

Inspection of a good school: Westhoughton High School

Bolton Road, Westhoughton, Bolton, Lancashire BL5 3BZ

Inspection dates:

16 and 17 November 2021

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to school. Most pupils said they feel safe. This is because they know they can share any worries with adults in school. Leaders have high expectations for pupils' achievement. However, pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), do not always achieve as well as they could. This is because some curriculum plans are not delivered as well as they should be.

Pupils enjoy a varied range of enrichment opportunities. They enjoy attending the Roald Dahl club, the European studies club, youth band and completing challenging activities in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

Pupils typically wear their uniforms with pride and look smart. Most pupils behave well. However, some pupils said that behaviour is not always as good as it could be. This means that their learning is sometimes interrupted by other pupils.

Leaders take any instances of bullying seriously and follow appropriate processes to sort out any concerns. Despite this, a few pupils and their families are concerned that bullying is not always resolved as effectively as it could be.

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

Since the previous inspection, the local authority has supported leaders in improving the effectiveness of the school. Pupils in key stage 3 benefit from studying subjects in greater depth and more pupils are choosing to study English Baccalaureate subjects in key stage 4.

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils to do well. In some subjects, the curriculum is well planned and delivered so that pupils can confidently recall what they have learned. In

other subjects, although leaders know what they want pupils to learn, the delivery of the curriculum is patchy. Consequently, some pupils cannot remember what they have learned previously. In addition, some pupils have not retained their knowledge of key vocabulary.

Leaders have improved the reading curriculum. Pupils are given time to practise reading in class at the start of the day. Those pupils who need to catch-up with their reading knowledge are effectively supported to improve.

Leaders ensure that pupils receive useful careers information, advice and guidance. Pupils get to know about the different careers which may suit their interests. For example, they link with a local theatre to find out about the careers available locally. Pupils benefit from an effective personal development programme. This builds their understanding of how to keep safe and healthy. They learn to appreciate and respect the differences between themselves and others.

Leaders identify those pupils with SEND effectively. Teachers use suitable resources and provide additional support to ensure that these pupils access the same learning as their peers.

Pupils typically behave well. Exclusions from school have reduced considerably over time. Pupils are supported by staff, and the use of the reflection room, to consider and correct their behaviour. Pupils' attendance is closely monitored. Much care is taken to reintegrate pupils who have not felt able to return to full-time education following the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions.

There is a clear policy and procedure in place to deal with bullying. Staff believe that pupils are safe in school and that leaders deal effectively with any form of bullying. Pastoral leaders address concerns raised and records show that effective action is taken to stop the bullying in most cases. Even so, a few pupils reported that bullying has continued to take place after it has been reported.

Members of the governing body are supporting leaders to improve the quality of education that pupils receive. Leaders and governors pay due attention to staff's well-being.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspectors agreed that English, mathematics and science may usefully serve as a focus of the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders work extensively with a range of agencies to safeguard pupils. There are systems in place to safeguard pupils at alternative provision.

Teachers and other adults in school are well trained to spot the signs of abuse and neglect. They know the procedures to follow should they need to report any concerns

about a pupil's welfare. Records of child protection concerns show that there is a strong culture for reporting concerns about pupils in a timely manner.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A few pupils are concerned about the effectiveness of leaders' actions to stop bullying. Some feel that it is not dealt with well and others feel that they cannot report it. Leaders must create a culture where pupils are confident to report any instances of bullying in the knowledge that it will be dealt with effectively by staff.
- Curriculum plans in some subjects are not well implemented across the school. Consequently, pupils do not achieve as well as they could do in these subjects. Leaders need to ensure that teachers receive the training that they need to deliver the curriculum plans effectively. This will help pupils know more and remember more in these subjects.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in October 2015.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	105252
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	10199559
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,248
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair of governing body	Joanne Murphy
Headteacher	Neil Coe
Website	http://www.westhoughton-high.org
Date of previous inspection	20 and 21 October 2015, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses five alternative providers.
- A new leadership team is in place since the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first inspection that has taken place in school since the COVID-19 pandemic started. Inspectors took account of the impact of the pandemic in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, members of the governing body, the special educational needs coordinator and a representative of the local authority. Inspectors also held meetings with groups of pupils and a range of other staff who work in school.
- Inspectors conducted deep dives in English, mathematics, science, modern foreign languages and history. Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work from these subjects, visited lessons and spoke with pupils and teachers. Inspectors also examined curriculum plans and met with leaders in each subject.

- Inspectors considered a range of evidence around safeguarding including whether leaders have appropriate vetting checks for adults who work in school. They scrutinised records about the actions that leaders have taken to protect the most vulnerable pupils at risk. Inspectors spoke to a range of pupils to understand whether they felt safe in school, and who they would go to if they needed help. Inspectors also looked at the systems in place for keeping pupils safe in alternative provision.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View. This included free-text responses from parents. They also considered the responses to Ofsted’s staff survey and the responses to Ofsted’s pupil survey.

Inspection team

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