

Inspection of a good school: Weavers Academy

Brickhill Road, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire NN8 3JH

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 May 2022

Outcome

Weavers Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school where staff care for pupils and are determined that they will succeed. They make sure that all pupils get the support they need. The curriculum is well planned, and pupils have the opportunity to study a wide range of subjects.

Pupils are proud of the school. They behave well in lessons and around the school. The new behaviour policy has had a positive impact. Bullying is rare, but when it occurs, it is taken seriously and dealt with well. Pupils say that they feel safe in the school.

Teachers make sure that lessons are well designed and follow the curriculum plan. They consistently use school-wide strategies, such as 'do now', so that pupils know what to expect in lessons.

Pupils have opportunities to take part in extra activities outside lessons, although these were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

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

Leaders have adopted a curriculum that is well designed and ambitious. Pupils study a wide range of subjects. Leaders consider all pupils' needs, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). As a result, pupils make good progress through the curriculum.

Leaders ensure that key topics and themes are identified in each subject and that lessons are planned carefully to build pupils' knowledge and skills over time. This is now becoming embedded in all subjects. Leaders work with colleagues across the multi-academy trust (MAT) to share ideas and expertise.

Lessons follow a consistent pattern. Teachers ensure that the work matches the curriculum's aims. They use skilful questioning and assessment to check how well pupils

have understood. They adapt their teaching to meet pupils' needs. The atmosphere in lessons is positive. Pupils respond well to the challenges provided by teachers.

Teachers' subject knowledge is good. Leaders have put a detailed programme of professional development in place. This helps teachers to improve their practice. The trust provides expert support and guidance, and opportunities to share good practice. Leaders consider teachers' workload and have put support in place to reduce unnecessary administration.

There are effective systems to support pupils with SEND, and their progress is carefully checked. As a result, they achieve well. However, some parents and carers of pupils with SEND feel that the school has not communicated with them well enough. As a result, they are not always confident that their children's needs are met.

Students in the sixth form play a full part in the life of the school. They are given the opportunity to study a wide range of subjects. Courses in the sixth form build well upon the curriculum further down the school. Leaders are increasingly ambitious for sixth-form students.

The proportion of pupils entered for the EBacc is below average. However, the school has put plans in place to increase this, primarily by encouraging more pupils to study a modern foreign language at GCSE level.

Pupils behave well. Leaders introduced a new behaviour policy earlier in the year to address pupils' needs following the disruption of the pandemic. Pupils tell us that this has led to greater consistency in the way that behaviour is managed and has improved the standard of behaviour across the school. However, some parents do not understand or agree with the reasons for the change. The school has a thorough and effective system of pastoral support for pupils.

Leaders provide a good programme of activities to enrich the curriculum, including opportunities in the sports and arts. Pupils appreciate this and are keen to take part. For example, the choir and swing band perform for pupils at each breaktime and lunchtime. Pupils are given good advice and support when they are making choices about their next steps.

Leaders gave good support for pupils and their families during the pandemic, including the provision of live online lessons. They are now putting a recovery plan in place to help pupils make up for lost learning, including an extensive tutoring programme.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders responsible for safeguarding have established robust systems for reporting and tracking concerns. They act decisively when necessary. Staff receive regular training and understand their responsibilities well. Leaders and staff carry out all necessary checks to ensure that the school is safe.

Pupils know who to go to if they are worried or concerned. They know that they will be listened to and taken seriously. They are taught about dangers and risks, including how to stay safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have established effective systems for managing pupils' behaviour and for supporting pupils with SEND. However, these systems have not been well understood by some parents. Leaders should develop strategies to engage with parents so that they can understand the work of the school.
- Leaders, with support and guidance from the trust, have put an effective curriculum framework in place, which identifies which topics should be covered over time. However, in some subjects this has been introduced recently, so not all pupils have developed a sound foundation. Leaders should now ensure that it is fully embedded and that key components of learning are secure in each subject.

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 first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2017.

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	139819
Local authority	North Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10227929
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	1257
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	90
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	David Anderson
Principal	Vivien Swaida
Website	http://www.weaversacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	16 and 17 May 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Creative Education Trust.
- The school uses three registered alternative providers.

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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The principal was absent during the inspection. Inspectors met with the acting principal.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, physical education, art and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject

leaders to discuss the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors met with a wide range of senior leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator and leaders responsible for attendance, behaviour and the pupil premium strategy.
- Inspectors met with members of the MAT and those responsible for governance.
- Inspectors looked at information about behaviour, attendance and enrichment opportunities.
- Inspectors spoke to a range of staff about workload and leadership.
- Inspectors talked to the leaders in charge of safeguarding arrangements. They met with a range of staff and pupils and looked at documentation to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Paul Heery, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
John Craig	Ofsted Inspector
Claire Shepherd	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
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