

Inspection of a school judged outstanding for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Wootton Park School

Wootton Hall Park, Northampton NN4 0HZ

Inspection dates:

25 and 26 March 2025

Outcome

Wootton Park School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The principal of this school is Dan Rosser. This school is a single-academy trust. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Roberta Brittle.

What is it like to attend this school?

Wootton Park School has very high expectations of how pupils will behave and of what they can achieve. Pupils throughout the school rise to the challenge. They are well behaved, eager to learn and achieve well.

There is a strong sense of community in the school. Dedicated staff keep pupils safe and resolve any worries quickly. Pupils of all ages get along well together. Older pupils proudly act as role models for younger pupils. For example, sixth-form students act as academic mentors, offering guidance as pupils in Year 11 prepare for GCSE examinations. Year 7 pupils act as reading buddies to pupils in the primary phase. These, and the many other leadership roles that pupils can take on, support pupils to gain confidence and develop their character.

Children in the early years get off to the best possible start. They quickly develop good learning habits, eagerly follow routines and display high levels of focus. Right through the school, pupils thrive in the positive and inclusive learning environment. Many enjoy the wide range of enrichment activities on offer. Sixth-form students are very well supported to be ready for their next stages in education, training or employment.

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

Since the previous inspection, this school has grown and moved to a new and permanent school building. It now accommodates pupils in all key stages from the early years through to the sixth form. As the school has grown, it has continued to develop and refine all aspects of its provision. It continues to offer an exceptionally high-quality education for all pupils. The most recent published outcomes at key stages 2 and 4 demonstrate this. Although outcomes have not been as strong in the relatively new sixth form, the school has significantly strengthened the curriculum and academic support for students.

The curriculum is broad and ambitious. At every stage, the important knowledge that pupils need to learn has been identified precisely. Staff from the early years, primary and secondary phases work together to make sure that pupils learn the right things at the right time. As subjects become more complex, pupils benefit from opportunities to revisit topics they have learned before. Teachers make sure that pupils are secure in their learning before moving on.

Teachers have excellent subject knowledge. They present new concepts clearly and design sharply focused and interesting learning activities. Teachers support pupils to learn subject-specific vocabulary and use it confidently as they discuss their learning. Teachers ask skilful questions to check that pupils can remember what they have learned and to stretch pupils' thinking. Teachers identify and correct misconceptions quickly, providing useful and valued feedback to pupils.

Behaviour is exemplary throughout the school. Pupils follow routines without fuss. No time is wasted. Pupils try hard in lessons. They produce work of a very high quality and take pride in their achievements.

Reading is a priority. Children in the early years begin to learn phonics as soon as they start school. They engage enthusiastically in the learning routines, supported by expert teachers. Staff check pupils' reading knowledge often. Any pupils who fall behind are helped to catch up quickly. As they progress through the school, pupils read often from books that match their stage of learning, building their fluency and confidence as readers. Across the curriculum, pupils are exposed to interesting texts, both fiction and non-fiction. In the sixth form, students are guided to read challenging academic articles to broaden their understanding of their chosen subjects.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve exceptionally well. The school identifies their needs quickly. Teachers plan learning activities carefully so that pupils with SEND have every opportunity to be successful alongside their peers. Pupils with social, emotional or mental health needs are very well supported by the caring well-being team, including Alfie, the well-being dog.

The school supports pupils' wider personal development extremely well. The curriculum for personal, social and health education is very well designed. Pupils gain an age-appropriate understanding of how to keep themselves safe and maintain good physical

and mental health. They learn to respect the fundamental British values and understand equality. Diversity is celebrated.

There is a vast array of clubs for pupils to develop their talents and interests. These include sports, arts and crafts, as well as other pursuits such as 'Dungeons and Dragons' and origami.

Aspiration is at the heart of the curriculum. In the early years, children are encouraged to think about the different jobs they can do when they are older. Through the primary and secondary phases, the subject curriculums inspire pupils to make links to their future career opportunities. As they get older, pupils benefit from detailed guidance about their next steps in education or employment. This includes access to colleges, universities and employers. Pupils in Year 11, and students in the sixth form, are very well supported to realise their ambitions as they plan their futures.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They value the support they receive to manage their workload and well-being. Knowledgeable and dedicated trustees provide excellent support and challenge to school leaders. Trustees play an active role in making sure that the actions taken by the school continue to help all pupils thrive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged outstanding for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding for overall effectiveness in July 2019.

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	142869
Local authority	West Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10324189
Type of school	All-through
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	4 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1561
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	240
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Roberta Brittle
Principal	Dan Rosser
Website	www.woottonparkschool.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	9 and 10 July 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses six alternative provisions. Three of these are registered and the other three are unregistered.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- 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 the principal, senior vice-principals, vice-principals and other school leaders.
- The lead inspector met with representatives of the board of trustees, including the chair of the board.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 held discussions about, and scrutinised records relating to, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors held discussions with staff and pupils. Inspectors considered parents' responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, as well as responses to the online staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

John Spragg, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Neil Wilkinson

Ofsted Inspector

Michael Wilson

Ofsted Inspector

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