

Inspection of a good school: Wigmore School

Ford Street, Wigmore, Leominster, Herefordshire HR6 9UW

Inspection dates:

28 and 29 June 2023

Outcome

Wigmore School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Wigmore is a friendly, welcoming school. Pupils have a common understanding of the importance of values like empathy, equality and teamwork. This results in positive relationships and a shared commitment to their learning.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and pupils usually meet these. Pupils arrive to school in a calm and orderly way, greeting the staff on duty. Pupils get on well with each other at social times, whether playing football or enjoying their lunch, picnic-style, on the field. Behaviour in lessons is good but, on occasion, the behaviour of a few pupils can disrupt the learning of others.

Pupils engage positively with their learning tasks, from talking confidently in French and Spanish to the quality of their writing in English. They achieve strong outcomes by the time they leave the school.

Pupils value the ways in which they can contribute to the school and wider community. Many support the smooth running of the school through their work as prefects. Some offer support as 'reading buddies'. Pupils plan fundraising activities for their chosen charities. They enjoy participating in the varied house competitions, from baking cakes to making rocket cars. They enjoy and benefit from educational visits, including trips to London and Paris.

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

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum, which is successfully accessed by all pupils. Teachers ensure that pupils' learning is ordered in a way that enables them to make good progress as they move between Years 7 and 11. Pupils learn well and achieve good examination results.

Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to help pupils understand new learning. Many are skilful in their use of questioning to check that learning has been secured.

Leaders have been working on improving assessment this year. There are some areas of strong practice across the school. However, this is less evident in key stage 3. In some subjects, pupils complete additional assessments on top of other tasks which assess how much they have learned. Sometimes, these assessments do not serve any useful purpose in helping pupils move forward in their learning.

Leaders have put in place an appropriate strategy to ensure that those pupils who find reading difficult receive prompt intervention. These pupils make rapid progress in becoming more confident readers. Pupils are encouraged to read widely and independently. Many talk positively about reading.

Work to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) has improved since the previous inspection and is now an area of strength. There is a clear and effective approach to identifying any needs a pupil may have. Teachers are provided with useful profiles to help them adapt the learning for these pupils; most do this very well.

Partly in response to the needs that emerged after the pandemic, leaders have increased the capacity of the pastoral team. This has helped provide more bespoke work to support pupils, including around mental health. The team respond effectively to the few incidents of bullying and discrimination that happen.

Leaders place great importance on pupils' personal development as well as their academic learning. They make sure that pupils learn about the diversity of wider British society and the work of global organisations, such as the United Nations. Pupils take these lessons and experiences seriously.

There is a strong careers programme to ensure pupils learn about all of the options open to them in the future. Leaders make sure that pupils have opportunities to engage with local and national companies when learning about possible careers. The very high proportion of pupils who sustain their move into education or employment when they leave school reflects the quality of this work.

There are some parents and carers who are unhappy with how well the school communicates with them. They believe that behaviour could be better. While many staff praise the way leaders have tried to reduce their workload, there are some staff who feel more could be done. Leaders have already identified working more closely with parents and staff as a priority in their improvement plans.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders carry out all necessary checks on staff before they start working at the school. Staff benefit from regular safeguarding training. They know the signs to look out for and how to pass on any concerns. Leaders quickly respond to any concerns and work hard to ensure that vulnerable pupils get the support they need. Leaders have close working partnerships with external agencies.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe through the well-thought-out 'lifeskills' programme. This includes healthy relationships and staying safe online. Leaders also make sure that pupils learn about topics linked to local issues. For example, older pupils have learned about the risks around young drivers.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Summative assessment in key stage 3 is not always linked to the learning that has taken place. There are times when some assessments are not needed as pupils' key learning has already been checked and gaps addressed. This means that pupils sometimes complete assessments that do not help to move their learning forwards. This also impacts on staff workload. Leaders should ensure that their approach to assessment in key stage 3 is more focused on how much pupils know and remember about their learning, and that any changes support further reductions in staff workload.
- Some parents are dissatisfied with the way leaders communicate with them. Because of this, there is not yet a shared understanding of leaders' vision for the school. Leaders should engage more effectively with parents, so that everyone in the school community is able to meaningfully contribute to leaders' ongoing school improvement work.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. 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 would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which 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 good in March 2018.

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](#)' 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	136405
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	10282689
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	449
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Andrew Marson
Headteacher	Dr Robert Patterson
Website	www.wigmoreschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 and 14 March 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher has taken up post since the previous inspection.
- There are currently no students in the sixth form. The school does not offer sixth-form provision.
- The school is part of Wigmore School Academy Trust which comprises two academies.
- Leaders make use of one registered alternative provider.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 11 with information and engagement about approved technical qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- 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 focused on the following subjects: English, history and modern languages. Inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work

and talked with pupils about the way these subjects are taught. They discussed the curriculum with other subject leaders.

- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents. These included information about behaviour, the curriculum and improvement planning. The school website was also checked.
- Inspectors talked to staff and leaders about safeguarding arrangements. They examined how leaders make employment checks on staff and scrutinised safeguarding records. They also looked at how incidents reported by pupils are recorded and analysed.
- Inspectors visited tutor times. They also observed informal times of the day to evaluate safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers and pupils. They met with trustees. They also talked informally to pupils and staff to gather general information about school life.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and free-text comments. Inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Nicola Beech, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Huw Bishop

Ofsted Inspector

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