

Inspection of Wood Green Academy

Wood Green Road, Wednesbury, West Midlands WS10 9QU

Inspection dates: 26–27 February 2020

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

The school's overall effectiveness has fallen since the last inspection. Leaders are taking effective action to secure improvements after standards and progress fell sharply in 2018. They improved in 2019 but improvements have been slower in English.

Pupils love coming to school, which is why they attend so regularly. They enjoy their learning. Their behaviour in lessons and around school is exemplary. Pupils show a high level of respect for each other. Relationships between staff and pupils are very strong. Pupils are kept safe. They learn in an environment where bullying is extremely rare. Any incidents are dealt with effectively by staff. Pupils spoken to agree with this.

Leaders strive for pupils to leave school as 'confident, successful, well-rounded young people'. Pupils have opportunities to enhance their wider experiences through the enrichment programme, clubs and visits. These include choir, chess and trips to France and Germany. The 'aspiration programme' raises pupils' expectations through trips to universities.

Pupils who find learning difficult receive effective support through a skills development programme. This helps them develop their literacy, numeracy and science skills.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils. This is why they offer a wide range of subjects which pupils can choose to study at GCSE and in the sixth form. However, take-up for modern foreign languages is low.

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

Curriculum planning allows pupils to learn and remember more. Standards are improving, including in science and mathematics, because of better sequenced planning. The sequencing of lessons is good in most subjects, including art, design and technology, history, geography and health and social care. Lessons are planned effectively to extend pupils' knowledge and skills. Most pupils are able to explain what they had been learning and how it builds on previous work. This is not consistent, however. At times, the intention of what teachers want pupils to learn by the end of a unit or topic is not clear.

Leaders recognise that entering pupils in Year 10 for GCSE English did not lead to a significant improvement in the below average standards and progress in English. They have taken steps to address this. Pupils now experience continuity and progression in English language and literature for a full five years.

There is full coverage and a breadth of learning for pupils in most subjects in the two-year key stage 3. However, some subjects, such as food and music, are taught in less depth. This is because there is not enough curriculum time available.

Leaders are ambitious for more pupils to take the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) subjects at GCSE. However, leaders are also committed to allow pupils a free choice to follow courses that meet their needs and aspirations. The proportion of pupils opting for subjects that result in them achieving the full EBacc is very low and has been falling in recent years. This is because only a small number of pupils continue with modern foreign languages beyond Year 8.

The learning hub is at the heart of leaders' intentions that reading has a high priority. All pupils in key stage 3 have dedicated reading lessons where they can access a wide range of suitable texts. During the inspection, pupils were able to take advantage of a book fair in the hub.

Low-attaining pupils, disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities all achieve highly. Leaders deploy additional funding to provide effective additional support. The curriculum is planned well to ensure that they are learning and remembering more.

In the sixth form, leaders are highly committed to maintaining a broad range of options, however small the uptake. Leaders have also expanded the types of qualifications available. Consequently, students from neighbouring schools can access courses not available elsewhere. Retention and attendance are high. There is coherence in lesson planning to ensure that learning is sequential. Not all pupils complete work experience as part of the study programme, however.

Leaders are very mindful of reducing staff workload. They have changed expectations for planning and assessment to address this. Leaders have also taken account of staff well-being, recognising that staff absence is higher than the national average.

Pupils' attitudes to learning are of a consistently high standard. Leaders' expectations for behaviour are exceptionally high and pupils respond positively to this. Pupils are articulate and respectful of others' opinions and beliefs.

Leaders plan well for pupils' personal development. Pupils can be members of the school council or student ambassadors. Older pupils voted in a mock election in December 2019. The school's personal, social and health education programme, 'step up for life', ensures that there is a high focus on religious and moral issues. The school has a comprehensive programme for careers advice and guidance. There is scope to provide a wider and richer set of experiences for pupils to develop their talents and interests further.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Leaders have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They have put in place a thorough

training programme for staff to ensure that they are all fully equipped to respond to any safeguarding incidents. Referrals are timely. Leaders have successfully developed a knife crime initiative with the police and other schools in response to local concerns. Pupils are taught to keep themselves safe through the school's 'step up for life' programme, which includes road safety, cyber bullying, the internet and safe sex. Governors hold leaders to account for safeguarding.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school is ambitious for pupils to succeed. It offers curriculum pathways to enable pupils to be well prepared for the next steps in their education, training and development. The EBacc subjects are at the heart of this. However, too few pupils take up the full EBacc subjects and numbers have been falling. This is as a result of low uptake in modern foreign languages. This means that very few pursue the subject in the sixth form, and this limits opportunities for a career where knowing a modern foreign language would be an advantage. Leaders should encourage more pupils to take up the subject at GCSE and beyond.
- In most subjects, pupils enjoy a breadth and depth of experience in the two-year key stage 3 before making their GCSE choices at the end of Year 8. However, coverage is more limited in subjects such as music and food. Uptake of extra-curricular music is also small. As a result, very few pupils experience a breadth and depth of music in key stage 3. Very few take music at GCSE. Leaders should find ways to ensure that there is greater depth and breadth in music and food in key stage 3. They should also review the two-year key stage 3 to evaluate the impact on other subjects.
- Although curriculum plans are well sequenced, the extent to which teachers have considered what they have wanted pupils to learn and know by the end of each topic or unit is not consistent. As a result, there are times when the focus is on preparing for the test rather than for pupils remembering information over time which can be applied in the next stage of their learning. Leaders should ensure that planning is consistent across subjects, matching the best practice that exists.
- The study programme in the sixth form enables students to succeed. However, not all of them take up the opportunity for work experience, which would help them prepare for the world of work in the future. Leaders should ensure that this entitlement is taken up by as many sixth-form students as possible.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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	136616
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	10122617
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,482
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	181
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Paul Francis
Headteacher	James Topham
Website	www.woodgreenacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	15–16 May 2012, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Both the current headteacher and the chair of the governing body were appointed since the school's last inspection.
- The school is a stand-alone academy.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

- We held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, subject leaders, other leaders and other members of staff. We spoke to pupils. We met three members of the governing body, including the chair.

- There were too few responses to take account of Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View.
- We considered information on behaviour, personal development, safeguarding and child protection.
- There are 14 pupils in registered alternative provision.
- We focused deeply on English, history, mathematics, modern foreign languages, music and science. We visited lessons, looked at pupils’ work, and spoke to subject leaders, teachers and pupils. We also looked at work in other subjects, including art, design and technology, drama, geography, health and social care and physical education.

Inspection team

Mark Sims, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
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Mark Feldman	Ofsted Inspector
Graeme Rudland	Ofsted Inspector
Dave Gilkerson	Ofsted Inspector

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