

Inspection of John Willmott School

Reddicap Heath Road, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands B75 7DY

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 December 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act

The headteacher of this school is Nicola Gould. This school is part of The Arthur Terry Learning Partnership, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Richard Gill, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by John Vickers.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum with personal development running through its heart. 'Turning potential into reality' is the motto that staff live by. The school has a set of well-established routines, including a strong focus on making pupils feel welcome when they arrive.

Lessons are purposeful and clearly structured. Pupils know what to expect and generally behave well. They show positive attitudes to their learning. Pupils are respectful and courteous in discussion. There is a sense of pride among pupils. They can see that the school has improved rapidly in recent years.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of opportunities for personal development. Character lessons, assemblies and form times are designed to help them understand the school's 'moral virtues'. Pupils talk positively about these and how they are praised. There are numerous clubs for pupils to be involved in, for example chess and drama, and a range of sports take place throughout the school day.

Staff know the pupils well. The school has put systems in place to capture pupils' views and concerns. Pupils feel supported and safe. Pupils say that staff take issues seriously and deal with problems that arise.

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

Leaders at all levels ensure that curriculum planning is ambitious for all pupils. The school benefits from the work of the trust. Pupils' learning is carefully sequenced. Teachers have a strong understanding of their subject and the important knowledge that they want pupils to learn.

Pupils experience an effectively delivered curriculum that helps them to know and remember more. While published outcomes are low, the impact of the curriculum seen by inspectors on the progress that pupils are making shows a different picture. Pupils can make clear links to prior knowledge across a range of subjects. Their work shows that they use prior learning to do more difficult things. However, on some occasions, teachers move pupils on to new learning before their knowledge has been checked. This leads to gaps in pupils' understanding and, at times, misconceptions developing.

Those pupils at an early stage of reading get the support they need. Carefully considered assessment is used to decide on the right interventions. This support helps them access all subjects in the curriculum. As a result, these pupils catch up with their peers. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are taught the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. However, there is variability in how well teachers adapt the curriculum for these pupils. Leaders are aware of this and are receiving support from the trust to improve the provision for pupils with SEND.

The school has raised expectations of behaviour. Pupils talk about these changes very positively and how these have improved their experience of school. Most pupils behave well. The school is working with pupils who fail to meet expectations. The pastoral team helps pupils to understand the reasons why they find self-regulation hard. This support is continually developing. Trained staff support pupils with specific needs. This involves helping them to transition back into class after time out. However, some staff do not consistently follow the behaviour management expectations. As a result, some pupils do not understand how to respond to what is expected of them.

Reducing absence has been a focus for leaders. They have put a lot of effort into raising the attendance of those pupils who are absent frequently. As a result, pupils' attendance has improved. Attendance is still lower than national, but the school is doing all it can.

Pupils are specifically taught the eight 'moral virtues'. These are included in the work of the school. The personal development curriculum is responsive to the need of the pupils. It takes account of the issues they may face in their day-to-day lives. Pupils learn about topics in an age-appropriate way in their weekly lessons and during form time. For example, they discuss consent, fundamental British values and mental health in ways which help them beyond school.

Careers education is well planned and sequenced carefully for pupils. The school understands their needs and when they will need support to make informed decisions. Leaders have a strong understanding of destinations data and make use of this. As a result, pupils get appropriate information about the range of options they have when they finish Year 11. Pupils are prepared well for their next steps.

Trustees and advocates understand how the school needs to improve. They receive clear information about leaders' actions. They focus particularly on work to support pupils with SEND, pupils who speak English as an additional language and disadvantaged pupils. Leaders at all levels know that the current entry level for the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) is low. The school has changed the options process in Year 9 to increase entries.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The adaptations for some pupils with SEND are not based well enough on their needs in lessons. Consequently, they do not always get the help they need to access the ambitious curriculum on offer. The school needs to ensure that all teachers carefully adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of pupils with SEND,

and put these in place in each lesson in order to help pupils with SEND to access the full curriculum well.

- Pupils' understanding is not always checked well enough before moving on to the next part of the curriculum. As a result, pupils have gaps in their knowledge or misconceptions. Leaders at all levels should ensure that teachers check pupils' understanding consistently well in order to enable pupils to build knowledge more effectively over time.
- The high expectations set for pupils' behaviour are not implemented consistently across the school. Some pupils do not cooperate with the routines in place well enough and therefore struggle to engage with their learning. The school needs to ensure that routines are well understood by staff and pupils.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	144721
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10290640
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	987
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	John Vickers
CEO of the trust	Richard Gill
Headteacher	Nicola Gould
Website	www.jws.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- John Willmott School converted to become an academy in July 2019.
- The school is part of the Arthur Terry Learning Partnership Trust.
- Since the last inspection, the school has closed its sixth-form provision.
- The school uses seven alternative providers for its pupils. All seven are registered.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 11 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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, members of the trust and governors, senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers and pupils. They also talked informally to pupils and staff to gather general information about school life.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, history, science, physical education, French 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 discussed the curriculum structure and visited lessons in a variety of other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors reviewed the personal, social, health and economic education curriculum plan, spoke with the curriculum leader and visited form time, line-up and assembly. An inspector also reviewed the support provided for pupils in regard to reading.
- Inspectors looked at records and spoke to staff in relation to behaviour, bullying and attendance.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including leaders' plans to improve the school and their self-evaluation of the school's work.
- Inspectors took account of responses to the pupil and staff surveys, as well as Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Richard Wakefield, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Ant Edkins	Ofsted Inspector
Gwen Onyon	Ofsted Inspector
Ed Leighton	Ofsted Inspector

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