details and revisits the important knowledge they need to know. Their individual needs are identified and supported well. Leaders' high standards and teachers' consistent application of these help those who struggle to manage their own behaviour to apply themselves, access the same curriculum as others and successfully learn what leaders intend.

Reading is central to leaders' thinking. They have put in place a range of approaches to help those who struggle to read. Some pupils follow a phonics programme. All pupils read regularly in school and teachers are trained in how to help pupils to read in their subjects. Pupils' reading is successfully enhanced as a result.

Leaders' clear and consistently applied behaviour routines have ensured that pupils behave well most of the time. Pupils know what to expect and how to behave. They generally treat others with respect and listen and work well in lessons. There are, though, some pupils who do misbehave when teachers are not looking and do treat others with unkindness. This is not the norm, but some pupils lack confidence in staff to deal with it when it happens.

Pupils learn about important issues like healthy relationships and consent in a way which they find helpful. Leaders have judged well when to approach these. They have worked effectively, to ensure that pupils understand the choices they have for their future education and careers, and they are in the process of broadening the programme of extra-curricular activities on offer. This year saw the introduction of the school's first activities week, for example, which sought to extend the range of experiences pupils have.

Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the work of leaders. They have 'bought in' to the changes the school and trust leaders have brought about and feel well supported by leaders.

The school and trust leaders form a strong and cohesive team which has driven, and continues to secure, school improvement.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Trust leaders carry out the checks required to make sure that adults who work in the school are safe to do so. School leaders provide them with the training to keep pupils safe. Staff know that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and know what to do if they have a concern.

Leaders are vigilant in keeping pupils safe. They follow up concerns appropriately and in a timely manner. They provide a dedicated phone number for pupils to text or phone if they are concerned about something when the school is closed. Pupils are well aware that there are staff they can speak to if they are worried about something. They learn about keeping themselves safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The changes to the way in which some subjects are taught are relatively new. Some pedagogical approaches are not as refined as most, and pupils still have gaps in their knowledge from the past. Leaders need to ensure that teachers consistently use leaders' curriculum plans well, and that gaps in pupils' knowledge are filled.

- Some pupils lack confidence in staff to deal with unkind behaviour. Sometimes, this behaviour persists and is upsetting for the pupils who are subject to it. Leaders need to ensure that all incidents of unkind behaviour are dealt with, and are seen to be dealt with, well so that pupils are confident to share their concerns with staff.

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	137949
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10255123
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	573
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Lord Theodore Agnew
Principal	Glen Allott
Website	www.inspirationtrust.org/wayland-academy
Dates of previous inspection	22 and 23 May 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the school has joined the Inspiration Trust.
- The senior leadership team has been expanded.
- The school makes use of one unregistered alternative provider.
- 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.

- 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, other school leaders and the director of secondary education from the trust.
- The lead inspector spoke with representatives from the academy committee, including the chair, and the chair and chief executive officer of the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, history, design technology and art. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also reviewed curriculum documentation for, looked at pupils' work in, and held discussions with leaders of, science and French.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors spoke with staff and pupils, reviewed the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks, reviewed safeguarding records and spoke with leaders of safeguarding. The lead inspector spoke to a representative of the unregistered alternative provider over the telephone.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's pupil survey, Ofsted's staff survey and Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors spoke with a range of pupils and staff and spoke with one parent over the telephone.

Inspection team

Andrew Hemmings, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Polly Lankester	Ofsted Inspector
Emma Matthews	Ofsted Inspector

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