

# Wilnecote High School

Tinkers Green Road, Wilnecote, Tamworth, Staffordshire B77 5LF

## Inspection dates

1–2 November 2016

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- There are still too many pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, who do not make good progress in their learning in a number of subjects.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently good. Work set by teachers is not always adapted to maximise the learning of the most able and least able pupils.
- Teachers do not routinely use the assessment information they have to support pupils' progress. The most able pupils are not challenged enough to fulfil their potential.
- Teachers do not routinely support pupils to develop good reading, writing and communication skills.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are variable. Some pupils do not engage willingly in lessons and not all teachers make their expectations sufficiently clear.
- Not all middle leaders have sufficient impact in driving improvement in outcomes for pupils and in checking the quality of work in their areas.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and his new senior team have been relentless in their drive to create a strong and aspirational culture, which is increasingly shared by staff and pupils.
- The actions of senior leaders, strongly supported by the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust the school joined recently, have led to rapid improvements in behaviour, teaching, pupils' progress and attendance.
- Leaders, including the education advisory board, which replaced the governing body, know the school's strengths and weaknesses well and have sharply focused plans for improvement.
- Pupils feel safe in school and understand how to keep themselves safe. Leaders work very well to ensure effective arrangements to safeguard pupils.

## Full report

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

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

- Continue to improve teaching so that all groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and the most able, make consistently good progress in all subjects by ensuring that teachers:
  - ask pupils questions that help them deepen their understanding of their work
  - systematically check pupils' understanding in lessons and then give them more help or challenge, as appropriate
  - support pupils to develop their literacy skills, especially the use of accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar in writing, across the curriculum.
- Strengthen leadership and management further by:
  - developing and embedding systems that provide data and information analysis to support leaders' monitoring of progress and drive for improvement
  - developing the skills and expertise of subject leaders to make sure that good practice is shared effectively across subject areas, so that pupils' learning experiences across the curriculum are in line with the school's culture of high expectations.
- Continue to improve the behaviour of pupils in lessons by:
  - ensuring that the new behaviour policy is fully embedded and consistently used by teachers
  - reducing the number of fixed-term exclusions.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- The headteacher, his new senior leadership team and the education advisory board set up by the multi-academy trust had to make very substantial changes over a short period of time in order to drive their improvement agenda. Many of these changes are already leading to rapid school improvement in key areas, including teaching and behaviour, but are not yet sufficiently embedded to secure good pupils' achievement and progress.
- Leaders have been effective in eradicating weak teaching. The school has recruited and retained well-qualified teachers who have added to its growing strengths.
- The rigorous management of teachers' performance is a key aspect of the leadership strategies to improve the quality of education in the school. This is acknowledged by teachers, whose morale is high as a result of the improved clarity of direction and success criteria for the school set by leaders.
- In order to secure sustained improvement, leaders are collecting a wealth of data and information on pupils' progress, attendance and behaviour. However, the analysis of the data and information collected is not yet sufficiently readily accessible through the school's systems to fully support middle leaders' monitoring of progress.
- Since the last inspection, the quality of teaching has improved significantly across the curriculum, but there are still inconsistencies in many subjects, including in English. While some subject leaders are highly effective, others still need to improve the quality of work in their subject area to make sure that pupils are making good progress and that the school's policy for marking and feedback is applied effectively.
- Leaders' recent efforts to improve pupils' literacy skills are beginning to show some impact. Learning in a range of subjects focuses on key vocabulary. In English, pupils follow a reading programme in key stage 3 to improve their reading skills. However, teachers are not consistently applying strategies to improve pupils' literacy in their subjects across the curriculum. As a result, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to develop their reading, writing and communication skills across the range of subjects they study.
- Leaders are very aware that the progress of disadvantaged pupils needs to be improved. There is a clear strategy in place to ensure that achievement differences between these pupils and other pupils nationally that still exist across the curriculum are diminishing and will eventually disappear. Additional funding, including the pupil premium and the Year 7 catch-up premium, is used for pastoral support, to enhance the curriculum and for targeted literacy and numeracy programmes. Although the gaps in attainment and progress between disadvantaged and other pupils nationally are now closing as a result, they are not closing quickly enough in all subjects, especially in English.
- Senior leaders are making the most of the new opportunities available within the multi-academy trust that the school joined in September 2016 to develop their capacity to lead improvement. This is not the case for middle leaders and their team, who are only starting to develop a closer collaboration with other schools across the multi-academy trust including the neighbouring outstanding school. As a result, many subject areas are

still to benefit from the opportunities for training and curriculum development that can be offered by the multi-academy trust.

- The headteacher and his senior team have secured the support of staff and pupils. They have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school currently operates a system of '100-day plans'. These plans have a sharp focus on the priorities aimed at improving all aspects of pupils' experiences, with a clear strategy to secure both short-term improvements and excellence in the long term.
- Senior leaders have designed a broad and balanced curriculum that meets the needs of the pupils well. There is a clear focus on improving the provision for the teaching of English and mathematics because of the priorities identified in the last inspection report. Other aspects of the curriculum are also well thought through to ensure that pupils have a wide range of choices. Leaders have a clear vision for broadening pupils' learning experiences to ensure that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education or training. Leaders considered that the vocational courses offered to key stage 4 pupils at the local college of further education until last year did not meet the school's requirements. Consequently, they are actively looking for alternatives to ensure that pupils for whom it is appropriate can achieve vocational qualifications. Pupils benefit from impartial careers guidance.
- A wide range of enrichment activities supports the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils effectively. These activities include visits to science and history museums, a geography trip to Iceland and an exchange with a German school. Key stage 4 pupils can volunteer to train as sports leaders, organising sporting events for the seven local primary schools the school works in partnership with. The school also organises a summer art festival and various musical and drama events throughout the year. The range of activities on offer, and the way in which leaders and teachers encourage participation in these, help pupils to become active and responsible citizens.
- The school joined the Community Academies Trust this academic year. Leaders benefit from strong backing from the trust, which has provided support both financially and by seconding leaders to the school.
- The chief executive officer of the Community Academies Trust has been a significant driving force behind the school's recent improvement. His determination and ambition have been key in raising the aspirations of staff and pupils and building an effective senior leadership team.

### **Governance of the school**

- The education advisory board (EAB) set up by the multi-academy trust brings considerable expertise and commitment to the school. Board members challenge leaders rigorously about the school's performance, scrutinising information about attendance, behaviour, teaching and progress.
- Board members carry out their statutory duties effectively. They monitor progress against the improvement plans. They regularly check the impact that 100-day plans are having, carefully evaluating the financial implications of the plans. They monitor the impact of additional funds such as the pupil premium and the Year 7 catch-up fund. They ensure that arrangements for managing the performance of leaders and teachers focus well on raising standards. They also ensure that all statutory safeguarding requirements are in place.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders pay particular attention to ensure that all policies and procedures, including the latest changes in the official safeguarding guidance, are in place, fit for purpose and well understood by staff. Staff receive regular training and updates. They are confident to pass on any concerns that they might have. They know the procedures to raise concern well and trust the effectiveness of the systems in place. Procedures to recruit staff safely are in place and used well. The majority of parents who responded to the school's survey indicated that their children feel safe in school and inspectors confirmed this in discussions with many pupils. All staff who responded to the inspection questionnaire said that pupils are safe in school.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved since the last inspection, but good teaching is still not the norm across the school. Better teaching has led to improved achievement, especially in mathematics. However, the quality of teaching in many other subjects is still not good enough to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress.
- Teachers plan learning conscientiously, but do not routinely take into account what pupils have already learned. This results in many lessons where the most able pupils are not given sufficiently challenging work while other pupils find work too difficult. As a consequence, too few pupils make as much progress as they should.
- Sometimes, teachers do not take swift actions to re-engage a small number of pupils who lose interest in their learning. These pupils tend to make slower progress than they should as a result, and the quality and presentation of their work is below the standards and expectations set by the school's leaders.
- The school has a clear policy for marking and feedback to help pupils understand how they can improve their work. However, the quality of feedback that pupils receive does not always allow them to do this and there are variations in the way the policy is applied within and across subjects. As a result, pupils do not have consistent support to improve their work across the range of subjects they study.
- Mostly, teachers focus on key vocabulary related to the subject they teach. This approach helps pupils to improve their literacy and is in line with the school's policies. However, the same level of consistency does not apply to other aspects of literacy such as spelling, punctuation and grammar. Some teachers do not correct basic written errors or do not insist on answers being well written and as developed as possible. As a result, pupils miss on a number of opportunities to apply and develop their literacy skills.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. They prepare learning that contains a range of activities designed to interest and engage their pupils. Some teachers use skilful questioning to check pupils' understanding and get them to think more in depth about their learning. For example, in mathematics, teachers routinely provide interesting problem-solving activities and probe pupils' understanding of the mathematical knowledge they have to use to find solutions to the problems.

- Teachers follow the school's policy to start and end lessons in an orderly manner. As a result, no time is lost at the start of lessons and transition between lessons is smooth and well managed.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Requires improvement**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are smartly dressed; they like their new uniform and are proud of their school. They are appreciative of the recent improvements in the quality of education they are receiving. They respond positively to the school's ethos of pursuing excellence.
- Pupils are aware of how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, both within school and when they are away from school. Issues such as sexual exploitation, drug addiction and gang culture are part of the school's programme to make pupils aware of key issues facing young people. Pupils recognise the potential dangers that the use of information technologies could pose to them. This is because staff provide them with comprehensive information on how they can remain safe when using the internet or social media. Pupils have a general understanding of risks associated with radicalisation and extremism. They understand the key principles of democracy and the rule of law.
- The school is developing opportunities for pupils to develop their leadership skills within the school community and beyond. Through participation on the school council and the sports leadership training, pupils are involved in activities that develop their sense of collective responsibility. From discussions with groups of pupils during the inspection, it is clear that participation in leadership activities is increasingly popular.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the different types of bullying, including homophobic, racist, sexual and cyber bullying. Issues related to bullying are discussed in tutor groups and pupils know why all types of bullying are unacceptable. Pupils are confident that inappropriate language and behaviour are not an issue in the school and that teachers deal with any incident of this kind well. The detailed records that the school keeps confirm this.
- A small number of pupils attend an alternative provision instead of studying in the school. These arrangements are organised by the school to ensure that pupils who need additional support that the school cannot provide can continue their education. School staff attend half-termly review meetings to ensure that the placements are successful. Close collaboration between the school and the alternative provision is effective in ensuring that the pupils who benefit from these placements are safe, attend lessons regularly and make progress.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are improving, but are not yet consistently good. Some low-level disruption still exists and the way it is dealt with by teachers is variable. Where teaching is most effective, as it is in art, modern languages or mathematics, pupils display good learning habits and rarely lose interest.
- There are still pupils who are being excluded from school for a fixed term for

unacceptable behaviour and conduct. This is linked to new behaviour policies and increased expectations that some pupils find difficult to adjust to. Leaders are anticipating that as pupils have a better understanding of what is expected of them and teachers apply new policies consistently, the number of exclusions will decrease significantly.

- Overall, attendance has improved over the last year, and this is especially the case for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, current information on the attendance of disadvantaged pupils shows that this group of pupils has still a higher rate of absences than others in the school.
- Pupils' conduct around the school is generally good, especially in corridors, where pupils are respectful of each other's safety. During breaks, in the canteen, where there is a good level of staff supervision, pupils behave well and the atmosphere is orderly. In the playground, most pupils play sensibly with their friends, but some groups of pupils appear to be bored and tend to be slightly more boisterous. A few pupils complained about having nothing to do.
- Leaders have introduced new rules for the start and end of lessons, which are having a positive impact on pupils' punctuality. Pupils are also punctual at the beginning of the day.
- Pupils are respectful of each other and of adults.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- Leaders have analysed the issues that stopped pupils from achieving well at the time of the last inspection and are addressing the causes of underachievement that affected outcomes for pupils. Their actions are starting to have an impact, but pupils still do not make sufficient progress in a range of subjects.
- Over recent years, pupils have made poor progress and left the school with standards well below national averages. For example, in 2015, just 46% of pupils made expected progress in English and 54% in mathematics. Only 45% of pupils achieved five GCSEs graded A\* to C including English and mathematics, which means that the school was only very slightly above the government's floor standard.
- The provisional GCSE results for Year 11 pupils who left the school last summer show some improvement, but attainment was still below the national average, with some significant differences between subjects. Progress in mathematics was much better than progress in English and science. The proportion of pupils achieving the English Baccalaureate was only 14%.
- Disadvantaged pupils have historically made much less progress than other pupils. In recent years, gaps between their attainment and that of other pupils nationally were widening. Leaders' actions to improve teaching and a sharper focus on the use of the pupil premium are beginning to have an impact and differences are diminishing, but not quite rapidly or evenly enough across the curriculum, especially for older pupils. Gaps are closing faster in mathematics than in English. The school's assessment information indicates that the standards achieved by disadvantaged pupils currently in Year 11 will be better than in previous years, and gaps will be smaller, but still large. Current assessment information for disadvantaged pupils in Years 7 and 8

show that their progress is more in line with that of other pupils and that gaps are closing.

- The most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are still not making as much progress as they should do. Historically, too few of the most able pupils achieved top grades at GCSE. This is because the school did not have clear strategies to ensure that pupils who started school with high academic abilities were given opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge to the highest levels. Now, teachers have higher expectations of what pupils should achieve, but a clear focus to develop the learning of the most able pupils is still not the norm across the curriculum. Leaders are aware that greater challenge for the most able pupils is required across the curriculum to make sure that they fulfil their potential, but their actions are still to have a significant impact.
- Outcomes for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities still require improvement, but have improved significantly since last year. Those pupils receive effective extra support in lessons and during additional sessions. The effectiveness of the support they receive has helped to compensate for past weaknesses in teaching. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, along with all others, are now benefiting from much improved teaching.
- Thanks to the efforts of leaders to ensure that there is no weak teaching in the school any more, pupils are now much better prepared for the next stage of their education or training than they were at the time of the last inspection. The school already has a good record in ensuring that the vast majority of pupils who leave after Year 11 remain either in education or in training, and new policies and practices are in place to continue to improve on this record.



## School details

Unique reference number	138936
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10019975

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Sponsored academy
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	799
Appropriate authority	Education advisory board
Chair	Sue Smith
Headteacher	Stuart Tonks
Telephone number	01827 831300
Website	<a href="http://www.wilnecotehighschool.org">www.wilnecotehighschool.org</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:headteacher@wilnecotehighschool.org">headteacher@wilnecotehighschool.org</a>
Date of previous inspection	17–18 September 2014

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with DfE guidance on what academies should publish.
- Wilnecote High School is an average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and for whom the school receives the pupil premium is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language is well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average.

- In 2015, the school met the government's floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The proportion of pupils who enter or leave the school at different times during the academic year is below average.
- There is a specially resourced provision for pupils with autism spectrum disorder operated by Staffordshire local authority on the school site.
- The school places pupils who may require additional support on alternative provision at Kettlebrook Short Stay School.
- Wilnecote High School became part of the Community Academies Trust on 1 September 2016.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 40 lessons, some of which were jointly observed with senior leaders.
- Inspectors looked at a range of pupils' work from a range of subjects, in key stages 3 and 4.
- Meetings took place with the headteacher, the chief executive officer of the Community Academies Trust, senior leaders, subject leaders and groups of pupils from across all years. The lead inspector met with four members of the education advisory board. An inspector also held a telephone conversation with a senior leader of Kettlebrook Short Stay School.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktime, lunchtime, between lessons and after school.
- Inspectors took into account 38 parental responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors took into account the views of 10 members of staff who responded to the questionnaire.
- Inspectors looked at a variety of documentation, including the school's own self-evaluation of its provision and its development plan. Inspectors also considered information relating to achievement, teaching and learning, behaviour and attendance, safeguarding and governance.

## Inspection team

Patrick Amieli, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
William Keddie	Ofsted Inspector
Rob Steed	Ofsted Inspector
Gwendoline Onyon	Ofsted Inspector

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