

Inspection of The Westminster School

Hawes Lane, Rowley Regis B65 9AL

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 July 2024

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

The Westminster School is a calm, friendly and happy school. Everyone is welcome. The school's 'SHALT' approach of 'safe, happy and learning together' shines through. Pupils overwhelmingly say that they like being at school.

The personal development programme is exemplary. This helps pupils learn valuable skills for life. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe and how to form lasting relationships. They learn how to cook and manage money. Visits in the local community help pupils to understand their role in society.

The school pays careful attention to helping older students get ready for their next steps at college or in work. Students enjoy a wide range of work experience opportunities. Through these, they can discover their talents and interests. As a result, students know what they want to do when they leave school. They leave school having successfully gained the qualifications they need to move on to the right destination for them.

The behaviour of pupils is exemplary. This is because everyone in this school treats each other with kindness. Pupils know the school rules and always try to follow them. Staff help those pupils who need extra support to get better at coping when things go wrong.

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

The school has developed an ambitious curriculum which is interesting and engaging. Pupils, including those in the sixth form, like to be in lessons learning new things. The curriculum is organised so that pupils build important knowledge over time. Practical experiences are woven into everyday learning. This helps pupils to practise applying the knowledge they have learned.

The school prioritises the well-being of its pupils by providing a team of experts who can support their mental health. This ensures that pupils receive the necessary emotional support when they need it and that any concerns they have are effectively managed. The school ensures that pupils receive helpful support and information as they move through different phases of education. Parents value this very much. Staff quickly gain the confidence of pupils and parents. This positive approach continues through school into the sixth form. One parent reflected the voice of many by saying that the school was 'like family to them'.

Reading is important at The Westminster School. Pupils read every day. Staff receive training so they can teach pupils to read effectively. As a result, pupils at the earliest stage of reading get the help they need to quickly learn to read.

In most subjects, teachers present the information that pupils need to know effectively. Pupils value the knowledge organisers that help them to identify what they need to know and remember. In these subjects, pupils build on their prior

knowledge well. However, in some foundation subjects, teachers do not make sure that pupils learn this important knowledge. As a result, in these subjects, pupils do not make the progress that leaders intend.

The school has an exceptional personal development programme. All pupils enjoy a wealth of high-quality opportunities to build their character. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe and become prepared for life in modern-day Britain. They enjoy residential experiences and visits to local places of interest. Older students get to work in a shop on the local high street leased by the school. Through this, they learn valuable life skills such as how to greet customers and complete stock takes. One pupil summed up the opinion of many when he said, 'We have fun, learn a lot and do amazing things.'

High-quality careers advice ensures that pupils know about different jobs and colleges. The school has built effective relationships with local businesses. Sixth-form students are confident in undertaking meaningful work placements. Through these, they build valuable evidence towards qualifications that are valued by local colleges or employers.

Governors have a detailed knowledge of the school's work. The headteacher provides dedicated and compassionate leadership. Together they recognise and value the important role played by every member of staff. The staff team has an unwavering commitment to the school. Everyone wants to provide the best education they can for the pupils.

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 made sure that the curriculum is implemented consistently well enough. This means that in some foundation subjects, pupils do not achieve as well as they could. The school should make sure that teachers have the knowledge and expertise to implement the curriculum well in all subjects.

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	132233
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	10322806
Type of school	Special
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	7 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	231
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	86
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Patricia Evans
Headteacher	Oliver Flowers
Website	www.thewestminsterschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	2 and 3 March 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- All pupils have an education, health and care plan for moderate learning difficulties. Pupils also have additional needs, such as autism, speech, language and communication needs and/or sensory and medical needs.
- The leadership team comprises the headteacher, two deputy headteachers and two assistant headteachers. One assistant headteacher was not at the school at the time of the inspection.
- The school makes use of two unregistered alternative provisions.
- 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.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, two deputy headteachers, an assistant headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, the chair of governors and four other members of the governing body. The lead inspector also spoke on the telephone to a representative from the local authority who provides school improvement advice for the school.
- The lead inspector visited one of the off-site unregistered alternative provisions and spoke with a pupil from the school who was in attendance.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading mathematics, food technology, physical education and personal, social and health education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, 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 other subjects and looked at a sample of work and documentation from other subjects.
- To gather evidence on pupils' wider development, inspectors met with the headteacher, two deputy headteachers, the head of careers and employer engagement, the careers adviser, the leader for careers in the curriculum and three groups of pupils.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors checked the school's single central record; spoke to senior leaders about safeguarding procedures; took account of the views of 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 reviewed a range of school documentation and policies, including the school development plan and minutes of governors' meetings.
- Inspectors spoke to leaders, staff and pupils about the wider work of the school.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's records of behaviour, including bullying, and records of suspensions. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- The lead inspector considered responses, including free-text comments, to Ofsted Parent View, the online survey. They also reviewed the responses to the staff survey and gathered the views of staff and pupils on site through discussion and through information sent to them during the inspection.

Inspection team

Jane Edgerton, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Ellen Taylor

Ofsted Inspector

Russell Hinton

Ofsted Inspector

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