

Inspection of Weald School, The

Station Road, Billingshurst, West Sussex RH14 9RY

Inspection dates:	8 and 9 October 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since October 2013. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are valued through the school's ethos of 'Opportunity and Community'. They build strong, trusting relationships with staff. Consequently, pupils feel happy and safe, adding to their sense of enjoyment of school life. Pupils treat each other with kindness and respect so that everyone feels welcome and included. The school has high expectations of what pupils will achieve. In response, pupils are ambitious and strive to achieve their best.

A rich offer of clubs provides exciting opportunities to further develop pupils' many talents and interests. Pupils enjoy learning new skills such as boxing or being part of the school's radio station. The school pays particular attention to ensuring that disadvantaged pupils benefit from an exciting range of trips and visits. Pupils learn to be charitable by raising money to build new classrooms in Kenya. Sixth-form students make annual visits to Kenya to be part of the building team.

Many students continue their studies in the school's sixth form as they value the extensive range of interesting courses on offer. Students further benefit from high-quality care, teaching them important life skills such as managing finances, leadership and work experience. Students leave school ready and equipped for a bright future ahead.

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

Pupils benefit from learning a wide range of academic and creative subjects. In each subject, the curriculum identifies the important knowledge and skills that pupils need to develop. Consequently, most pupils learn well through a clearly structured curriculum. In many subjects, including courses offered in the sixth form, pupils achieve highly. The school has undertaken recent important refinements to ensure pupils gain a secure foundation of knowledge that helps them know and do more. For example, in modern foreign languages, teaching focuses on pupils routinely revisiting important vocabulary. More pupils are now choosing to learn a modern foreign language as part of the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects.

Typically, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive the support they need to access the curriculum. The school ensures that staff are aware of the specific strategies that pupils need to help them. The school reviews these strategies often, ensuring approaches are relevant and reflect pupils' current needs. In subjects where teachers make suitable adjustments to lessons, pupils with SEND achieve very well. However, this is not consistent in all subjects. At times, in a small number of subjects, the adaptations made by teachers are not sharply tailored to pupils' needs. This means some pupils with SEND struggle to keep up with their peers and develop gaps in their understanding.

Promoting a love of reading is a priority for the school. Pupils read widely and often from an interesting range of books. The school provides effective additional support for pupils who need help to read confidently. Literacy support extends through the school into the sixth form. Here, students who need help with essay writing receive additional in-class

help. This ensures students develop the important literacy skills they need for future success.

The school has created a highly positive culture of mutual respect and kindness. Pupils feel safe in school as the school takes quick and effective action should bullying occur. The school educates pupils about the impact of unkind behaviour. If pupils need help to manage their emotions, the school provides thoughtful support. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They listen to teachers and follow the school rules as the school is insistent on the highest expectations. Pupils attend school very well because they value their education and the positive professional relationships they have with staff and peers.

The provision for personal development prepares pupils and students to understand the opportunities and challenges of modern Britain. Many pupils engage well with their learning. However, some do not fully recognise its relevance to their own lives. Pupils are enthusiastic about the school's extensive and impressive offer of clubs. Many of these clubs are coordinated and led by the sixth-form students. Leadership opportunities for pupils are abundant. However, not all pupils are suitably aware of how to use the school's pupil forums to have their voice heard. An inspiring careers programme provides pupils with the information they need when making decisions about their future. This guidance has been highly beneficial in helping sixth-form students successfully enter first-choice university courses and apprenticeships.

The school and its governing body are relentlessly ambitious to see pupils flourish. The school ensures that staff feel happy and valued. Staff retention is high because they 'love the family feel' of the school. They speak highly of the cohesive culture of professional challenge and support that ensures pupils are prepared well for life ahead.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, some staff do not precisely tailor adaptations for learning to meet the individual needs of pupils with SEND. This means that these pupils do not access the curriculum as well as they could. The school should ensure that teachers consistently adapt learning so that pupils with SEND can keep up with their peers and learn as well as they can.

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.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	126068
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10341631
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
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	1,760
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	307
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Nicola Waters
Headteacher	Sarah Edwards
Website	www.theweald.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	23 and 24 October 2013

Information about this school

- The school uses three registered and four unregistered providers of alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, 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 graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form

provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school’s education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector also met with the representatives from the board of governors, including the chair of governors. The lead inspector also had a telephone call with a representative of the local authority and the school improvement partner.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, art and design, modern foreign languages, physical education and geography. They discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, teachers and pupils, visited lessons and looked at samples of pupils’ work. An inspector also listened to pupils reading during an intervention. Inspectors also looked at other aspects of the school’s curriculum, visited additional lessons and looked at further samples of pupils work on the second day.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire, including the free-text comments. They also took account of the responses to the confidential staff survey and gathered the views of both staff and pupils throughout the inspection.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils’ interests first.
- Inspectors reviewed and scrutinised a range of the school’s documentation, including leaders’ plans for improving the school, minutes of governing body meetings and records of attendance and behaviour incidents.

Inspection team

Michelle Payne, lead inspector	His Majesty’s Inspector
Mike Serridge	Ofsted Inspector
Tash Hurtado	Ofsted Inspector
Jason Philipsz	Ofsted Inspector
Simon Tong	Ofsted Inspector

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