

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Wood Green Academy

Wood Green Road, Wednesbury, West Midlands WS10 9QU

Inspection dates:

8 and 9 April 2025

Outcome

Wood Green Academy has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher is James Topham. Wood Green Academy is a single-academy trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Vicky Millward.

What is it like to attend this school?

Wood Green Academy has a very strong sense of community. Pupils in all years, including students in the sixth form, talk of positive relationships with staff, several of whom attended the school themselves. Equality, respect and tolerance are at the heart of the school's values. Pupils feel safe. They say that bullying can happen, but staff take this seriously when it is reported. As a result, most pupils are happy and attend school regularly.

Pupils move promptly and calmly around the large site. In lessons, they show mature behaviour and an interest in their learning. Pupils and students in the sixth form have a clear understanding of inclusion, diversity and what is right and wrong. They engage politely with adults and visitors to the school.

Pupils benefit from a wide curriculum offer. There are a range of subject choices available at GCSE and in the sixth form. All pupils receive independent advice and support when choosing subjects. As a result of teachers' high expectations and targeted support for pupils, the majority of pupils achieve well. Younger pupils participate in compulsory enrichment sessions after school once a week. These include leadership skills, judo and kabaddi. Older pupils engage in valuable work experience placements.

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

The school ensures pupils receive an ambitious curriculum. All pupils follow the same curriculum, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff motivate pupils to succeed. For example, in wider curriculum subjects, such as art, pupils are enthused by the standard of work produced by former pupils. This then inspires them to produce work of an exceptional standard themselves.

The school's well-sequenced curriculum helps pupils develop their knowledge and skills. Students in the sixth form engage in mature discussions about their learning. For example, in a sixth-form English lesson, the teacher encouraged pupils to link ideas around female repression to the class novel. This helped students deepen their understanding of the book's societal context.

Since the last inspection, the school has re-evaluated the curriculum and changed the structure of lessons. There are now purposeful opportunities for pupils to learn, apply and retain knowledge over longer periods of time. Pupils are further supported to develop their extended writing through the use of higher level vocabulary. Regular checks on pupils' learning allow pupils to identify the progress they have made in the curriculum and where improvements may be required. However, at times the school does not always provide pupils with sufficient detail on their next steps. This means that pupils cannot always see clearly how to improve their work.

The school has a strong focus on reading. The school checks pupils' reading ability on entry. A phonics programme helps those who need support to become more fluent readers. The school's learning hub (library) is at the heart of the school. It offers a range of fiction and non-fiction resources. Pupils read with their tutors in dedicated form-time sessions each week.

Pastoral care is central to the school's mission. Pastoral leaders know pupils, families and the local community well. Pupils are educated on a range of topical issues in the school's own personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) programme. These include sessions on knife crime, vaping and e-safety. There is a culture of vigilance and a mantra of 'this could happen here'. The school provides support to pupils who struggle to meet the school's high expectations. Leaders identify patterns in behaviour. They act swiftly to address any emerging trends.

Pupils attend school regularly and this is celebrated through the school's house system as well as other reward schemes. Suspensions are used when pupils do not meet the school's very high expectations. Repeat suspensions are rare.

Beyond the academic, the school provides a range of wider opportunities. Enrichment lessons are led by specialist coaches. There is a range of sports on offer, including climbing, table tennis and trampolining. At times, attendance at these clubs is lower than the school would like. The school has identified this as an area for improvement. Since the last inspection, the school has strengthened its engagement with local employers.

This helps prepare pupils for the next stage in their education or training. Former students return to Wood Green to inspire pupils about the world of work. Sixth-form students welcome the support they receive with applications for higher education and apprenticeships.

The school is well led and managed. The members of the experienced leadership team have a strong vision for continual improvement. They are supported by a dedicated board of trustees, whose members recognise the school's strengths and areas for development. Most staff and parents and carers express their support for the school. Staff appreciate leaders' awareness of their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Feedback that pupils receive on their work is not consistent across all subjects. In some subjects, pupils do not receive clear guidance on how to improve their work. The school should ensure greater consistency across the school by embedding the successful practice that already exists in other subjects.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in February 2020.

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	136616
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	10377046
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
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	1,527
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	224
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Vicky Millward
Headteacher	James Topham
Website	www.woodgreenacademy.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	26 and 27 February 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses five registered and three unregistered providers of alternative provision.
- 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 evaluation 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 held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, middle leaders, teaching and support staff and trustees during the inspection.
- Inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to staff, looked at samples of pupils' work and talked with some pupils about their learning. They also spoke to pupils about their experiences at the school and their views on behaviour and bullying.
- The lead inspector spoke to the three unregistered providers of alternative provision that the school engages with.
- Inspectors spoke to leaders about the provision for pupils with SEND and reviewed documentation relating to pupils with SEND.
- 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.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents. This included information about pupils' behaviour, attendance, the school's curriculum and improvement planning. They also reviewed minutes of trustees' meetings.
- Inspectors considered responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire and the free-text responses. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's online staff survey and pupil questionnaires.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktimes and lunchtimes.

Inspection team

Michael Scott, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Stewart Tait	Ofsted Inspector
Cat Woodsmith	Ofsted Inspector

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