

Inspection of a good school: Wye School

Olantigh Road, Wye, Kent TN25 5EJ

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 May 2024

The principal of this school is Luke Magee. This school is part of United Learning Trust which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Jon Coles, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Reena Keeble.

Outcome

Wye School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel valued and cared for as part of this close school community. The warm and friendly approach from staff encourages pupils to be positive about their learning and to feel safe. Strong trusting relationships mean pupils are confident to talk to adults about any worries or concerns they might have.

Pupils are very accepting of each other and are keen to recognise diversity. They learn about major world religions and positively respect the different beliefs and opinions of others. There are many extra-curricular opportunities available, including clubs, trips and visits that enrich pupils' education. Many pupils benefit from taking part in these, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Leaders and staff are ambitious for all pupils. The school's values underpin its work and are embedded into pupils' experiences. Pupils demonstrate these values in their daily interactions with their peers and staff. They are kind, caring and considerate of others.

The behaviour of pupils is purposeful and considerate. On rare occasions when this is not the case, the school has effective systems to address this. If bullying occurs, the school takes appropriate steps to prevent this from reoccurring. As a result, pupils feel confident that staff will help to resolve issues. Pupils are proud to earn rewards for their good conduct and achievements.

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

The school is aspirational for all pupils to gain the knowledge and qualifications they need to be successful in their future education and employment. The ambitious and broad curriculum provided enables pupils to study the full range of national curriculum subjects. Teachers deliver the curriculum effectively in the majority of subjects. They ensure that

pupils acquire the key knowledge and skills they need to be successful. In most subjects, the curriculum is set out so that the essential knowledge pupils should learn and the order in which they should learn it is clear. Teachers help pupils to make links to what has been learned before with new learning, across the school's curriculum. This enables pupils to build connections and deepen their knowledge. In art, for example, pupils explore a range of varied materials and media. They regularly practise using different artistic techniques. Consequently, pupils demonstrate greater development of skills in this subject.

Teachers use a variety of checks to see how well pupils are learning. They act swiftly to address any gaps in understanding. This is not, however, consistent in all areas of the curriculum. In a small number of subjects pupils' ability to recall learning over time is variable. Leaders are aware and taking action to support the consistency of curriculum delivery across all areas.

Pupils with SEND are known and staff take the time to ensure appropriate help is quickly put in place. Time is taken to ensure pupils have support to learn and take part in all aspects of school life. Teaching staff are appropriately trained to meet the differing needs of these pupils. This enables pupils with SEND to work with increasing levels of independence and confidence.

Sixth-form students demonstrate positive attitudes towards their learning. Teachers ensure that all students are expertly supported to access their programme of study. Attendance and engagement in the sixth form are excellent. Students' personal development is well considered and helps to deepen their knowledge across a range of subjects. They learn how to work independently and produce high-quality work.

Pupils conduct themselves politely and respectfully. This creates a calm atmosphere in lessons where learning mostly takes place without disruption. At social times, pupils interact cheerfully with their peers and with staff. On rare occasions, if pupils find it more difficult to manage their behaviour, the support that they receive from staff enables them to re-engage with learning.

While many pupils attend well, a small number have higher levels of absence meaning they do not fully benefit from the education on offer. Leaders have a clear action plan based on a keen understanding of the reasons why pupils are absent. Staff work closely with these families and external services. This is beginning to improve the attendance of some pupils. The school recognises the need to continue with this work to ensure pupils attend regularly.

The school supports pupils' wider personal development effectively. Pupils understand equality and are respectful of different faiths and cultures. They enjoy taking on responsibilities in school, such as representing the school council. Many pupils get involved with community and charity projects enabling them to be active citizens. The school provides pupils with lots of information about the choices for their next steps in education and future careers. There are opportunities for pupils to meet with employers and apprenticeship providers and take part in work experience. Consequently, pupils are well informed and decisive about their future steps.

Staff are happy and proud to work at this school. They appreciate the support they get to manage their workload and the opportunities to develop their expertise. Leaders from the trust, trustees and governors know the school well. They provide strong support and effective challenge to the school as it continues to develop its provision.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum in some subjects is not yet consistently implemented. This means that pupils do not always achieve as highly in these subjects as they do in others. The school should continue with their planned developments to embed the curriculum, helping pupils to learn equally well across every subject.

Background

When we have judged 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 December 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' 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	139664
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10321975
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy free school
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	573
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	69
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Reena Keble
CEO of trust	Jon Coles
Principal	Luke Magee
Website	www.wyeschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	11 December 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Wye School is part of United Learning Trust.
- The school does not currently use any 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 and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During this inspection the inspector held meetings with the headteacher, senior leadership team, inclusion lead, teachers, support staff and pupils.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the local governing body, representatives from the board of trustees and other leaders from the trust.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, art and design, geography and religious education. In each subject, the inspector met with subject leaders, talked to pupils, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector listened to some pupils read to adults. Other aspects of the school's curriculum were also considered.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector 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.
- The inspector took account of a range of other information, including the school's development plans, school policies and governor and trustees' minutes.
- The inspector considered the responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire and the free-text comments that were submitted. They also took account of the responses to the confidential staff survey and gathered the views of both staff and pupils throughout the inspection.

Inspection team

Numera Anwar, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Giles Osborne

Ofsted Inspector

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