

Inspection of Westfield Academy

Tolpits Lane, Watford, Hertfordshire WD18 6NS

Inspection dates:	5 and 6 November 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is Tim Body. The school is the single member of Westfield Academy Trust. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Vijay Assani.

What is it like to attend this school?

At this inclusive school, pupils get off to a great start. This is because staff help pupils to 'believe, strive and achieve'. Staff believe in pupils' abilities and potential. Pupils get plenty of help, support and encouragement with their studies. Pupils and students in the sixth form learn an ambitious curriculum. This includes the opportunity to study a varied range of academic and vocational subjects, including the high-quality football academy. Highly effective careers advice guides and motivates pupils and students in the sixth form to 'aim high'. Many move on to ambitious destinations in the world of work or further study.

Wider trips and experiences take pupils beyond their day-to-day lives. Pupils value the lessons they learn from the varied external speakers that visit their assemblies. Exciting trips abroad or the popular Duke of Edinburgh's Award enable pupils to try something different. Pupils enjoy the sports clubs and other extra-curricular activities on offer.

Clear routines support most pupils to behave well. Pupils are respectful to each other and to staff. The student council works closely with staff to make positive changes to school life, for instance improving the rewards system or introducing further opportunities to celebrate the school's diverse community.

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

The school's well-designed curriculum is a result of leaders' continuous reflection and evaluation of 'what works'. The curriculum gives pupils access to ambitious qualifications that will set them up well for their futures. This ambition is shown through the high number of pupils that access the English Baccalaureate and the well-considered mix of academic and vocational subjects in both the school and sixth form.

The school arranges subject knowledge logically. This enables pupils to build their learning effectively as they progress through the school. When teaching, staff, overall, successfully use the school's approach called the 'Westfield Way'. This approach is based on a range of practices that support pupils to learn well. Effective training means that mostly staff know and use these techniques in the classroom. Through the 'you do' tasks, staff ensure that pupils and students in the sixth form get plenty of practice and support to remember and build on what they have learned. Consequently, pupils progress well from their various starting points.

Accurate checks in lessons help staff to spot if any pupils need further help or support. In most cases, staff use these checks well and quickly help pupils with their errors or gaps in learning. In a small number of cases, however, sometimes, staff move on too quickly before checking new learning. Consequently, pupils do not build their knowledge as well as they do in the rest of the curriculum.

When pupils start at the school, staff effectively check their reading knowledge. A varied range of interventions and support help most pupils catch up. Staff recognise that some readers need extra support on top of what is already on offer. This is to improve their

fluency and confidence. A new programme to support reading has just started, but it is too early to tell its impact.

Staff collect accurate information about pupils' needs. Teachers use this information well to adapt lessons around pupils' specific special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils with SEND are fully included in school life, and many progress well with their learning.

Most staff deal with behaviour well. High-quality emotional and well-being support is in place for pupils who need it. Pupils trust the adults to look after them or be there if things get tricky. The school's 'ripple effect' principles outline the high expectations that the school expects from pupils. These include being respectful, listening and putting effort into their learning. Most pupils live up to these principles and behave well. Any disruption is dealt with quickly so that pupils can refocus on their learning. In a minority of instances, some staff are inconsistent with how they deal with pupils' behaviour. Consequently, these pupils do not always behave as well.

An improving personal, social, health and economic education curriculum teaches pupils about important topics such as first aid and democracy. Topics are effectively altered around local issues. This means the learning is relevant to pupils and their day-to-day lives.

Since the previous inspection, the school has continued to improve. Leaders have not stood still. They know what work there is still to do. They act with determination and, with the support of staff and the trustees, put pupils at the centre of their work.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A small number of teachers are still developing their expertise, so they do not always check pupils' understanding effectively. This means that gaps in pupils' understanding are not spotted or addressed as quickly as they could be. The school should ensure that all staff use assessment effectively so that any gaps in knowledge are spotted promptly and addressed.
- The new approach to supporting pupils with their phonics and reading has only just started. Pupils are yet to benefit from this support. The school should ensure that programmes to support pupils with their reading are implemented well so that pupils have the necessary skills to access the full curriculum and achieve their potential.
- A minority of staff do not use the school's behaviour systems and routines consistently well. In these instances, pupils' behaviour is not addressed in an effective or fair

manner. The school should ensure that all staff know and understand the procedures to address poor behaviour and use these consistently and fairly.

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	140049
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10345384
Type of school	Secondary
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	1,341
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	180
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Vijay Assani
Headteacher	Tim Body
Website	www.westfield.herts.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	10 and 11 December 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- The school uses one registered alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Year 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical 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 a range of leaders, including the headteacher, the senior deputy headteacher, other senior leaders and the school's special educational needs coordinator.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following areas; English, mathematics, science, history and physical education. In each area, inspectors met with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers and pupils and looked at pupils' work.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with those responsible for governance, including a range of trustees and the chair of the trust.
- 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 spoke with a range of pupils. Inspectors spent time with pupils at breaktimes to observe behaviour and speak to pupils and sixth-form students about school life.
- Inspectors spoke to a range of staff over both days of the inspection and considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- The lead inspector considered the responses made by parents to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, including free-text responses. The lead inspector also considered the results from the school's own parent survey.

Inspection team

Damian Loneragan, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Caren Earp	Ofsted Inspector
Cathy Barr	Ofsted Inspector
David Piercy	Ofsted Inspector
Sue Pryor	Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024