

# Wellfield High School

Yewlands Drive, Leyland, Lancashire PR25 2TP

## Inspection dates

23–24 May 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- The standard of education provided at the school declined after the last inspection. Too many pupils, especially boys, did not attain the examination grades that they should have in 2017.
- Pupils' rates of progress have improved this academic year. However, they remain variable, especially for boys.
- The headteacher provides highly effective leadership. However, other areas of leadership require strengthening. Some leaders do not routinely monitor, evaluate and refine improvement plans.
- Governance requires improvement. An external review of governance is recommended to ensure that governors are routinely effective in holding school leaders to account.
- Leaders have not used the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils effectively until recently. This aspect of school leadership still requires strengthening to ensure that the current improvements in these pupils' attendance and progress gather pace.
- Despite improvements in teaching and learning since September 2017, inconsistency remains within and across subjects, including in mathematics and science.
- Teachers do not routinely set pupils, especially the least and most able, work that closely matches their ability.
- Pupils' attendance is improving but it remains below average. Persistent absence is above the national average.

### The school has the following strengths

- The appointment of the new headteacher in September 2017 has transformed the school. Leaders and teachers are more effective than was the case previously, and they have demonstrated the capacity for further improving the standard of education that the school provides.
- Most teachers share and promote the high expectations for pupils that senior leaders set. As a result, pupils have good attitudes to learning, and they are learning at a faster rate than was the case previously.
- Leaders have reviewed the curriculum to ensure that it matches pupils' needs and interests and prepares them for their next steps in education or employment effectively.
- Leaders use the additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities effectively.
- Pupils describe the school positively, including those in Year 7. They like school and describe it as a happy and safe environment. Older pupils say that teaching has improved a lot since the new headteacher was appointed.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' outcomes, especially for boys.
- Improve leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that leaders monitor, evaluate and refine improvement plans regularly and effectively
  - strengthening the effectiveness of governance so that governors routinely hold school leaders to account
  - ensuring that additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively so that these pupils attend regularly and make progress in line with that of others nationally.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
  - removing inconsistencies in the quality of teaching across a range of subjects, including in mathematics and science
  - insisting that the most able pupils are routinely provided with opportunities to stretch their thinking so that they consistently attain the highest levels
  - ensuring that pupils with low starting points are consistently supported to make the progress that they should.
- Improve pupils' attendance so that it matches that of others nationally.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to ascertain how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- The standard of education provided by school leaders declined after the previous inspection. Pupils' attitudes to learning were frequently poor and too many did not make the progress that they should have made. This was because teaching was routinely weak, and leaders did not provide the capacity to improve the school. The new headteacher, appointed in September 2017, has provided a catalyst for change. She has led by example to create a culture of high aspirations. Pupils, parents and carers value the improvements already made and recognise that the standard of education that the school provides is on an upward trajectory.
- Senior leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and its priorities for improvement. The positive differences that they have already made, most notably in raising staff's expectations for pupils, demonstrate the capacity to further boost the standard of education provided. Senior leaders plan carefully and strategically. Actions are linked to identified weaker aspects, such as the current variability in pupils' progress, as well as to upgrade all areas of leadership so that they routinely match the high standards set by senior leaders.
- The new headteacher has transformed the school's ethos. Staff, including other leaders, say that they now have a clear understanding of their responsibilities, they feel supported by senior leaders and that they enjoy working at the school. As a result, other aspects of leadership are more effective than they were previously, although these need sharpening to be fully effective. Inspectors found that leaders were accurate and positive about the next steps in their own development. For example, these leaders do not routinely monitor, evaluate and refine the plans that they are responsible for, so that aspects of the school's improvement are not as rapid and secure as they should be.
- The new headteacher has invested the school's resources sensibly in teachers' professional development. Staff are positive about the training that they receive. They say that leaders have established a culture of professional development across the school. School leaders are accurate in their view that training, support and an insistence on high expectations are securing more consistency in the quality of teaching and assessment than was the case previously, although variability remains.
- Leaders have a clear rationale for the pupils' curriculum. They have evaluated the impact that the curriculum has had on pupils' outcomes and have made the changes necessary, including those for pupils with low starting points in key stage 3. Pupils' choices at key stage 4 are designed to prepare them well for the next stage of their education and careers. Many pupils participate in the range of cultural, creative and sporting activities that take place beyond lessons.
- Leaders provide a careers guidance programme, which is planned effectively and raises pupils' aspirations. The proportion of pupils moving on to further education and employment is above the national average, including for those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. However, leaders accurately identify that pupils have not consistently moved on to the next steps that they should have moved on to, especially boys and disadvantaged pupils, because of previous weak examination results.

- The school's use of the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is more effective than was the case at the time of Ofsted's previous monitoring visit in March 2017. However, this aspect requires further strengthening because leaders are not consistently precise in assessing, evaluating and refining the actions that they take to improve these pupils' education. Consequently, despite some signs of improvement, the attendance and progress of these pupils do not routinely match those of others nationally.
- Leaders use the funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities effectively. The support for pupils with an education, health and care plan is closely matched to their specific requirements. These pupils generally follow a broad and balanced curriculum, make good progress and move on to next steps in education and employment. Leaders' actions to eradicate the variation in the quality of the teaching that pupils with in-school support plans have previously received are especially effective at key stage 3.
- Leaders use of Year 7 catch-up funding is effective. Pupils receive a range of support measures well matched to their literacy and/or numeracy requirements. Accordingly, most of these pupils catch up with others.
- Leaders' plans to support the pastoral transition of pupils from primary school are effective. Staff gather information that supports pupils' transition to secondary school, including about those who have SEN and/or disabilities, and they share this effectively. Consequently, the Year 7 pupils with whom inspectors spoke were positive about the school. Staff also gather information about pupils' academic performance. This is used especially effectively for pupils with low and mid starting points.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governance has strengthened recently, partly because of new appointments to the governing board. Governors are equipped to rectify the financial mismanagement which left the school with a significant budget deficit in recent years. Current governors' expertise in this aspect means that the school now has a secure financial base from which to strengthen the quality of education that it provides. Governors have a clearer understanding of their roles and duties than was the case previously. However, the support and challenge that they set senior leaders is variable in its effectiveness and requires improvement.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Checks made by inspectors found that staff, including non-teaching staff, are trained in identifying potential risks to pupils. They know pupils extremely well and they are vigilant in supporting pupils' safety. Consequently, there is a strong culture of safeguarding.
- School leaders work effectively with parents and external agencies and act swiftly when required. Referrals are followed up in a robust manner and record-keeping is good.
- Leaders maintain good-quality safeguarding records. There are systematic procedures

for checking the backgrounds of staff when they are appointed.

- Leaders ensure that pupils have a clear understanding of the risks which might affect them and how they are to keep safe, including online. Pupils know to whom they should report concerns and how to do this.

### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

### Requires improvement

- Leaders have challenged weaker teaching since the appointment of the new headteacher. They have identified priorities to improve the quality of teaching, including the need for consistently high expectations for pupils from teachers, and have supported these priorities with a training programme. As a result, teaching is stronger than was the case previously. However, it is not consistently good enough to ensure that all pupils make the progress that they should make. Variability remains across subjects and between different year groups. For example, although teaching in English is generally stronger than in mathematics and science, there is inconsistency in all these areas.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' conduct and attitudes to learning are more consistent than was the case previously. As a result, low-level disruption during learning is rare, so that teachers focus on pupils' learning rather than managing poor behaviour. This has secured improvement in pupils' progress across a range of subjects.
- Senior leaders have taken effective action to ensure that pupils are routinely taught by staff with good subject knowledge. Pupils say that before the new headteacher arrived, staff absence and turnover was high, particularly in science. This is no longer the case and, as a result, the pupils with whom inspectors spoke said that they are learning more quickly and securely than previously. Boys have especially benefited from these improvements, although variation remains, especially in mathematics and science.
- Leaders have provided a whole-school focus to train and support teachers to use the information that they have about pupils to plan work at the correct level. However, teachers' practice is variable. Pupils with mid starting points are typically provided with work that matches their ability so that they learn effectively. However, the most able pupils are not routinely challenged to allow them to make consistently good progress and improve their attainment. Teachers' planning to support the learning of pupils with low starting points is not consistently effective. For these pupils, it is typically strongest at key stage 3. Here, teachers use the information that they have about these pupils effectively to structure and support pupils' learning.
- Pupils have benefited from teachers' training to develop the quality of their questioning. The training has secured improvement in pupils' learning where teaching is most effective. In these cases, teachers use their secure subject knowledge, alongside accurate assessment information, to engage and challenge pupils. When this works, pupils are provided with opportunities to consolidate, extend and apply their knowledge through extended written and spoken activities.
- Regular and accurate assessment of pupils' learning is helping leaders monitor and evaluate pupils' progress more effectively than was the case previously. Leaders and teachers identify those pupils who have fallen behind. For example, too many pupils have not made the progress that they should have made in science in previous years because of poor or inconsistent teaching. Teachers are taking steps to support these pupils in catching up. Consequently, despite some remaining inconsistencies, these

pupils are making better progress than previously because gaps in their learning are being addressed.

- Inspectors saw examples of homework that pupils are set. Parents say that homework is set regularly, and that the work is usually of an appropriate standard.
- School leaders provided inspectors with copies of reports that they send home to parents. These documents contain clear and useful information about pupils' recent progress.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Requires improvement

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- School leaders have promoted a culture of high expectations since the appointment of the new headteacher. For most pupils, this has developed their confidence both as learners and in their interactions with one another and adults. This was clearly visible when inspectors met pupils during the inspection. They were typically courteous and demonstrated positive aspirations for life and learning.
- Most pupils and their parents believe that bullying is rare, and that staff deal with it effectively. The pupils who spoke with inspectors were adamant that racism and homophobia have no place at the school.
- School leaders recognise and act effectively on their responsibility for pupils' mental and physical health. They take steps to ensure that these aspects are widely promoted through pupils' learning and through the support services. Staff know pupils well and are trained to identify any signs that a pupil may be at risk. Leaders provide a range of support measures for these pupils, including an on-site counselling service. As a result, pupils speak positively about teachers' support for their personal well-being.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Leaders regularly plan and review opportunities for pupils to learn about fundamental British values and other faiths and cultures. Pupils value differences and respect views different from their own.
- School leaders manage effectively the personal development and welfare of the pupils who attend alternative provision.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Leaders, including the recently appointed headteacher, have quickly established positive relationships with pupils and high expectations of pupils' conduct. As a result, school leaders have created a secure and orderly environment. Pupils say that incidents of poor behaviour are far less common than was the case previously.
- Most pupils behave well in lessons. The pupils with whom inspectors spoke said that behaviour in lessons has improved significantly since the arrival of the new headteacher. Leaders have a clear focus on ensuring a culture of high expectations from teachers. Inspectors saw that these standards are applied effectively, in the most part. Consequently, most pupils have positive attitudes to learning, and take pride in

their work. However, a few lose concentration when teachers' expectations do not match those of school leaders, or when teaching is not pitched appropriately.

- Pupils' attendance has improved since the arrival of the new headteacher, but it remains below the national average. Systems recently introduced to secure the good attendance of pupils who have been persistently absent in the past are showing signs that they are effective. Consequently, some of these pupils are starting to attend school more regularly. Leaders are sharply focused on improving the attendance of pupils at the school so that it matches that of others nationally.
- Pupils treat the school environment with respect and do not leave litter lying around. At break, lunchtime and at the change of lessons, pupils move around the school in an orderly manner. They arrive punctually at lessons.
- School leaders manage effectively the attendance, behaviour and safeguarding of the pupils who attend alternative provision.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- Pupils' examination results in 2017 were variable. Overall, they were significantly lower than those of others nationally. This was the case especially for boys, disadvantaged pupils and those with high or low starting points. Pupils' examination results in science were very poor, as they had also been in 2015 and 2016. However, girls' results and pupils with mid starting points were better than others at the school, and they attained grades that were at least in line with the national average.
- Inspectors' analysis of pupils' current work shows that their outcomes are on a trajectory of improvement. More pupils are working at the level expected of their age and starting point, but variation remains. Pupils' current outcomes are typically stronger in key stage 3 than in key stage 4. Pupils generally make stronger progress in English than they do in mathematics and science.
- Boys are making better progress than was the case previously because of improvements in their attitudes to learning. They benefit from the ongoing improvements in the quality of teaching since the current headteacher was appointed, and the higher expectations set by most teachers. However, despite an improving picture, boys' outcomes remain inconsistent, especially in key stage 4.
- Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils require improvement. They made significantly less progress in examinations in 2017 than others nationally. Work seen by inspectors shows that school leaders are accurate in saying that the differences in attainment between current disadvantaged pupils and others are diminishing. However, this improvement is not yet consistent across subjects and year groups.
- More pupils make good progress from their starting points than was the case previously, but inconsistencies remain. Current pupils with mid starting points typically continue to make the progress that they should. Despite stronger outcomes for some of the most able current pupils, their progress remains variable within and between subjects and year groups, and it is often weaker in key stage 4. This is because teachers do not routinely set the most able pupils work that challenges them. Pupils with low starting points are making stronger progress in Year 7 and 8 than previously, but their progress is inconsistent in Year 9, 10 and 11.

- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities have made significantly better progress this academic year than they have previously. These pupils generally make the progress that they should make because teachers routinely use the information provided by school leaders to set challenging work and to ensure that the support that they provide is well matched to pupils' needs.
- Leaders monitor the quality of education that pupils who attend alternative provision receive effectively. These pupils benefit from appropriate curriculums that focus on preparing pupils for the next stage of their education.
- The proportion of pupils who progress to further education, employment or training is in line with the national average. However, because of weak examination results previously, pupils do not consistently move on to the higher qualifications of which they are capable.

## School details

Unique reference number	119723
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10045838

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	370
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Maria Neale
Headteacher	Mrs Lesley Gwinnett
Telephone number	01772 421 303
Website	<a href="http://www.whs.lancs.sch.uk">www.whs.lancs.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:head@whs.lancs.sch.uk">head@whs.lancs.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	13–14 January 2016

## Information about this school

- In 2017, the school met the Department for Education's definition of a coasting school, based on key stage 4 examination results.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of SEN or an education, health and care plan is well above the national average.
- The school uses alternative provision for pupils at Shaftesbury High School, Tarleton Academy, The National Teaching and Advisory Service, The PV Centre and Walton-Le-Dale High School.

## Information about this inspection

- Meetings took place with school leaders, teachers, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Discussions were held with pupils to gather their views on variety of issues, including safeguarding, bullying, behaviour, teaching, careers guidance and the curriculum.
- Inspectors examined a range of the school's documentation, such as self-evaluation, the improvement plan, assessment information, the pupil premium plan, minutes of governing body meetings, attendance and behaviour records and safeguarding information.
- Inspectors took account of 26 staff survey responses, 41 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and 34 written responses from parents to Ofsted's free-text facility. Inspectors also considered 84 pupil survey responses.
- Inspectors conducted learning walks and lesson observations across a range of subjects and year groups. They were accompanied by school leaders on most of these observations of teaching and learning.
- Inspectors scrutinised the work in pupils' books by undertaking a work analysis with school leaders.

## Inspection team

Stephen Ruddy, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Dympna Woods	Ofsted Inspector
Tracey Greenough	Ofsted Inspector

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