

Inspection of Westwood College

Westwood Park, Leek, Staffordshire ST13 8NP

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 May 2024

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Sixth-form provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Good

The headteacher of the school is Matthew Taylor. This school is part of the Talentum 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, Ian Wilson, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Richard Hey.

What is it like to attend this school?

Westwood College promotes 'respect, resilience, ambition and pride'. Pupils say these values help them focus on how to develop positively as young people. While the school has high aspirations for all its pupils and students, these ambitions have not been fully achieved. Nevertheless, pupils say there is an improving environment to learn in.

There is a purposeful atmosphere around the school. During lessons and unstructured times, such as breaktimes and lunchtimes, many pupils behave sensibly. Where pupils' behaviour is not acceptable, staff speak quickly with these pupils to explain the school's high expectations. Pupils speak positively about the support they receive. Warm and respectful relationships characterise life at this school. Pupils feel happy and safe. Pupils know who to talk to about any concerns they may have.

The school places a strong emphasis on pupils' personal development. Students in the sixth form are proud to mentor pupils in the lower school. These roles help pupils understand how to be responsible. The extra-curricular programme is diverse. Pupils take part in a range of clubs, such as sport, art and drama. Pupils value being able to participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme and school productions.

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

There has been significant change to some post holders at the school since the last inspection. This includes a new headteacher and changes to staff in other leadership roles. The school has worked rapidly to review and design a highly ambitious curriculum for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). New policies have brought some improvement in how pupils learn. However, these improvements have not yet led to consistently improving outcomes by the end of key stage 4.

Some teachers use assessments effectively in order to check what pupils know and to ensure that they understand previous learning. For example, Year 10 pupils in drama can use their knowledge from a theatre production well to develop their characters in a devised piece of work. However, there are frequent times when some teachers do not check pupils' understanding carefully enough. As a result, they do not have a sufficiently detailed understanding of whether pupils have remembered what they have learned before. This means that teachers do not consistently adapt the learning to address any wrong ideas or missing knowledge, which limits the progress pupils make.

The school quickly identifies pupils with SEND. They provide some pupils with the additional support they need to access and learn the curriculum. However, some pupils with SEND do not receive effective support to fully meet their needs. Many teachers use the key information about pupils with SEND effectively in order to

adapt their teaching. However, some teachers do not adapt learning well enough to fully support pupils with SEND.

The school is beginning to develop support for pupils who are weaker readers. However, this is at a very early stage of development. During 'tutor time' some teachers effectively model reading by highlighting key thematic work. The school is beginning to develop more effective systems of checking pupils' comprehension of what they have read. Pupils are also starting to develop their understanding of key vocabulary and themes.

Absence from school is preventing a significant number of pupils from achieving their potential. There are too many pupils who miss school unnecessarily. This means that they miss out on too much learning. The school is aware of the need to engage with pupils and parents further as a matter of urgency.

To support pupils' personal development, the personal, social, health and economic curriculum is well planned and sequenced. Pupils learn about topics such as healthy relationships and online safety. The school is providing pupils with the opportunity to develop their knowledge and awareness of spiritual and cultural diversity, although this is at an early stage of development. A comprehensive careers programme is in place for all pupils. Pupils engage enthusiastically with this programme.

The school has not precisely evaluated which actions are the most effective in addressing the school's shortcomings. For example, the school does not have a good enough understanding of why the progress of disadvantaged pupils is not as strong as it should be. Similarly, concerns around some pupils' attendance are not as well understood as they could be. However, governors and trustees do have a secure awareness of the importance of safeguarding and well-being. The school has implemented a clear well-thought-out professional development programme for staff. The school consults staff about policy changes and carefully considers staff workload, which staff are appreciative of.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers do not consistently check that pupils understand what has been learned and what they can remember. This means that gaps in pupils' knowledge are not identified and addressed effectively, and therefore they do not make as much progress as they should. The school should ensure that teachers consistently check pupils' understanding and adapt their teaching accordingly to close any gaps.

- Some pupils miss too much school, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. This holds back their progress and achievement. The school should work more closely with parents and external agencies to communicate effectively and secure more regular attendance for all pupils.
- The school has not reviewed or analysed some of its improvement actions as carefully as it should. This means that it does not always know the effectiveness of its strategies to support pupils' progress and development. The school should ensure that it precisely analyses the effectiveness of improvement strategies to ensure it makes a positive difference to all pupils' education, including disadvantaged pupils.
- Some pupils with SEND do not receive sufficient support to enable them to effectively access the curriculum. This limits the progress and achievement of these pupils. The school should ensure that pupils with SEND receive effective support to enable them to make strong progress across 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 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	142755
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10337824
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	13 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	780
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	195
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Richard Hey
Headteacher/Principal/Teacher in charge	Matthew Taylor
Website	www.ttl.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 February 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Talentum Learning Trust, which contains nine schools.
- The headteacher was appointed to the school in October 2019.
- The school does not use any alternative provision for 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.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors focused on the following deep dives: drama, health & social care, mathematics, modern foreign languages and science. The inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and talked with pupils about their learning. The inspectors also looked at the curriculum in other subjects.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of school documents. These included information about pupils' behaviour, attendance, the school's curriculum and improvement planning. The school's website was also checked.
- 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.
- The inspectors observed pupils during informal times of the day as part of their evaluation of safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- The inspectors held meetings with the chair and chief executive officer of the trust, the chair and other governors of the local governing board, the headteacher and other senior leaders, teachers and pupils. The inspectors also talked informally to pupils, staff, parents and carers to gather information about school life.
- The inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View and the free-text comments. The inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey and pupil questionnaires.

Inspection team

Stuart Clarkson, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Sara Arkle	Ofsted Inspector
David Hermitt	Ofsted Inspector
Darren Bishop	Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024