

Inspection of Walton Priory Middle School

Beacon Rise, Walton, Stone, Staffordshire ST15 0AL

Inspection dates: 25–26 February 2020

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending Walton Priory Middle School. Teachers at the school have strong subject knowledge. They ensure that work is interesting and challenging. They have high expectations for all pupils and work hard to help them to succeed. Pupils are well prepared for future GCSE courses and the world of work.

There are many different opportunities during the school day. Pupils experience enriching activities alongside their lessons. Practical STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) projects every week help them to apply what they have learned in the classroom. The school emphasises the importance of competitive sports. This helps to build pupils' character and resilience. The school encourages outdoor learning through the forest school.

Pupils behave well. They concentrate in lessons and work hard to succeed. They actively take part and many volunteer answers in lessons. Pupils get along well together at breaktimes. They move sensibly around the school site. They are polite to each other and to staff and visitors. They are happy. Teachers and pupils have strong relationships. They enjoy each other's company and show mutual respect. Bullying is very rare. When it happens, pupils know that teachers will deal with it.

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

The school has improved since the previous inspection. The headteacher organises the school very well. She has worked with other leaders to enhance the experience of pupils at the school. Pupils say that they feel lucky to attend the school.

School governors play a key role in school life. They are knowledgeable about the school's strengths and weaknesses. They often visit school and share their expertise. They provide valuable support to the headteacher.

Curriculum leaders carefully plan what they teach pupils. They have thought about the order in which topics are covered. This helps pupils to remember what they need to. Teaching in mathematics and English has improved. Pupils experience an ambitious curriculum. For example, they study two Shakespeare plays as well as 19th-century literature in their English lessons. Teachers encourage pupils to read widely and to use the school's well-stocked library. However, learning is less well planned in a few subjects. School leaders have plans to help the leaders of these subjects to learn from the improvements already made in other areas.

Leaders have planned ways to develop pupils' confidence, resilience and character. There is a very wide range of clubs and societies. Many pupils participate in these and enjoy doing so. Pupils are encouraged to enter different competitions. The school has gained notable national success in some of these. Pupils get information about different careers that they could pursue in the future. The school has formed close links with local employers who visit to speak to pupils. One parent spoke for many when they said, 'The opportunities the school provides are brilliant!'

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported in this school. Teachers take careful notice of their specific needs. They adjust lesson activities when they need to. These pupils enjoy the many activities on offer. They are looked after very well.

Teachers enjoy working at this school and feel proud to do so. They feel that the school has improved significantly in recent years. They admire the work of the headteacher in bringing about these changes. They feel respected and that they are treated fairly.

School leaders have thought carefully about how best to promote positive mental health. Pupils are taught about this in assemblies and in personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons. They spoke to us about how useful they find this guidance. They understand the steps they can take to help themselves and each other.

Some pupils did not perform as well as expected in their key stage 2 tests in 2019. They did not do as well as previous pupils had in 2017 and 2018. Leaders have recognised the need to better check on what pupils know and can do. They have taken steps to help pupils do better in the future.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Leaders have set up systems that work well. If pupils are worried about anything, they know whom they can talk to. When it is necessary, leaders refer safeguarding issues to external agencies.

School staff know that they all share the responsibility to look after pupils. They are trained regularly and are aware of safeguarding risks, as well as pupils' individual needs.

School leaders check staff and visitors to ensure that they are appropriate to work with children. Filtering and monitoring systems operate within school to protect children when they go online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum is carefully planned in most subjects. However, this work is not yet complete in all subjects. Leaders must ensure that the curriculum is planned equally well across all subjects.
- Pupils enter the school from nine different first schools. Leaders currently do not check what pupils know and can do when they join the school as well as they

could. Leaders should improve their work with the first schools so that pupils' attainment improves by the end of Year 6.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	124426
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10122454
Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	9 to 13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	499
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Amanda Brooke
Headteacher	Lindsay Taylor-Potts
Website	www.waltonpriory.staffs.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	8 May 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has not undergone any significant changes since the last inspection.
- The school does not make any use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We met with members of the governing body, the headteacher, senior leaders, the designated safeguarding lead, the special educational needs coordinator and various teachers. The lead inspector spoke on the telephone to a representative from the local authority.
- We took into account parents', pupils' and school staff's responses to Ofsted's inspection surveys.
- We spoke to pupils in lessons, during breaktimes and as they moved around the school.

- We looked carefully at different documents, including minutes of governing body minutes, external reviews carried out by the local authority, curriculum plans, attendance records and school development plans.
- We did deep dives in English, mathematics, French, history and science. These included visiting lessons, looking at pupils' work, meeting with curriculum leaders and holding discussions with teachers and pupils.
- An inspector listened to key stage 2 pupils read.

Inspection team

Thomas Walton, lead inspector Ofsted Inspector

Clare Considine Ofsted Inspector

Philip Hamilton Ofsted Inspector

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