

Inspection of Wellacre Technology Academy

Irlam Road, Flixton, Urmston, Manchester, Lancashire M41 6AP

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 October 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

The headteacher of this school is Julie Sharrock. This school is part of the Wellacre Technology Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Andrew Young.

What is it like to attend this school?

At Wellacre Technology Academy, pupils are articulate, polite and well mannered. For example, they wait patiently to enter and exit buildings and hold doors open for each other. The mutually respectful relationships between staff and pupils are evident in this caring community. The school has high expectations of how pupils should behave. It teaches pupils how to behave well, and they do. Pupils are happy and proud to attend this school.

Pupils study an ambitious curriculum. The number of pupils studying the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects has risen considerably. Nevertheless, the school does not have consistently high expectations of some pupils' academic achievement. Some pupils' knowledge is not developed well over time, and therefore, they do not learn as well as they could.

The school caters well for pupils' wider development. There is an abundance of carefully constructed and inclusive leadership opportunities to meet the needs and interests of a range of pupils. For instance, pupils enjoy acting as career champions, sports ambassadors and form representatives. These roles help them to develop a voice and teach them how to act responsibly. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) play a full and active part in school life.

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

The school values and celebrates reading. Teachers encourage pupils to read for enjoyment. The school makes regular checks on how well pupils read. It uses this information to correctly identify pupils who need extra support. Well-trained staff deliver a literacy catch-up programme that successfully closes some of the gaps in pupils' reading ability. This means that these pupils can access the curriculum more easily.

The school has redesigned its key stage 3 curriculum so that it is more ambitious. In some subjects, it has identified the key knowledge that pupils should learn and how that knowledge should build over time. Where this is the case, pupils make links with prior learning. However, in other subjects, where the school has not considered the precise knowledge that needs to be taught, pupils do not build a deep enough understanding of concepts over time.

While teachers' subject knowledge is generally strong, there is an unevenness in how well the curriculum is delivered. In some cases, teachers do not choose the most appropriate methods to help pupils to learn. The activities that teachers sometimes design do not help pupils to remember important information.

Teachers do not systematically check whether pupils have understood the curriculum. Assessment strategies are not used effectively so that gaps in learning can be identified and addressed. Consequently, misconceptions and gaps in pupils'

learning mean that they do not achieve as well as they should. Furthermore, the school has not accurately identified the actions that will improve the quality of education that pupils receive.

Pupils benefit from strong pastoral support. This helps them to conduct themselves well in lessons and at social times. Pupils' learning is rarely disturbed. 'The hub' is used well to support pupils, including those with SEND, to access the same curriculum as their peers. Staff are adept at identifying the additional needs of pupils with SEND.

The school has taken effective action to improve attendance rates, including for disadvantaged pupils. Parents and carers are very positive about the school and the support that their children receive. The school engages well with parents. For example, parents of pupils with SEND contribute towards pupils' support plans and attend careers information meetings with their children.

The school is passionate about its plans for pupils' personal development. It has thoughtfully provided opportunities to enrich pupils' experiences, alongside preparing them well to take up their place in modern Britain. For instance, a group of pupils offer companionship to elderly residents in the local care home. Pupils' responsible behaviour is nurtured when they volunteer at the 'teens and toddlers group' at a local primary school. The school engages with further education providers which supports pupils to make informed choices about their future. Nearly all pupils progress to education, employment or training when they leave the school.

Staff are dedicated and committed to the school and its values. The trustees and leaders are committed to reducing staff's workload. Staff are appreciative of leaders' actions to support their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the school has not clearly identified what pupils need to learn. This means that some teachers do not have a sufficient overview of how pupils' learning should build cumulatively over time. In turn, pupils are not able to develop a rich understanding of these subjects. The school should ensure that the finer detail of the curriculum is mapped out in these subjects so that it is very clear what needs to be taught and how knowledge should build over time.
- The school's use of assessment strategies does not help teachers to identify misconceptions and gaps in pupils' learning and to remedy them swiftly. As a result, some pupils' misunderstandings and gaps in knowledge go unrectified and this hinders how well these pupils learn. The school should ensure that teachers

check regularly on pupils' learning in order to identify gaps or misconceptions.

- The curriculum is not delivered consistently well across all subjects. In some lessons, teachers do not provide activities which help pupils to learn well. The school should ensure that teachers have the relevant subject pedagogical expertise to teach the curriculum so that pupils know more and remember more. The school's procedures for checking on the impact of the curriculum have not identified why pupils struggle to remember what they have learned. As a result, the school does not have a secure understanding of what needs to be done to improve the quality of education that pupils receive. The school should ensure that it supports leaders to accurately evaluate the strengths and improvement priorities of the curriculum.

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	136378
Local authority	Trafford
Inspection number	10290165
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	692
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Andrew Young
Principal	Julie Sharrock
Website	www.wellacre.org
Dates of previous inspection	21 and 22 June 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not make any use of alternative provision for its pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the principal, other leaders, members of staff and representatives of the trustees, including the chair. The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority and the school

improvement partner.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in mathematics, science, languages, geography, English and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, 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 in some 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 spoke to groups of pupils from Years 7 to 11 about their experience of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including any free-text responses. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff and pupils.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation document, school improvement plans, minutes of trustee meetings and records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Jenny Jones, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Erica Sharman	Ofsted Inspector
Karen Parker	Ofsted Inspector
Katy Robinson	Ofsted Inspector

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