Inspection of a good school: The Wavell School

Lynchford Road, Farnborough, Hampshire GU14 6BH

Inspection dates: 9 and 10 November 2021

Outcome

The Wavell School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Being a pupil at Wavell means you are part of a community where everyone looks out for each other. Pupils are made to feel welcome as soon as they start. Responses to Ofsted Parent View outlined how valuable the summer school and transition activities were in helping Year 7 to settle in September. The staff's careful thought and the kindness of identified pupil 'buddies' also help pupils from military families when they join the school. This support is particularly important for those pupils who may move more regularly.

Pupils have a strong understanding of and respect for equality and diversity. There is an eagerness for pupils to find out about each other's backgrounds and beliefs. Pupils know that bullying is wrong, and that their teachers will take swift action when this is reported.

Teachers have high expectations for what the pupils will achieve academically. This is coupled with a determination that pupils have the skills they need to be successful when they leave school. There is a strong emphasis on encouraging pupils to talk and voice their views. Lessons such as the English 'Let's Think' sessions help to develop pupils' confidence to question, debate and reflect on the world around them.

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

Leaders are driven by a determination to meet the needs of every pupil. The school's ethos, 'We care to challenge', embodies this approach. Staff combine their support to help every pupil achieve academically with kindness and care. The school's ambitious curriculum is reflected in the number of pupils who study the English Baccalaureate subjects until the end of Year 11. Knowledge and skills across the whole curriculum have been sequenced so pupils can confidently build on previous learning. However, while most subjects have fully implemented this detailed planning, a small number have not. In these subjects, further support is being provided to ensure that learning is consistently effective.

Pupils in key stage 3 enjoy their learning. They study a broad curriculum until the end of Year 9. Subject teams have thought carefully about the knowledge and skills pupils need that will help them to be successful and achieve well. However, the checks on pupils'

knowledge do not always help teachers know quickly what support pupils need. Leaders are keen to ensure that this assessment process is developed. This will help pupils to build their confidence in knowing how well they are doing and what they need to do next.

Leaders have prioritised the importance of reading. Within the English curriculum and across the school, pupils explore a wide range of quality texts. These texts consider diversity as well as other issues affecting pupils today. Highly trained staff accurately identify the needs of pupils who may find reading more difficult. This includes the support provided by the school's resource provision for pupils who have specific learning difficulties. This support has a positive impact on pupils' reading and learning.

The personal development offer is a strength of the school. After-school clubs and whole-school events help pupils extend their learning. The well-considered personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum is regularly adapted to develop pupils' knowledge and support their well-being. The careers guidance helps to raise pupils' aspirations for when they leave the school. This provides useful motivation for pupils through their academic studies.

Lessons are calm and focused. Pupils know what is expected of them and are clear on the actions staff will take if the school rules are broken. 'Personal learning plans' give teachers detailed guidance on how to help pupils who find managing their behaviour more difficult. This means that these pupils can continue to learn well with their peers.

Overwhelmingly, staff appreciate the thoughtful support from leaders and the team of dedicated governors. Ongoing professional development is balanced with a consideration of the staff's workload and well-being. Staff value the time they have as a team, working together to continue to develop learning across the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders provide regular, detailed and up-to-date training for staff on potential risks to pupils' safety and well-being. Staff report any concerns quickly. Leaders then work closely with highly trained staff in school as well as local external agencies to provide ongoing support.

Pupils are very aware of what actions they need to take to keep themselves safe. This includes speaking to a trusted adult in the school if they have concerns about their own well-being or that of a friend. Pupils really value the discussions around mental health during their PSHE lessons, as well as the time for quiet reflection during 'Mindfulness Wednesdays'.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The full implementation of planning in a small number of subjects is not yet consistent. Therefore, teachers do not always have an accurate view of how pupils' knowledge and understanding build over time. Leaders are aware of this and understand the importance of carefully monitoring the impact of their planned improvements to ensure that pupils' knowledge is secure in every subject.
- The assessment used in key stage 3 does not always help teachers to identify whether pupils have confidently learned the intended knowledge and skills. Therefore, teachers are not always clear on what gaps pupils have in their learning and what further knowledge is required. Leaders should carefully consider and monitor the effectiveness of assessment to ensure that pupils know and remember more across the school's key stage 3 curriculum.

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 second section 8 inspection since we judged school to be good in October 2012.

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	116448
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10200490
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	1014
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jason Murdoch
Headteacher	Amanda Rowley
Website	http://www.wavellschool.org.uk/
Date of previous inspection	17 January 2017

Information about this school

- The school has a higher-than-average number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This includes those pupils who are supported in a resource-based unit for pupils with specific learning difficulties. This provision is funded by the local authority.
- The school has a higher-than-average number of pupils from military families who are stationed locally in the Farnborough area.
- The school uses two registered alternative providers to provide education and support for a very small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 11 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors met with senior leaders, staff and pupils. They also spoke with representatives from the board of governors, including the chair. An inspector also spoke with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, history, and design and technology. They discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, teachers, and pupils, visited lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered the 142 responses to Ofsted Parent View questionnaire, including 82 free-text comments. They also took account of the responses to the confidential staff and pupil surveys, as well as gathering additional views throughout the inspection.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors viewed the school's website and policies, met with the designated safeguarding leaders, spoke with pupils and staff, checked school records of safeguarding checks carried out on adults working at the school, and spoke with governors.

Inspection team

Aimee Floyd, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Mark Roessler	Ofsted Inspector

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