

Inspection of The Whitby High School

Sycamore Drive, Whitby, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire CH66 2NU

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 May 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders and staff have appropriately high expectations of pupils and students in the sixth form at The Whitby High School. Pupils, including students in the sixth form, benefit from a good quality of education and achieve well in most subjects.

Staff expect pupils to behave well. Mostly, pupils live up to these expectations during lessons and around the school. Pupils enjoy lessons that are typically free from disruption. They are usually calm, polite and respectful when they move around school.

A small minority of pupils, parents and carers have some concerns about bullying and other unpleasant behaviours. However, most pupils feel that these are uncommon. Pupils told inspectors that staff will challenge these behaviours when they occur and deal with them effectively. The vast majority of pupils feel that they are supported well by their teachers.

Pupils and staff share respectful and positive relationships. The majority of pupils said that they trust staff and would approach them for help if they needed to. This helps pupils to feel safe in school.

Pupils and students speak highly of the many different clubs, charities and trips in which they enjoy taking part. Pupils appreciate what staff do to make these opportunities welcoming to all; for example, by adapting sports and reading clubs to encourage pupils of all abilities to participate.

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

Governors, leaders and staff at The Whitby High School have successfully tackled the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. Leaders have strengthened staff's ambition for pupils. The majority of staff have acquired the knowledge and skills that they need to improve the quality of education, behaviour and pupils' personal development.

Leaders have ensured that the overall curriculum for pupils, and students in the sixth form, is suitably broad and balanced. Pupils choose to study subjects that are matched well to their needs and aspirations. Subject curriculums are ambitious, appropriately demanding and sensibly ordered. Leaders and staff think carefully about the knowledge that pupils should learn in the subjects that they study.

Teachers ensure that pupils have calm environments in which to learn during lessons. Most pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. They show respect and interest in other pupils' ideas.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge. They use their expertise to design demanding activities so that pupils can learn well. Teachers' approaches to

assessment strategies are focussed well on the knowledge that they want pupils to have learned. This helps teachers to identify and address pupils' misconceptions quickly. Pupils and students typically gain an increasingly rich body of subject specific knowledge.

In a very small number of subjects, some staff are still developing their knowledge of how to deliver certain aspects of subject-specific content well. In these subjects, some pupils' and students' understanding of key concepts is not as secure as in other areas of the curriculum.

Leaders have strengthened the culture of reading. Many pupils enjoy reading for pleasure and read confidently in the subjects that they study. Leaders accurately identify those pupils who are at the earliest stages of learning to read. However, leaders' systems do not enable them to pinpoint the precise deficits in some pupils' reading knowledge. This means that some of these pupils do not get the targeted support that they need to quickly become confident and fluent readers.

Leaders have suitable processes to identify and share the needs of pupils and students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Specialist staff provide well-matched support to help these pupils to overcome the barriers that they face. Most teachers skilfully adapt how they deliver curriculums so that pupils with SEND can access the same ambitious curriculums as their peers and achieve well.

Leaders and staff provide appropriate challenge and support for those pupils who do not attend school regularly enough. As a result, many of these pupils are attending school more often.

Pupils in Years 7 to 11 benefit from a well-planned and comprehensive personal development programme including personal, social and health education. Pupils in these years learn about different types of relationships and how to be a responsible citizen. However, this programme in the sixth form is not as well developed. As a result, some students in the sixth form do not have as many opportunities to explore and understand some aspects of personal development.

Leaders ensure that pupils and students in the sixth form are well-informed about their next steps and possible career choices. Consequently, pupils and students have a secure understanding of the full range of options available to them in further education, employment or training.

Leaders, including governors, listen carefully and take on board the views of staff. Leaders use this feedback to make positive changes while ensuring that they are considerate of staff's workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff have an in-depth understanding of the safeguarding concerns that pupils and students in the sixth form may face. They ensure that pupils are taught well about how to keep themselves safe.

Staff are trained well to help them to identify safeguarding concerns. They make effective use of systems to report, share and act on concerns about pupils in a timely manner.

Leaders carefully consider the care that vulnerable pupils and their families need. They make extensive use of expertise from school staff and other safeguarding partners to support these pupils as best they can. Leaders check regularly how well this support contributes to pupils' welfare and safety.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, some teachers do not deliver intended curriculums so that pupils and students get sufficient opportunities to build on what they know and remember. This hinders how well pupils in these subjects can recall earlier learning and make links with what they know already. Leaders should ensure that teachers in these subjects get the support that they need to deliver intended curriculums effectively.
- Some pupils who are at the earliest stages of learning to read do not always get the support that they most need. This impedes some pupils in making gains in their reading knowledge. Leaders should ensure that staff understand how to identify specific gaps in pupils' reading knowledge. They should ensure that support for pupils is more closely matched to their specific needs.
- In the sixth form, leaders are still refining the personal development curriculum for students. This means that some students in the sixth form do not get enough opportunity to explore and deepen their understanding of some aspects of this curriculum. Leaders should ensure that students in the sixth form benefit from a more comprehensive programme of personal development.

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	111429
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10216082
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Foundation
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	1564
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	183
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Angela Claydon Carole Hibbert
Headteacher	Bryn Heeley
Website	www.whitbyhigh.org
Date of previous inspection	9 July 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The Whitby High School is a foundation school maintained by Cheshire West and Chester local authority.
- The school makes use of five alternative providers to provide full- and part-time education for a small number of pupils.
- 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.

Information about this inspection

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

- 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.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and senior leaders. They met with representatives of the governing body and local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, history and design and technology. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke to leaders about the curriculum.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's records of safeguarding checks and referrals. They met with leaders who have overall responsibility for safeguarding. Inspectors spoke with staff and pupils about the school's work to keep pupils safe.
- Inspectors spoke with leaders responsible for SEND and reading. They also looked at information about the support for pupils who have additional needs.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in class and around the school site. They also scrutinised behaviour and attendance records.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils from all year groups and considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for pupils.
- Inspectors held discussions with staff and considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including the comments received by Ofsted's free-text facility. Inspectors also considered the views of parents who contacted them during the inspection.

Inspection team

Michael Pennington, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Kate Bowker	Her Majesty's Inspector
Tracey Greenough	Ofsted Inspector
Tuesday Humby	Ofsted Inspector
Graeme Rudland	Ofsted Inspector

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