

# Inspection of a good school: Woolton High School

Woolton Hill Road, Woolton, Liverpool, Merseyside L25 6JA

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Inspection dates: 19 and 20 March 2024

## **Outcome**

Woolton High School continues to be a good school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Everyone is made to feel welcome at this school. Pupils develop nurturing and trusting relationships with staff, who help them to understand their own emotions and behaviour. This helps pupils to feel comfortable, happy and safe in the school community.

Pupils rise to the challenges and high academic expectations set by the school. There is a strong shared commitment to making sure that pupils achieve everything of which they are capable. Pupils benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum. For example, a rich vocational offer is available for pupils that includes horticulture, upcycling and catering.

Pupils enjoy being with their friends and behave well most of the time. Typically, they are active participants in their learning. Staff act quickly to support when pupils need help to remain calm, regulated or focused. Consequently, behaviour is calm across lessons and at other times during the day.

The school supports pupils' personal development particularly well. Opportunities to strengthen their characters are wide-ranging. Pupils enthusiastically take part in trips, including to the theatre and to a philharmonic orchestra. Pupils are supported to develop new interests, such as gardening, where they help to create wildflower and bumblebee gardens.

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

Pupils who attend the school all have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They work towards vocational awards and recognised qualifications. Since the previous inspection, the school has strengthened its curriculum offer and has established an ambitious and varied curriculum. In most subjects, this sets out clearly what pupils need to know and be able to do. However, in a few subjects, curriculum thinking lacks precision. In these subjects, the school is still determining the specific knowledge and vocabulary that pupils should learn. Consequently, pupils do not build securely on their

earlier learning. This hampers how well pupils develop their understanding in these subjects over time.

Teachers use effective assessment strategies to establish starting points for pupils and to shape future learning. They take careful note of the advice from pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans. Teachers present information clearly and encourage pupils' use of vocabulary across the curriculum. Content is sensibly adapted into small steps so that learning is manageable and does not overwhelm pupils. Classroom environments are precisely adapted and teachers are well trained to support pupils' understanding and access to learning.

Since the previous inspection, the school has prioritised reading. All pupils receive regular reading sessions. Pupils who have gaps in their reading knowledge receive targeted support. This helps them to develop their fluency, confidence and enjoyment in reading. Pupils who need additional support to secure their phonics knowledge are identified swiftly. Staff have benefited from high-quality training to enable them to deliver the phonics programme effectively. Pupils engage well in these sessions and make good progress towards becoming more assured readers.

The school identifies the additional needs of pupils with SEND promptly and accurately. Pupils value carefully tailored sessions that support individual targets linked to their EHC plans. They are fully involved in the wider life of the school.

The school focuses strongly on pupils' attendance. It continuously endeavours to use a range of incentives and ideas to encourage pupils to attend well. For example, staff celebrate and reward pupils who attend regularly or whose attendance has improved. This has significantly improved some pupils' attitudes to attending school. Pupils are polite, inquisitive and welcoming towards visitors to school.

The school's personal, social and health education curriculum is designed well to support pupils growing up in modern Britain. Pupils learn how to lead safe, healthy lives. They receive age-appropriate relationships and sex education. Additionally, pupils learn how to develop their self-confidence, how to make sensible choices and how to be tolerant and respectful of those who are different to them. Pupils enjoy a range of clubs, including in football, pool, and arts and crafts.

The school understands that preparing pupils for adult life is extremely important for the pupils in their care. A variety of well-considered cultural, work and enterprise opportunities are threaded through the curriculum at every opportunity. This includes access to independent careers information, advice and guidance. This helps pupils to make informed decisions about their next stage of education, employment or training. In line with their aspirations, pupils progress to positive destinations when they leave school.

Staff are overwhelmingly positive about how the school is led. They know that their views are listened to. Staff appreciate 'Well-being Wednesday'. Governors have a wide range of expertise. They have a clear understanding of their roles and provide effective support and challenge to leaders to continually improve the quality of education that pupils receive.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- In a small number of subjects, the school is still identifying the specific knowledge that it wants pupils to learn. As a result, some pupils do not learn in these subjects as well as they should. The school should ensure that all curriculums set out the important things that pupils should know and the order in which this should be taught.

## 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 school to be good in November 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 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	104739
<b>Local authority</b>	Liverpool
<b>Inspection number</b>	10294198
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Boys
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	73
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Frank Shotter
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mark Christian
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://wooltonhighschool.com">wooltonhighschool.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	11 September 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative provision for pupils.
- All pupils have an EHC plan. Places are commissioned by local authorities.
- The school provides education for pupils, aged 11 to 16, with social, emotional and mental health needs, autism and other learning needs.
- 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

- 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 met with the headteacher and with other leaders. The lead inspector also spoke with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. She also spoke with a school improvement partner from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, and information and communication technology. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- An inspector evaluated the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The lead inspector met with the SEND coordinators and reviewed samples of documentation relating to pupils with SEND.
- 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.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents and carers expressed through Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and for pupils.

### **Inspection team**

Kate Bowker, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Kevin Sexton

Ofsted Inspector

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