

Inspection of a good school: Wales High School

Storth Lane, Kiveton Park, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S26 5QQ

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 October 2023

Outcome

Wales High School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Wales High School is a friendly and vibrant school. Pupils understand the importance of tolerance and respect. Everyone is welcome in this inclusive school. Leaders have created a positive culture that spreads through every aspect of the school community.

The school has designed an ambitious curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This extends to pupils who access the school's specialist resource provision, who are skilfully supported by well-trained staff to thrive in school. Some pupils have significant gaps in their knowledge when they join the school. For some disadvantaged pupils, these gaps do not close quickly enough.

The school prioritises pupils' personal development. Pupils, including those in the sixth form, learn about important issues such as respectful relationships, financial management and discrimination. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain. The school's work to promote mental health is noteworthy. Pupils and staff are supported well by a team of counsellors and trained staff.

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

The school has identified the important knowledge that it wants pupils to learn in each subject. New knowledge builds effectively on what pupils already know because teachers have a clear understanding of the curriculum from Year 7 to the sixth form. Leaders enable teachers to work together so that they can continually refine the curriculum to better meet pupils' needs.

Teachers have very strong subject knowledge. They use this to ensure that learning is matched well to pupils' capabilities. Leaders provide precise guidance for teachers to help them to support pupils with SEND. Teachers use assessment well and align this with the curriculum to identify any gaps in pupils' knowledge. However, for some disadvantaged pupils, these gaps in knowledge remain.

Leaders have allocated curriculum time to enhance pupils' reading. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 are encouraged to read texts by a range of authors and of different genres through the 'GROW' curriculum. Where pupils are at an early stage of learning to read, leaders quickly identify the barriers that prevent pupils from reading fluently. Pupils receive the support that they need to become confident readers.

The school has recently raised its expectations relating to pupils' conduct. Most staff and pupils welcome these changes. The majority of pupils behave well and focus well on their learning. There is very little interruption to learning. Bullying can happen, but when it does, most pupils are confident that staff will address it quickly.

The school is focused on giving pupils experiences beyond academic learning. Leaders plan carefully to make sure all pupils develop into well-rounded individuals with a strong sense of community. They learn to respect and celebrate difference. Pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is enhanced through a cohesive programme of assemblies that complement the taught curriculum. Pupils benefit from a highly effective careers programme. They are well prepared for their next steps in education, training or employment.

Students in the sixth form, including those with SEND, have a curriculum that meets their needs. Teachers have secure subject knowledge. Students' wider personal development is well considered. For example, sixth-form students work with local businesses to develop projects which enrich their understanding of the world of work.

All staff follow a strong programme of professional learning. This programme is matched to the school's improvement priorities and the interests of individual staff. Leaders are considerate of staff's well-being. They take staff's views into account. Those responsible for governance provide effective support and challenge. They have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. Leaders are steadfast in their commitment to inclusivity for all pupils and the wider community of Wales High School.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some disadvantaged pupils have gaps in their knowledge and do not make as much progression through the curriculum as their peers. The school should implement its plans fully to address these gaps and enable disadvantaged pupils to learn better, particularly by the end of Year 11.

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 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 would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2018.

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	136331
Local authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	10290163
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	1,850
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	250
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Dominic Beck
Headteacher	Guiseppe Di’Tasio
Website	http://www.waleshigh.com/
Date of previous inspection	2 May 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is the only school in the Wales High School Academy Trust.
- The school uses five unregistered providers of education.
- 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.
- The school operates a SEND resource base for autism to provide support for 22 pupils with complex needs.

Information about this inspection

- 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- 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 met with the headteacher, the head of school and senior leaders responsible for safeguarding, behaviour, attendance, personal development, teaching and learning, pupil premium spending and the sixth form.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, history, geography and art. As part of the deep dives, inspectors visited lessons, reviewed curriculum plans and spoke with curriculum leaders and teachers. They also talked to pupils about their learning and looked at the work they have completed.
- Inspectors met with the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator. Education, health and care plans and other support plans for pupils with SEND were reviewed. Inspectors visited lessons to see how pupils with SEND are supported to learn.
- Inspectors met with the leader responsible for reading to discuss the support for pupils at the early stages of reading.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for professional development to discuss staff training.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for the pupil premium strategy.
- The team scrutinised the school's records of bullying, reviewed the actions leaders take when bullying occurs and spoke to several groups of pupils, including some single-gender groups, to understand their experience of school.
- Inspectors met leaders to discuss pupils' behaviour and reviewed the school's data on suspensions and internal suspensions.
- Inspectors met with representatives from the local governing body.
- Inspectors scrutinised records relating to attendance and records of pupils who have joined or left the school roll.
- Inspectors met with the leader responsible for alternative provision to discuss the rationale for its use and to review the checks that leaders carry out to ensure pupils are safe. Alternative provision settings were contacted and visited as part of this inspection.

Inspection team

Stuart Voyce, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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