

Inspection of Waseley Hills High School

School Road, Rubery, Birmingham, West Midlands B45 9EL

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 June 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Sixth-form provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Waseley Hills increasingly understand that learning is important. Teachers encourage them to believe that they can achieve well. Most pupils enjoy their learning and feel happy at school. However, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do not currently have the right support to help them to do as well as they could.

Leaders want every pupil to feel part of the wider school community. They are keen to ensure that pupils are part of 'The Waseley Way'. Most pupils enjoy coming to school and feel safe and supported by their teachers. However, some pupils talk about lessons being disrupted by other pupils and how this hinders their learning.

There have been several changes to the school in the last few years. However, following the appointment of the new principal and the school joining the Central Regions Schools Trust, it is now growing in strength. As one pupil commented, 'We have seen some good changes since January.'

Bullying is rare in the school and when it does exist, pupils are confident that it is dealt with by teachers. Pupils feel safe in school and say that they have someone to go to if they are worried.

Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy taking part in sporting events and learning outside the classroom. Following COVID-19, leaders are working hard to give pupils more opportunities to attend trips and visits in order to enhance their learning. Pupils welcome this.

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

The new principal has an accurate view of the school. Since his appointment in January 2022, he has quickly identified the strengths and the areas that need improvement. Along with other senior leaders, he has begun to make changes and has a clear plan to improve the school. The support of the trust has, in a very short time, resulted in some positive improvements. For example, some very capable leaders and teachers have now been appointed. However, the impact of these changes is yet to be seen in some aspects of the school's work.

Leaders are strengthening the curriculum. They have a clear view of what they want pupils to know, do and understand in each subject. The curriculum is ambitious and focused on the essential knowledge and skills that pupils need to be successful. In some subjects, including English, the curriculum is detailed and there is a sensible approach to the way lessons are sequenced. In other subjects, such as science and mathematics, the plans are in the earlier stages of development.

Sometimes, pupils struggle to recall their prior learning and remember the important knowledge previously taught, because the delivery of the curriculum is still too variable.

Teachers use assessment effectively in some lessons, such as English and geography, to check and improve pupils' learning. However, this is done less well in other subjects, for example mathematics. In these subjects, teachers do not routinely use assessment effectively, to check pupils' understanding or to inform their future learning.

The provision for pupils with SEND is inconsistent. Leaders have ensured that the systems to identify the needs of pupils with SEND are increasingly effective. However, in several cases, the curriculum is not adapted well enough to support pupils' needs. This means that pupils with SEND are not always able to make the progress of which they are capable.

Reading is given a much higher priority than was previously the case. Leaders understand the importance of reading and there is now significant investment in supporting pupils to read well. For example, there is a daily 20-minute reading period with tutors. Pupils' understanding of what they have read is improving. However, this has only recently been implemented and is still in its infancy. In some lessons, pupils do not have opportunities to read a variety of texts and material.

Pupils' behaviour is improving but is not yet good. Recently, leaders have raised their expectations of pupils' behaviour. There is now a more coherent approach to promoting good behaviour that all staff know and are beginning to apply. Most pupils welcome this positive change but not all pupils have consistently positive attitudes to their learning and, at times, learning is disrupted.

There is an effective plan in place for personal, social and health education (PSHE). Pupils learn about healthy relationships and keeping themselves safe online. Important topics are taught through assemblies and tutor time, as well as through a dedicated lesson every week. However, leaders recognise that the PSHE programme needs to be more closely mapped and monitored to ensure it best meets pupils' needs.

The school provides appropriate opportunities for pupils, including those in the sixth form, to think about their future careers and pathways. Since the pandemic, more visitors are coming into school to talk to pupils about their next steps in education or employment and training. Leaders are also planning more trips and visits to give pupils experiences beyond the classroom.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school, supported by the trust, has made significant strides in creating a positive safeguarding culture. Leaders carry out thorough checks on the suitability of adults working at the school.

Staff are well trained and knowledgeable in this area. Staff are clear about procedures and policies relating to keeping children safe. The members of staff with responsibility for safeguarding are diligent and ensure that pupils who need help get it in a timely way. Leaders have a clear understanding of the local issues facing the pupils at Waseley Hills.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There is too much variation in how the curriculum is planned and delivered in different subjects. As a result, pupils do not learn the key knowledge as well as they should. Leaders and staff need to make sure that the essential knowledge in all subjects is clearly identified and organised so that pupils' learning builds over time. Staff should ensure that the curriculum is well delivered so that pupils can remember, recall and apply what they have previously learned.
- Some staff do not use assessment effectively in order to establish what pupils know, understand and can do. As a result, pupils' misunderstanding and misconceptions and the gaps in their learning are not identified quickly enough. Leaders should make sure that staff use assessment well to check pupils' learning and use the evidence to inform changes or modifications to the curriculum and pupils' future learning.
- Pupils with SEND do not do as well as they should in several subjects because the delivery of the curriculum is not adapted to meet their needs. Leaders should make sure that all staff have the knowledge, understanding and expertise to modify the delivery of the curriculum to best meet the needs of pupils with SEND.
- On occasion, low-level disruption has a negative impact on pupils' learning. This hinders the progress that they should be making as they cannot concentrate on their work. Leaders should ensure that the behaviour policy is embedded and applied consistently by all staff so that pupils demonstrate consistently good behaviour in all lessons.
- The school's arrangements for helping pupils to read better are in their infancy. Leaders should make sure that weaker readers have the necessary support to help them read confidently, fluently and with understanding, and that all pupils have opportunities to read a variety of texts, genres, media, poetry and plays.

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	138664
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10227366
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	742
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	61
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Eric Griffiths
Principal	Damian Belshaw
Website	www.waseleyhills.worcs.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	26 and 27 June 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The principal has been in post since January 2022.
- Waseley Hills joined the Central Regions Schools Trust in November 2021.
- The school uses two registered alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

- Inspectors completed deep dives in the following subjects: mathematics, science, English and geography. Inspectors spoke to leaders about the curriculum, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and talked with pupils about the way these subjects are taught. They also looked at other subjects, such as PSHE, to check how these are planned and taught.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents. These included information about behaviour, attendance, the school curriculum and improvement planning. The school's website was also checked.
- Inspectors talked to pupils, staff and leaders about the school's safeguarding arrangements. They examined how leaders make employment checks on staff and scrutinised further safeguarding records. They also asked how incidents reported by pupils are recorded and analysed.
- Inspectors observed pupils during informal times of the day to evaluate their behaviour and the school's safeguarding arrangements.
- Inspectors held meetings with trust leaders, the principal, senior leaders, curriculum leaders, teachers and pupils. They also talked informally to pupils and staff to gather general information about school life.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and free-text comments. Inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaires.

Inspection team

Neil Warner, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Clare Considine	Ofsted Inspector
Julie Griffiths	Ofsted Inspector
Tim Bassett	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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