

Inspection of North Walsham High School

Spenser Avenue, North Walsham, Norfolk NR28 9HZ

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 December 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is James Gosden. This school is part of Enrich Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Russell Boulton, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Jeff Lansdell.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to be members of this flourishing school community. They routinely demonstrate the core values of 'trust, resilience, excellence and kindness', which define the school's character. Across the school, pupils benefit from the warm and welcoming environment. Pupils know that the staff care about them. They are very well looked after, and there is always someone to talk to if needed.

At North Walsham High, pupils thrive. They are confident to share what they know and how well they achieve. Pupils are well supported to succeed in what they do.

Pupils know that adults also have high standards for how they should behave. They work well in lessons because routines and expectations are clearly understood and followed. There is very rarely any disruption either in class or at social times. Pupils care for each other. They demonstrate high levels of respect towards their peers.

Pupils take advantage of the wide range of clubs available to them. They love that there are lots of opportunities to develop their interests and get involved in competitions. Basketball, football and preparation for the school production of 'Sister Act' are all very popular.

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

Since the previous inspection, school leaders and the new trust have made significant improvements to the quality of education. The ambitious curriculum is well designed to meet the needs of all pupils.

Ongoing training is of a high quality and carefully matched to staff's needs. This ensures that teachers are able to deliver the curriculum effectively. They explain new information to pupils clearly. Teachers enable pupils to understand how new knowledge links with what they have previously learned. In the main, they plan activities that allow pupils to build on their prior knowledge and to further develop their understanding. For example, in history, pupils learn about race relations in different contexts. This gives pupils the knowledge and skills to understand and discuss challenging topics with confidence.

Teachers check what pupils know in a variety of ways. Most adults are skilled in identifying what pupils know and can do. If they identify any misconceptions, teachers adapt their lessons to make sure that pupils do not fall behind. This means that across the curriculum, pupils achieve very well. However, in key stage 3, sometimes teachers do not check precisely enough what pupils know. On occasion, they do not match activities closely enough to pupils' starting points. When this happens, some pupils do not have enough opportunities to clarify any misconceptions or to deepen their understanding.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported by adults. The school closely monitors how well these pupils are doing. Teachers

prioritise support for the most vulnerable pupils. They have a very secure understanding of pupils' additional needs and how to best meet these. The vast majority of pupils with SEND achieve highly, based on their starting points.

The school has effective processes in place to identify pupils who arrive with barriers to learning due to low levels of literacy. Adults have put in place measures to help pupils rapidly catch up with their reading. This includes small-group reading interventions that are well matched to pupils' needs and help them to build their skills and confidence in reading.

Adults have high expectations for how pupils should behave. There is a shared understanding of rules and routines. Pupils respond very well to this clarity. They behave consistently well. This ensures that all pupils can benefit from a positive and purposeful learning environment.

The provision for pupils' wider development ensures that pupils benefit from rich and varied experiences. Visits to Cambridge, museums, activity centres and sports matches are all extremely popular. The school provides ample opportunities for pupils to develop their leadership skills, such as becoming anti-bullying ambassadors. Pupils are respectful and polite. They are very well prepared for life after school.

Leaders, including trustees and governors, have been extremely effective in ensuring continued improvement to all aspects of the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In key stage 3, sometimes teachers are not sufficiently precise in identifying what pupils know or can do. This means some teachers move on before all pupils have understood what is being taught. At other times, pupils are given activities that do not provide them with sufficient opportunities to deepen and extend their understanding. The school needs to ensure that all staff consistently provide pupils with activities that are matched precisely to their starting points.

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	147505
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10295119
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	614
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trustees	Jeff Lansdell
CEO of trust	Russell Boulton
Headteacher	James Gosden
Website	www.nwhs.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- North Walsham High School converted to become an academy in November 2019. When its predecessor school, North Walsham High School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged as requires improvement.
- The school is part of Enrich Learning Trust.
- In September 2020, a new headteacher was appointed.
- 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.
- This was the first routine inspection the school had 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.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, science, physical education and history. For each deep dive, the 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.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of trustees and governors and reviewed documentation relating to governance and school improvement.
- The lead inspector met with trust staff, including the chief executive officer, and scrutinised documentation relating to school improvement and quality assurance.
- Inspectors met with school leaders to discuss the school's approach to supporting disadvantaged pupils and staff development.
- Inspectors reviewed behaviour and attendance records and observed pupils' behaviour around the site.
- An inspector scrutinised documentation and met with leaders to discuss the school's approach to pupils' personal development.
- An inspector met with the special educational needs coordinator and reviewed documentation relating to pupils with SEND.
- The lead inspector considered responses to the survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. She also reviewed responses to Ofsted's staff survey and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Bessie Owen, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Michael Williams	His Majesty's Inspector
Dave Gibson	His Majesty's Inspector

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