

Weobley High School

Burton Wood, Weobley, Hereford, Herefordshire HR4 8ST

Inspection dates

21–22 November 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The dedicated headteacher and his team have a clear vision for the school's future and high aspirations for pupils. Leaders and governors are justifiably proud of the achievements of their school.
- Leaders and staff know and care for pupils extremely well. Pupils enjoy coming to school, they are confident and feel safe.
- Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. Relationships are a strength. Respect and courtesy are the norm.
- Leaders work closely with parents to ensure that pupils meet high expectations of behaviour and attendance. As a result, attendance is high for all pupils. Exclusions are low and repeat exclusions are exceptionally low.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. It is carefully designed to ensure that it meets the needs of all pupils.
- The curriculum and the wide range of provision for extra-curricular activities promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Leaders closely monitor the progress pupils make in different subjects. Most pupils make strong progress across a wide range of subjects.
- Teaching is good. Teachers consistently demonstrate good subject knowledge and positive relationships to secure pupils' learning.
- Teachers plan interesting lessons that engage pupils in learning. However, some teachers' questioning could be more effective and more challenging.
- Additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is well used. These pupils make accelerated progress across the curriculum.
- Leaders use pupil premium funding to provide a range of interventions to support the learning, progress and welfare of disadvantaged pupils. As a result, most disadvantaged pupils make progress similar to that of other pupils nationally. However, in some subjects, these pupils do not make the progress that they are capable of achieving.
- Leaders ensure that pupils are very well prepared for the next steps in their education or employment.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Reduce the differences between the progress of disadvantaged pupils and that of other pupils nationally and in the school by:
 - ensuring that staff know precisely how best to support disadvantaged pupils' different needs so they make more rapid progress across all subjects.
- Strengthen teaching, learning and assessment further across all subject areas, in particular by:
 - improving questioning to draw out reflective responses from pupils and to offer additional learning challenges.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher provides strong and effective leadership for all staff and pupils in the school. His determination and commitment to do the very best for each pupil is reflected by leaders at all levels. The headteacher has the highest expectations of students and staff. As a result, the school continues to thrive. It is very popular with parents and is oversubscribed.
- Leaders have established an open, welcoming culture and an inclusive ethos, which is strongly appreciated by staff, parents and pupils. One parent remarked on the 'marvellous positivity' that exists. Leaders and governors are dedicated to promoting equality of opportunity and mutual respect for all. As a result, the school is a happy and calm environment where pupils work exceptionally well together. These positive attitudes effectively encourage pupils' strong progress over time.
- Leaders and managers know the school's strengths well and they continue to adopt a proactive approach to identifying and tackling emerging weaknesses. As a result, the good standard of education seen at the last inspection has been maintained.
- Staff who met inspectors feel valued and trusted by leaders. Staffing is stable, and pupils benefit from the continuity this brings. Staff morale is high, as shown by the overwhelmingly positive responses to the staff questionnaire. Staff agree that leaders do all they can to ensure that the school has a motivated, respected and effective teaching staff.
- Leaders use a range of evidence to determine the quality of teaching and its impact on how well pupils learn. They check on day-to-day routines, observe lessons, scrutinise pupils' work and keep track of pupils' progress. Leaders and managers systematically check on teachers' performance and set suitably challenging targets for further improvement.
- Leaders use their evaluations of strengths and weaknesses of teaching, learning and assessment to identify priorities for continuing professional development. Managers regularly meet with staff to share their expertise or provide time to consider aspects of their work. Teachers appreciate the encouragement they receive to take risks and innovate in ways that are right for the pupils.
- Leaders at all levels review the curriculum annually. Amendments are carefully made to meet more effectively the needs of all pupils. In Year 9, all pupils have a personal interview with the headteacher to discuss their key stage 4 curriculum. A range of other options are carefully tailored to pupils' needs, preferences and aspirations. For example, additional science courses are provided as well as the opportunity to study a second language. 'Express' groups in English and mathematics provide the highest levels of challenge for the most able pupils in key stage 4.
- Across the curriculum, leaders have ensured that pupils have opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and that they learn about fundamental British values. Pupils enjoy a range of visits to extend their wider learning experiences. Pupils have many opportunities to develop their interests and talents through extra-curricular activities that include clubs in sports, photography, chess, dance, drama and science.

- Leaders accurately identify groups of pupils who experience learning difficulties or who are in danger of falling behind and speedily provide additional support to meet their needs. Leaders make excellent use of all the additional funding they receive to employ additional teachers and teaching assistants to effectively support pupils particularly in English, mathematics and science. They skilfully adapt subjects to enable pupils with low starting points, including those who have SEN and/or disabilities, to make improved progress.

Governance of the school

- The governing body was formally reconstituted in January 2017 following the creation of a federation of Weobley and a primary partner school. Governors are very ambitious for pupils and staff. They are committed and dedicated. Governors bring a wide range of skills and they have the necessary expertise to support their work.
- Governors talk with confidence about the strategic direction of the school. They know the school well and have a clear understanding of its strengths and where further improvements are necessary. Governors provide challenge and support for school leaders. They use information well to effectively hold leaders to account.
- Governors visit the school regularly and they have active links to different subject areas. A core group meets with the headteacher at regular intervals to review school performance and to ensure that targets are on track.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There is a strong culture of safeguarding that runs through the school. Leaders, staff and governors are very clear about the role they play to keep pupils safe and fulfil their safeguarding duties.
- Leaders ensure that staff receive regular training and updates on matters of local or national concern, so that staff are constantly aware of indications of harm to pupils' well-being. Leaders develop strong partnerships with external agencies to protect vulnerable pupils. Referrals to other agencies are timely and suitably detailed.
- Through lessons and 'drop-down days', pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and that they know who to go to if they have any concerns.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good and in some cases highly effective. Teaching and learning are underpinned by the positive relationships and mutual respect between teachers and pupils. As a consequence, pupils engage well in their learning and they are motivated to make strong progress.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils and in response pupils are engaged and attentive in lessons. Classroom settings are informative and conducive to highly focused learning. As a consequence, pupils concentrate on their work and maintain their motivation throughout the day.

- Teachers across the school have good subject knowledge. They plan interesting and purposeful tasks that hold pupils' interest and effectively develop pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. Leaders ensure that the most effective teaching and planning methods are regularly shared between departments. As a result, pupils make strong progress across a range of subjects, particularly in key stage 4.
- Where learning is most effective, teachers provide stretch and challenge for pupils. Much teaching uses questioning effectively to check pupils' understanding and to encourage pupils to think more deeply. However, some teachers' use of questioning is not as effective as that of others when deepening pupils' understanding or providing more challenging thinking.
- Teachers know their pupils well, and they make effective use of information about pupils to match the work they set to pupils' needs. As a result, the progress made by pupils of different abilities across a range of subjects is strong.
- Additional support for pupils who need extra help with their learning is usually targeted efficiently. For example, teaching assistants provide timely additional support for pupils who need help to settle down or get started with an activity. The progress made by disadvantaged pupils and by most pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is improving in a range of subjects.
- Leaders know that disadvantaged pupils do not consistently make the necessary strong progress to match the standards attained by other pupils nationally. Leaders are considering further support for teachers to improve their knowledge of how best to meet the pupils' different needs.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Staff care a great deal about pupils' personal development and emotional well-being. Much of the care for individual pupils takes place through a learning and inclusion centre where a wide range of support is provided, including counselling. Pupils value the support they receive from this centre, their teachers and staff.
- Pupils spoken to by inspectors were confident and very positive about their experiences at school. They are proud of their school, and they would recommend it to pupils currently in primary school. Pupils wear their uniform with pride.
- In lessons, pupils take care with the presentation of their work. They are cooperative, mutually supportive and work well together in groups.
- Pupils say that incidents of bullying are rare. If bullying occurs, they are confident that the school deals with it effectively.
- Pupils were clear that discrimination has no place in the school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.

- Pupils are courteous and welcoming to visitors. They show high standards of self-discipline as they move through corridors, in the canteen and in social areas. In lessons, pupils are attentive and motivated to do well. They show respect for the ideas and views of others. As a result, the school is an orderly and calm learning community.
- The responses to the Parent View questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive. Nearly all parents agreed that their child is happy at school, that the school makes sure its pupils are well behaved and that their child is well looked after by the school.
- Leaders work closely with parents to resolve problems with occasional slips in behaviour or attendance. Everyone is very well aware of the school's clear expectations and procedures. As a result, exclusions for poor behaviour are low. The school has exceptionally low rates of repeat exclusions. No permanent exclusions have taken place for seven years.
- Attendance overall continues to be consistently above the national average. There are no significant variations in the attendance of different groups of pupils. Persistent absence has decreased and is now below the national average. Pupils are consistently punctual at the beginning of the school day and arrive promptly for lessons.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In 2016, the progress made by pupils across a range of subjects was significantly above national averages. In 2017, provisional examination information shows that overall pupils' progress improved further. Attainment was well above average in 2016 and in 2017.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics has been particularly strong for four successive years. In English, most pupils made progress broadly in line with the national average in 2016. Following the re-marking and upward movement of a substantial number of papers in 2017, progress in English is likely to be in line with that of previous years.
- In key stages 3 and 4, work in books and assessment records show that the majority of current pupils are making at least good progress towards their targets.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make accelerated progress from their starting points. The effective support pupils receive in specialist lessons and across the curriculum meets their needs well. As a result, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities achieve well.
- Careers education and guidance is a strength at the school. As a result, pupils are well prepared for their next stage of education or training. From Year 8, all pupils are given guidance for their futures and they benefit from a range of visits. For example, pupils in Year 9 attend the Skills Show and university visits take place in Year 10. Leaders provide a comprehensive package of information, guidance and advice, including a range of speakers and a careers website. All pupils benefit from work experience. As a result, pupils are prepared well for their next stage of education or employment.
- In 2016, disadvantaged pupils' progress fell below that of other pupils nationally and fell further behind in 2017. A substantial proportion of pupils had complex needs and some also followed a reduced curriculum, which had had an impact on headline figures.

- Most of the disadvantaged pupils in key stages 3 and 4 are making progress in line with their capabilities, but not all. Leaders have identified those pupils who are in danger of falling behind and have introduced a range of strategies to accelerate their progress further.

School details

Unique reference number	116952
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	10037143

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	520
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Avery
Headteacher	Dean Williams
Telephone number	01544 318 159
Website	www.weobleyhigh.co.uk
Email address	admin@weobleyhigh.hereford.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	19–20 September 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of information on its website.
- Weobley High School is a secondary school serving Weobley and surrounding villages in rural Herefordshire.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils whose first language is not believed to be English is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above average.
- The school provides shared provision on a part-time basis for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum requirements for pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in a wide range of subjects in 26 lessons. Members of the senior leadership team also observed nine of these lessons.
- Inspectors talked with pupils on several occasions during lessons, and at breaktimes and lunchtimes. They met with two groups of pupils to find out their views about the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with subject leaders, including those with responsibility for English, mathematics and science. They met several senior leaders, including the headteacher, often on more than one occasion.
- A meeting was held with members of the governing body, including the chair.
- The inspectors looked at a wide variety of documentation provided by school leaders. These included records of pupils' attendance and behaviour, information about the progress of pupils, the school's development plan, governing body minutes, the school's self-evaluation and information about performance management. They looked at examples of pupils' work and checked their learning in lessons.
- The inspectors took into account the 73 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View. They also considered free-text comments from parents and a letter from a parent.

Inspection team

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Alan Johnson	Ofsted Inspector
Rob Steed	Ofsted Inspector
John Parr	Ofsted Inspector
Tracey Lord	Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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