

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mr Nathan Cole
Headteacher
Wilson's School
Mollison Drive
Wallington
Surrey
SM6 9JW

Dear Mr Cole

No formal designation inspection of Wilson's School

Following my visit with Anne Hudson, Peter Gale, David Bromfield and Duncan Kamyra, Ofsted Inspectors, to your school on 11 and 12 February 2020, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

This inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for inspecting schools with no formal designation. The school was selected following our regular risk assessment and selection of schools for inspection. The inspection was carried out because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector wished to determine the effectiveness of leadership and management in the school.

Evidence

Inspectors scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding arrangements. We met with the headteacher, groups of pupils, groups of teachers and members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. We met with the special educational needs coordinator and the designated safeguarding lead. We considered information about pupils repeating Year 12. We visited lessons in a wide range of subjects and across all year groups, accompanied by school leaders. We considered correspondence the school received from parents and carers during the inspection and we also had a telephone conversation with a parent. We scrutinised governors' minutes, attendance records and fixed-term exclusion data. We had conversations with staff and pupils in and between lessons and we visited form periods.

Having considered the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time:

Safeguarding is effective.

Context

The school is a boys' grammar school, with 1,260 pupils on roll, including 320 in the sixth form. Pupils represent a wide range of ethnic groups. More pupils than the national average speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is lower than the national average, as is the proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals. Pupil mobility is lower than the national average. The school has a stable staff, with many long-serving members. The school has no full-time vacancies.

You and your leadership team consistently model the school motto of 'not for oneself, but for all'. Respect for one another and for different beliefs permeates the school. Pupils are kind, considerate and have a keen sense of equality. You are supported by a long-serving team of governors that adds to the sense of community in the school. Staff we spoke to said that they feel valued by the headteacher. Staff said leaders are approachable and that the headteacher has created a happy place to work.

Your school is a caring community where staff are keenly aware of their safeguarding responsibilities. They go above and beyond this to keep pupils safe. Leaders keep meticulous records and there is a very rigorous system to report and monitor concerns. Leaders are aware of the issues affecting young people in the local area and as such are able to respond quickly to potential issues.

Leaders have a clear vision for challenging able pupils and providing them with a broad and deep curriculum. They challenge all pupils equally, including those with SEND. Leaders offer a broad range of subjects, including modern foreign languages and creative arts and, in 2020, every Year 11 pupil will be entered for the English Baccalaureate subjects. This demonstrates leaders' desire to challenge all pupils and for pupils to aspire to the very best in future study or the world of work.

Leaders have designed the curriculum to meet the needs of pupils in the school. Attainment on entry is high and above the national average. Pupils study a programme that is at least as ambitious as the national curriculum for key stage 3. An example of the ambition can be seen with all Year 7 pupils learning to play a new musical instrument. In Year 9 pupils begin a three-year programme of 'GCSE Plus'. 'GCSE Plus' goes beyond the examination board requirements and extends pupils' understanding of subjects. In addition, pupils follow a programme called 'the Elizabethan' in Year 9 that continues to develop their knowledge in areas like history, politics and art. This develops into a further enrichment programme in Year 10. Leaders see the curriculum as a seven-year programme, preparing pupils for the challenge of A Levels and beyond.

Sixth-form students choose from a wide range of subjects in Years 12 and 13. The academic nature of the curriculum offer meets the needs of the students in the sixth form. It prepares them for future study at university, higher level and degree apprenticeships, as well as the world of work. Leaders have ensured that there is a comprehensive careers programme throughout school and this becomes very personalised to individual students' needs in the sixth form. Almost all of Year 11 pupils progress to the sixth form and nearly all complete their studies, with 99% going to university. A small number of students do not achieve as well as they or their teachers would like or expect at the end of Year 12. These students are offered the opportunity to repeat Year 12 and improve their performance, increasing their choices in Year 13. This affects a small number of students each year and these decisions are made in the best interests of the student.

There are many opportunities for pupils beyond the classroom. Leaders have provided pupils with a wide range of extra-curricular activities. These range from the Combined Cadet Force and sports to chess and drama productions. Participation rates are very high and sixth-form students commented that there were too many things for any one boy to do.

Pupils learn about fundamental British values in personal, social and health education (PSHE) and across the curriculum. These values also run through many of the things pupils do in school. Pupils are voted onto a student board and this board has effected change in the school, for example regarding the one-way system and gaining additional water fountains. Pupils have started a 'Pride Club' and there are 'Rainbow Ambassadors', demonstrating the commitment there is in the school for inclusivity and equality. Sixth-form students were very proud of the 'Wilson's Intrigue' magazine that was written and produced by pupils and students with a keen interest in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Leaders have successfully used the school motto to create a calm and respectful environment with academic challenge. Pupils are impeccably behaved in lessons and around the school. They are polite to one another, to staff and to visitors. Pupils are proud of their school and they want to make the very best of themselves to maintain its reputation.

Pupils and staff were very clear that bullying is not tolerated in your school. Leaders ensure that pupils hear this from the top of the organisation. Pupils said that in the rare cases that bullying occurs, they know who to tell and they know it will be dealt with quickly. Leaders are proactive and think about changes in society and their local context and ensure that the school community remains cohesive. The PSHE curriculum is amended regularly to reflect the needs of pupils and the society in which they live.

Attendance rates are significantly above the national average and pupils are punctual to their lessons. There are few exclusions, but when there are they are appropriate. Leaders were clear that this was achieved by challenging pupils and

giving them reasons to enjoy school and therefore ensuring that they attend. Leaders have clear procedures in place to identify pupils who are absent and strategies to get them back into school.

School leaders and governors take a keen interest in the well-being of their staff. All staff we spoke to were keen to tell us how well supported they feel. They are able to make suggestions for improvements and they feel that they are listened to and their ideas acted upon. Staff really value your work as headteacher and the impact you have had on an already highly achieving school. Teachers are appreciative of the new marking scheme introduced two years ago and the impact it has had on reducing their workload. Teachers spoke often about the benefit of the additional reading week they receive in October half term. Teachers are able to improve their subject knowledge and then use this to enhance their teaching.

Governors have a clear understanding of the school in terms of its curriculum, pupils' outcomes, and the safety and well-being of pupils. Governors meet regularly and make visits to the school to meet staff and pupils. They ask the right questions of the leaders and they can clearly articulate their strategy regarding its curriculum.

External support

Leaders liaise with outside agencies effectively, for example the local authority. The school uses Copeland School as alternative provision when needed. Leaders also arrange opportunities for pupils to engage in extra-curricular activities with pupils from other local schools.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Southwark, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Sutton. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Mark Smith
Her Majesty's Inspector