

# Inspection of a good school: Westcroft School

Greenacres Avenue, Underhill, Wolverhampton, West Midlands WV10 8NZ

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Inspection dates: 20 to 21 February 2024

## Outcome

Westcroft School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Westcroft School is an exceptionally welcoming place for pupils to learn. Staff quickly form positive relationships with pupils and their families. They work as a team to decide how best to support their pupils so that they make the best progress possible, and pupils do.

The school has developed an ambitious curriculum that meets the special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) of the wide range of pupils at this school. Central to the curriculum is helping pupils gain independence in their learning and preparing them for their future. The school does this well. Older pupils talk about possible careers and are ambitious about the future.

Pupils are happy and feel safe in school. Staff skilfully help pupils manage their behaviour. Because of this, behaviour in school is good. Pupils are proud of their school. They are considerate and take care of each other.

The personal development of pupils is a strength of the school. Pupils appreciate the vast opportunities and trips they experience through the curriculum. They particularly enjoy the residential trips to a local outdoor activity centre. Pupils were animated when they recalled walking through the woods at night, making a fire, and cooking on it.

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

This school is very well led and managed by the leadership team and those responsible for governance. Through the checks that they make, they know what is working well in school and what needs to be improved further. They take time to listen to staff. Staff enjoy working in the school and say that leaders give them the support they need to manage their workload.

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils. For older pupils, this leads to accreditation. The school ensures that subject leaders have the time they need to develop their subjects. It checks that the school's intentions are being implemented by

teachers in the classroom. As a result, the development of some subjects has been rapid. However, a few subjects in the post-14 curriculum do not consistently identify what staff want pupils to know and when. In a few subjects, there is not a clear sequence of learning from the key stage 3 curriculum to the post-14 curriculum.

Teachers carefully select learning activities that engage pupils' interest and deliver the intended curriculum. They use assessment well to identify what pupils know and where they might need more help. Staff quickly notice if a pupil is not making progress, and they begin appropriate interventions or introduce additional learning support aids when needed.

Many pupils arrive at the school with little or no verbal communication skills. Some pupils are not able to communicate to staff what they want or need. The school helps all pupils to develop a meaningful vocabulary and introduces communication aids if they need them. This strong focus on communication continues throughout the school.

From the beginning, the school prioritises the teaching of reading through regular phonics and reading lessons. The school has identified which books pupils will study as part of their English lessons so that pupils get a greater understanding and love of books. As a result, many pupils become fluent readers and enjoy a wide range of books. However, the choice of texts, how to use them, and what the learning intentions are, are not as clear for pupils with the most complex learning needs.

The school expects pupils to behave well and to attend regularly. The staff understand their roles in supporting pupils to improve their behaviour, and they encourage pupils to be in school every day. Pupils listen and respect their teachers. They know the school rules and do all they can to follow them. As a result, attendance is good, and the school is a calm and productive place to learn.

Pupils have many opportunities to engage in sports and sporting competitions. They enjoy the leadership opportunities they have, such as through the school council and sports leadership roles.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- The school has not consistently identified the content that it wants pupils to know in a few subjects in the relatively new post-14 curriculum. It has not ensured that there is a clear sequence of learning from the key stage 3 curriculum to the post-14 curriculum. This means that staff are not always clear what pupils must know by the time they finish the topic or unit of work. The school should ensure that there is clarity about

what pupils will know, experience and learn within a topic or unit of work for these subjects.

- The school has not yet developed a wider reading curriculum that is accessible and meets the needs of pupils with the most complex needs. As a result, these pupils do not consistently develop an understanding of the texts being read to them. The school should identify which books are the most appropriate for these pupils and adapt teaching strategies to help pupils access these texts.

## Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Westcroft Sport and Vocational College, to be good in February 2013.

## 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 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	142383
<b>Local authority</b>	Wolverhampton
<b>Inspection number</b>	10294622
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Academy special converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	191
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	20
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Robert Turton
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Doug Selkirk
<b>Headteacher</b>	Helen Andrioli
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.westcroftschoo.co.uk">www.westcroftschoo.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	11 September 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Westcroft School is a large special school for students aged 5 to 19 years old.
- The school is one of 16 academies in the Central Learning Partnership Trust.
- The school has a joint local executive governing body with another school within the trust.
- All students have an education, health and care plan. All students have a range of SEND.
- The school does not use off-site alternative education providers.

- 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.
- The school does not have a religious character.

## Information about this inspection

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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with members of the governing body, trustee board, and members of the senior and middle leadership team. Inspectors also met with teachers, teaching assistants and pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, personal, social and health education. For each deep dive, inspectors considered the school's curriculum documentation, visited lessons and scrutinised pupils' work. Inspectors met with pupils to discuss their learning in these subjects. Inspectors also spoke to pupils about their wider experiences of school.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including school policies, risk assessments, attendance information and behaviour logs.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and the staff survey.
- 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.

## Inspection team

Amanda Green, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Andrew Orgill

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
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