

Wellacre Technology Academy

Irlam Road, Flixton, Urmston, Manchester, M41 6AP

Inspection dates

9–10 May 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The principal and senior team provide motivating leadership that inspires staff and pupils to do their best. Areas identified as requiring improvement at the last inspection have been tackled successfully.
- The school's values, 'honesty, pride, respect, aspiration and resilience' are at the heart of the school's work. Pupils are proud of their achievements and a credit to the school.
- Governors share leaders' high aspirations for pupils and provide good support and challenge.
- Middle leaders make a good contribution to improvement. Actions are focused effectively on raising pupils' outcomes.
- Improvements to teaching are being secured through effective training. Leaders seek out external specialist support and ensure that the school is vibrant and keeps developing.
- Teachers' increasingly secure subject knowledge and accurate assessment of learning is raising pupils' outcomes.
- Pupils make good progress at key stage 3. They are attaining higher grades at GCSE than they have in the past. High-quality careers advice ensured that all leavers in 2016 went into further education, training or employment.
- Pupils who need to catch up or have special educational needs and/or disabilities make rapid progress across the school.
- Pupils feel and are safe in school. Robust safeguarding, care and support meet pupils' pastoral needs effectively.
- Pupils are self-disciplined and respectful towards each other around the school. The vast majority of pupils work hard in lessons and concentrate well.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good. Leaders are making sure that current learners achieve the best possible examination results and develop excellent personal skills.
- There is still some variability in teaching and learning in key stages 3 and 4, for example in teaching for greater depth in pupils' understanding and developing their thinking and reasoning skills.
- Reading, writing and numeracy skills are not developed as well as they could be in all subjects.
- Teaching does not meet the needs of the most able pupils as well as it could in some subjects. There is some highly successful teaching but it is not consistent.
- The effective practice already in school and strong leadership and governance provide the school with good capacity to sustain further improvement.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve teaching and raise pupils' achievement by:
 - using the best practice in the school to improve weaker aspects
 - ensuring that teachers in all subjects achieve greater depth to pupils' learning and develop pupils' thinking and reasoning skills
 - further developing pupils' reading, writing and numeracy skills across the curriculum
 - ensuring that the most able pupils in school are challenged consistently in all subjects so that a greater proportion of pupils can achieve higher grades in examinations.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The principal, vice-principal and senior leadership team provide a clear direction and strong drive for improvement. Their high aspirations are shared by motivated staff who feel valued and benefit from good-quality training to develop their teaching and leadership skills. There is strong leadership capacity to sustain improvements.
- The school has made significant improvement since the last inspection. The improvements are being sustained by rigorous systems to manage the performance of teachers and ensure that pupils are making good progress.
- Leaders and governors are outward-looking and actively seek specialist support and challenge. They have developed productive partnerships with several local schools, Loreto Teaching School, Alliance for Learning, local employers and with Trafford local authority improvement services and subject networks. Teachers benefit greatly from sharing best practice with colleagues from other schools, as well as from specialist support within school. Senior leaders also provide valued support to other schools.
- Subject leaders have received good-quality training to improve their leadership skills. Leaders at all levels contribute to accurate self-evaluation, which is based on a wide range of evidence from checking teaching and tracking pupils' progress. Consequently, departmental and whole-school planning for improvement include the most important priorities and actions are having a positive impact.
- High-quality training and ongoing professional discussion has had a significant impact on the quality of teaching and on teachers' morale. Training is planned carefully to meet individual needs and career aspirations as well as supporting school priorities for improvement. Newly qualified teachers are supported effectively.
- Special educational needs and pastoral leaders provide knowledgeable leadership and support. Special educational needs funding is used effectively. Provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is a strength of the school. Parents are extremely pleased with the provision, stating for example, 'Nothing is too much trouble. The learning support team are all excellent.'
- The curriculum meets the needs of pupils well. Leaders have planned the curriculum carefully to provide pupils with choice and meet their career aspirations. The key stage 3 curriculum has been reviewed to ensure that the higher demands of the national curriculum are met in all subjects. At key stage 4, pupils can choose from a range of academic and vocational subjects. Attainment in vocational subjects remains strong and attainment in academic subjects is rising due to curriculum changes and better teaching. Pupils are being better prepared for GCSE in modern foreign languages.
- High-quality impartial careers information, advice and guidance on key stage 4 options supports pupils to fulfil their aspirations and make the right choices. In 2016, all pupils who left Year 11 went into further education, employment or training.
- There is a good participation in the range of activities provided for pupils at lunchtime and after school. Various sports clubs and activities, such as 'Eat Well' courses, STEM

(science, technology, engineering and mathematics) club, robotics, bee-keeping and gardening, extend pupils' learning and skills.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills are developed effectively in various subjects and are a focus in 'Respect' lessons. Pupils develop a good understanding of different faiths and cultures and of moral and ethical issues in these lessons. Pupils have a good understanding of global issues and this is reflected in the school's accreditation with the International Schools Award in 2016. Pupils' social skills are developed well in various subjects, through their contributions as leaders and in the day-to-day running of the school.
- The school is highly inclusive and welcoming. Equality of opportunity is promoted strongly and discrimination is not tolerated. Pupils are respected and show respect for one another.
- Pupils are taught about British values and they are integral to the work of the school. Pupils participate in democratic processes through the election of pupil leaders and understand how democratic principles, liberty and the rule of law apply in their school and wider society. Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain.
- The pupil premium is used effectively. Following an external review of pupil premium, leaders are analysing barriers to learning effectively and ensuring that the impact of the funding is checked carefully. Changes to provision are having a positive impact so that differences in the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in school and others nationally are closing.
- Year 7 catch-up funding is also used effectively. Pupils who start the school with lower than average prior attainment are supported very successfully. They make above-average progress in Year 7 and build on this across the school.
- Good transition arrangements with primary schools are supporting pupils of all abilities to build on their prior attainment and make good progress from the start of key stage 3. English and mathematics teachers have benefited from training provided by primary school teachers so that they are aware of the demands of the key stage 2 curriculum.
- Parental engagement is good. The vast majority of parents who responded to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire, would recommend the school and say that their children are happy, feel safe and are taught well. Parents recognise the improvements the school has made in the last two years. Comments such as 'The school has made every effort to improve behaviour and attainment. The leadership is strong, communication is good. It has come a long way' are typical of the many positive comments received. Inspection findings endorse these views.
- A very small minority of parents expressed some concerns about variability in pupils' progress and behaviour with different teachers. Inspection findings show that there is some variation but that weaker aspects are being tackled effectively by leaders and improving.

Governance of the school

- The governing body has a good understanding of the challenges, strengths and weaknesses of the school. Governors have a range of skills and provide effective support and challenge to school leaders. They are highly aspirational for pupils.

- The governing body has made good use of external expertise to review its effectiveness and the school's use of the pupil premium. They have acted on recommendations successfully.
- The reorganisation of committee structures has improved communication and ensures that governors' skills are put to best use.
- Governors' in-depth understanding of the school is informed by their 'deep dive' analyses of strengths and weaknesses in different subjects and the achievement of different groups of pupils.
- The pay committee is clear about how decisions on teachers' pay progression are made and work alongside a national leader of education to manage the principal's performance effectively.
- Finances are managed carefully. Governors check the impact of additional pupil premium and catch-up funding carefully.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Records of child protection concerns, behaviour and incidents are of high quality. Pupils' needs and the impact of actions are recorded in detail.
- Vulnerable pupils receive excellent support from within school and through effective liaison with external agencies. One parent commented: 'The network of staff, form tutors, subject teachers and senior leaders, who give additional time to support [our child] and ourselves as parents, has overwhelmed us. We cannot thank them enough for their care and dedication.'
- Staff have received appropriate training and know what to do if they have concerns. They are fully aware of the 'Prevent' duty. There is a strong focus on ensuring pupils' mental health and well-being.
- Procedures for the recruitment of staff meet requirements. Policies and procedures are fit for purpose.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching has improved following high-quality training that supports whole-school improvement and meets teachers' individual professional development needs. New teaching staff and a reorganisation of subject leadership have also had a positive impact.
- There is some inspiring teaching that captures pupils' imagination and results in pupils making rapid progress in several subjects, for example in English, mathematics, science, sport and business studies.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge, which ensures that teaching is pitched accurately at national curriculum expectations. High-quality resources are used creatively. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to make best use of their skills and they make a good contribution.
- The review of the key stage 3 curriculum and new schemes of learning have raised

teachers' expectations of what pupils should achieve at key stage 3, so pupils build on their prior attainment successfully.

- Assessment is used well in lessons to adapt teaching to pupils' immediate learning needs. At key stage 4, assessment is used very effectively by pupils to improve their work. The moderation of the assessment of pupils' work across the school and with colleagues in other schools has been a key factor in raising teachers' expectations.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress in lessons because they receive targeted support or challenge where needed.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make rapid progress. They are supported effectively in class by teachers and teaching assistants and benefit from expert teaching in smaller groups.
- Pupils who need to catch up are also taught very well, so they make rapid progress from their lower-than-average starting points. Teaching in the lower sets is exciting and motivating, so pupils catch up quickly.
- There is some variation in teaching and learning between subjects. In modern foreign languages and design and technology, teaching is less successful in developing depth in pupils' learning. There is also some variation in teaching and learning within subjects. In mathematics, humanities and science, for example, there is some exceptional development of pupils' thinking and reasoning skills in some classes but not in others.
- Teaching is variable in the extent that it meets the needs of the most able pupils and enables them to make the most rapid progress possible. There is some highly effective practice, for example in English and some mathematics groups, where pupils are provided with challenging work that extends their knowledge and skills. However, there are also occasions when the most able pupils are not provided with suitably challenging work.
- The development of pupils' literacy across the curriculum is a focus in school development planning and is improving. Skills are developed well in English, where there is good attention to improving pupils' reading skills and ensuring that they use correct spelling, grammar and punctuation in their writing. Such skills are not developed as well in all subjects. Numeracy skills are also developing across school with the appointment of a numeracy leader, particularly in science, humanities and computing. Developments are at an early stage, however.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils develop effective leadership skills, for example, in sports and in their coaching capacity with primary school pupils. They take on responsibilities in school as STEM leaders, subject leaders, reading ambassadors and year-group ambassadors with confidence and aplomb.
- As one parent said, 'The young people develop as well-rounded citizens and have the skills such as resilience, self-confidence and self-worth and empathy to prepare them

for the next stage of their lives.' Inspection findings support these views.

- Pupils feel safe and free from bullying and harassment in school. Incidents of bullying have reduced significantly in the last three years. Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying, including the use of derogatory language based on race, sexuality, disability or appearance. They show respect for each other and bullying is now rare. Any issues are dealt with effectively.
- The pupil 'anti-bullying ambassadors' make a good contribution to resolving any issues fairly and maturely. They have received training and are clear about safeguarding issues and their responsibilities.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe when using social media and online. They are aware of the risks of extremism. Pupils are also aware about risks to health and safety in the community.
- Vulnerable pupils are supported extremely well in school and with support from relevant external agencies. The school's records are detailed and comprehensive. The procedures to support children looked after by the local authority are good.
- The safety, behaviour and personal development of pupils in alternative provision is checked carefully. Their attendance is good and the school ensures that the provision meets their needs effectively.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The new behaviour policy is having a positive impact. Staff, pupils and parents talk of the 'culture shift' in the school since the last inspection. One member of staff commented, 'Behavioural issues have greatly reduced in the past few years and I believe that is down to good leadership and all staff supporting each other.' Inspection findings corroborate this view.
- Pupils' conduct around the school is consistently good. They are self-disciplined and orderly when they move around the school. The atmosphere is calm and safe. At break times, they are sociable and respectful towards each other.
- Attendance is above average and overall persistent absenteeism is below average. Persistent absenteeism has reduced among disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils at risk of poor attendance receive effective early support and there are rigorous procedures to follow up absence.
- Both permanent and fixed-term exclusion have been high in the past but have reduced significantly to be closer to average. Incidents leading to isolation or removal from class have also reduced significantly. The reduction in serious behaviour incidents reflects the higher expectations for behaviour and the greater engagement of pupils.
- Pupils who are at risk of exclusion or absence are supported very effectively in the school's inclusion centre. The provision supports pupils to make more rapid progress in their learning and develops their personal and social skills successfully.
- The vast majority of pupils have good attitudes to learning. They are attentive and contribute enthusiastically in lessons. Pupils show high levels of concentration when they are given extended tasks to complete. They show resilience and perseverance when tackling challenging work.

- There are occasional disruptions to learning when pupils are not fully engaged by the teaching. Such incidents are rare, however.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' achievement has improved since the last inspection, due to good quality professional development for teachers, a more rigorous approach to tracking pupils' progress and well-planned interventions to help pupils catch up where needed.
- In 2016 the proportion of pupils who attained a good pass in English and mathematics GCSEs was above the national average. GCSE attainment also shows improvement in several other subjects when compared to the national average in 2016.
- Attainment was lower than average in a few subjects in 2016, most notably in graphics, food technology, geography and languages and in the EBacc element overall. Leaders have taken appropriate action to tackle weaknesses in curriculum planning and teaching, so pupils are making better progress in these subjects now.
- Pupils who are currently in school make good progress from their various starting points. The review of the key stage 3 curriculum has successfully raised teachers' expectations of what all pupils should achieve at key stage 3. The good transition procedures support pupils to build on their prior attainment and make good progress from the start. Disadvantaged pupils make equally good progress at key stage 3 as others in school from their different starting points.
- The broad curriculum at key stage 4 provides pupils with a wide choice of academic and vocational subjects and supports them to achieve their aspirations. Pupils of all abilities make particularly good progress in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, construction and engineering, business and sport.
- Pupils who attend alternative provision make good progress because their learning and personal development needs are met well. Leaders check their progress carefully.
- Pupils who have lower-than-average starting points and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities often make rapid progress. Pupils benefit from targeted, highly effective teaching in classes and small groups and effective support from teaching assistants.
- Disadvantaged pupils' progress has lagged behind that of other pupils in school and non-disadvantaged pupils nationally in the past. The differences in attainment are diminishing, following a full review of pupil premium spending and provision. Differences in GCSE results diminished in 2016 and leaders are taking appropriate action to ensure that the differences in progress across the school continue to diminish. Teachers and leaders track disadvantaged pupils' progress carefully and ensure that extra support is provided where needed if they are not making the progress expected.
- The progress of the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, is improving but is still variable between subjects and teaching groups. Teaching is not as highly tuned to their needs as it is to the needs of lower-ability pupils. There is some exemplary practice in quickening the progress of the most able pupils in English and some science and mathematics groups, but it is not consistent across all subjects.
- Pupils' improving attainment, the broad curriculum and their effective all-round

personal development prepare them well for the next stage of their education, employment or training. The highly effective advice and guidance on option choices and careers supports pupils to make informed choices and achieve their aspirations.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Leaders and governors are managing the closure of the sixth form at the end of this academic year effectively. They are ensuring that the learners completing their courses in Year 13 this year are taught well and achieve the best possible examination results. Retention on courses is historically good, although it has inevitably been affected by the imminent closure.
- Teaching, learning and assessment in the sixth form are consistently good. Teachers' good subject knowledge and effective assessment of learning ensure that learners are equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to achieve good results in examinations. Teaching in sport and business studies is particularly effective.
- Learners' work-related learning and personal skills are developed exceptionally well. They develop successful study skills, are highly motivated and have good attendance. Work experience is relevant and productive. Learners' leadership skills are developed effectively in enterprise projects and in various leadership roles across the school.
- Learners' behaviour is exemplary. They show respect for each other and contribute positively to the calm and affirming atmosphere in school. They are extremely positive about their experience in the sixth form.
- Outcomes for learners are good. Those who left in 2016 made good progress from their starting points. Their attainment in examinations was above average in vocational subjects and close to average in academic subjects. Learners who are currently in Year 13 are making equally good progress. There are no differences in the learning of disadvantaged learners and others in school and nationally.
- Learners' English and mathematical skills are developed effectively. All those entered for GCSE resits in English and mathematics made good progress and were successful.
- Leadership and management of the sixth form is good. The curriculum has been adapted successfully to meet the needs of learners in Year 13 during the transition towards its closure. Leaders check teaching and learners' progress carefully and ensure that support is provided if progress slows. Safeguarding meets all requirements.
- As in the main school, learners receive high-quality careers information, advice and guidance. Their good achievement and excellent personal skills equip them well for the next stage in their education, training and employment. All learners have planned destinations through University and Colleges Admission Service (UCAS), in apprenticeships or employment.

School details

Unique reference number	136378
Local authority	Trafford
Inspection number	10032208

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	701
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	17
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Elaine Johnson
Principal	Melanie Wicks
Telephone number	0161 748 5011
Website	www.wellacre.org
Email address	mwicks@wellacre.org
Date of previous inspection	20–21 May 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website. It complies with DfE guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school is smaller than most secondary schools. It is a non-selective comprehensive school in an area with selective education.
- All pupils in the main school are boys. A small number of girls attend the sixth form.
- The proportion of pupils who receive support for special educational needs is above average. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special education needs or an education, health and care plan is well above average.

- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is slightly below average.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and who speak English as an additional language are below average.
- The sixth form is closing in July 2017.
- A small number of pupils receive alternative provision through the Medical Education Service at the Vulnerable Pupil Referral Unit. The school also uses Trafford local authority pupil referral unit, which supports pupils with behavioural needs, but there are no pupils attending this provision currently.
- The school meets the current government floor standards. These are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.
- The school meets the Department for Education's definition of a coasting school based on key stage 4 academic performance results in 2014, 2015 and 2016.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in almost all subjects and in different ability groups. They visited the inclusion centre and spoke to the leader of alternative provision. They also observed tutor sessions and an assembly. Some observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors conducted a detailed scrutiny of a sample of pupils' work from range of subjects and ability groups. They heard pupils read and spoke with pupils in lessons and in several formal meetings.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, a representative from Trafford local authority and four governors. Inspectors spoke to all staff that were observed.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation, improvement planning and records of monitoring, management of performance and training. Safeguarding policies and procedures were examined.
- Inspectors took account of 142 responses to parent view, the Ofsted online questionnaire, 78 questionnaire responses from staff and 34 responses from pupils.

Inspection team

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