

Weavers Academy

Brickhill Road, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire NN8 3JH

Inspection dates

16–17 May 2017

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| 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

- Through her determined leadership, the headteacher has brought about significant improvement to the school's provision in a short period.
- Pupils in all year groups make good progress across a range of subjects.
- The difference in the achievement between the school's disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally is closing rapidly, particularly in mathematics and English according to the school's own data.
- Pupils' attainment in English and mathematics rose significantly in 2016.
- A clear focus on training that meets the needs of the school's teachers has been crucial to the improvement in the quality of teaching, which is now good.
- Governors know the school well and provide effective support and challenge to the leaders, holding them accountable for raising pupils' progress further.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge and careful planning of lessons ensure that they set tasks that enable pupils to make at least the progress that they should.
- On occasions, the most able pupils do not receive work that enables them to make the greater progress of which they are capable.
- The strong relationships that exist within the school encourage pupils' good behaviour. Pupils are polite, respectful and positive ambassadors for the school.
- Good teaching and leadership in the sixth form allow students to achieve well and prepare effectively for their next steps.
- Opportunities to develop literacy across the school are good. Pupils make good progress in their reading and writing skills as a result.
- Pupils feel safe and are kept safe because of the effective guidance and support provided by teachers. Pupils learn how to support and respect each other.
- Subject leaders play a central role in monitoring and improving teaching. They are clearly focused on ensuring that pupils make good progress from their different starting points.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive effective support from their teachers and other adults in the room and, as a result, make good progress.
- Overall attendance has improved and is now in line with the national average. However, some pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, do not attend as regularly as they should.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement by ensuring that all teachers set the most able pupils suitably challenging tasks, so that they make good progress across all of their subjects and attain the highest levels.
- Further embed the strategies already in place to reduce the absence of disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, so that their attendance is at least in line with that of all pupils nationally.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher provides strong leadership. Aply supported by leaders at all levels, she has forged positive relationships with all members of the school community, and has raised expectations in relation to the quality of teaching, pupils' achievement and behaviour. This culture of higher expectations has resulted in rapid improvements in teaching, pupils' behaviour and their progress.
- Consequently, staff morale is high and overwhelmingly positive about the school and the journey that it has been on since the last inspection. Nearly all the parents and staff who expressed a view through the online questionnaires said that the school is led well.
- Leaders monitor and evaluate the work of the school robustly. They visit lessons regularly and frequently to examine the quality of the work in pupils' books and gain a sound understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Teachers are keen to develop their practice. They meet weekly to discuss innovative and creative ways to improve pupil engagement, which leads to pupils making greater progress. Where teaching has been weak, the school has taken rapid and decisive action to improve the quality of learning.
- Leaders have ensured that the additional pupil premium funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively to support pupils in the classroom.
- Leaders use additional funding effectively to support pupils who arrive at the school in Year 7 needing to catch up in English and mathematics. The school employs a primary specialist to work with these pupils. Through carefully planned lessons and additional catch-up classes, as well as a high focus on developing literacy, these pupils are now making good progress. This intensive extra support has enabled these pupils to catch up and allowed them to access the wider curriculum more readily.
- The curriculum contributes well to pupils' progress, behaviour and personal development and welfare. Leaders have planned the curriculum well so that it is broad and balanced. The curriculum provides a wide range of courses, including work-related subjects that prepare pupils well for their next steps in their education, training or employment. Senior leaders regularly review the curriculum that they offer to ensure that it meets the needs of the pupils. For example, senior leaders have increased the number of English lessons that pupils receive in Year 7 to provide them with increased opportunities to become secure in their communication skills.
- A wide range of extra-curricular activities supports the curriculum well. These activities enable pupils to deepen their understanding of learning beyond the classroom.
- Pupils receive regular opportunities to develop their understanding of fundamental British values and prepare for life in modern Britain. Through the 'drop down' days and tutor time activities, pupils are able to develop their understanding of different religious beliefs and moral points of view.
- The Creative Education Trust has a high profile in the school and provides effective support and challenge to senior leaders when it is required. Leaders within the trust

have been relentless in their drive to support the school in rapidly improving its provision. For example, the trust has provided subject specialist advisers who have worked closely with the subject leaders to ensure that the necessary improvements in the quality of teaching take place. The school's leaders have responded well to this support, and have used it effectively to secure their own capacity to bring about the improvements to the school's provision that have taken place since the last inspection.

- Senior leaders ensure that the funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is used appropriately, including engaging with external agencies and specialist providers. However, the attendance rate for this group of pupils is still below the national average.

Governance of the school

- The governing body has a secure and precise understanding of the quality of the school's provision and of those areas that require further development. Governors receive regular, detailed reports from the senior leaders. They use these to provide rigorous challenge and appropriate support to the headteacher and her senior leaders. Governors are tenacious in holding leaders to account.
- Members of the governing body have an excellent set of skills and experiences and are highly effective in carrying out their duties. They have ensured that the spending of the pupil premium and other funding is strategically planned.
- Governors ensure that performance management is carried out effectively, including that of the headteacher. As a result, teachers have a strong understanding of their role in ensuring that pupils make good progress.
- Governors fully understand their responsibility in relation to safeguarding pupils. The governor who has responsibility for safeguarding regularly undertakes visits to check on the school's procedures for keeping pupils safe.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective and meet statutory requirements. Senior leaders have ensured that there is a strong safeguarding culture in the school and that all staff understand their responsibilities in relation to keeping pupils safe.
- Senior leaders are highly vigilant about the well-being of their pupils. On those occasions when they are concerned about a pupil's welfare, senior leaders take quick and effective action to ensure that the pupil receives the support that is required. In so doing, they work closely with parents and with external agencies. Senior leaders maintain comprehensive records of the work that they complete to support pupils. They ensure that all staff have a clear understanding of the action that the school has taken for each safeguarding concern.
- Senior leaders have ensured that staff receive regular safeguarding training. Leaders have also ensured that staff are sensitive to issues in the local area that may affect their pupils' welfare and know what action to take.
- Senior leaders work closely with pupils, parents and external agencies to ensure that pupils are kept safe.

- All of the pupils that inspectors met said that they feel safe in the school and know who to speak to if they have any worries. They said that they are confident that teachers would help to resolve any concerns that pupils have quickly and effectively. This is because staff know the pupils well. They have their trust and over time have built very positive relationships with pupils and their families.
- Almost all parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, said that their child feels safe at school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. Leaders have ensured that teachers set tasks that engage pupils in their learning to enable them to make strong progress. Teachers are determined to be the best they can be. They actively collaborate to develop themselves in order to give pupils the most positive experiences during their lessons.
- The school places high importance on helping pupils to improve literacy because many pupils join the school with low attainment in English. Teachers have made this a priority and, for example, pupils receive regular guidance on how to improve the accuracy of their writing in all subjects. Pupils who fall behind in reading catch up quickly through the school's rigorous reading schemes.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are consistently positive. Pupils listen carefully and are respectful to one another. This enables teachers to fully focus on pupils' progress in lessons.
- Teachers know their pupils well and plan lessons effectively.
- Teachers are adept at asking questions. They ask thought-provoking and challenging questions to develop pupils' understanding. In a science lesson, the teacher encouraged pupils to pose and answer their own questions. Pupils engaged well with this activity, enabling them to further develop their understanding of the states of matter.
- Pupils receive precise and detailed advice and guidance from their teachers. Pupils engage well with this feedback, which enables them to improve their work, and so become more secure in their knowledge, skills and understanding. Pupils are confident in talking about their learning to their teachers and to their peers.
- Teachers use their strong subject knowledge well to plan activities that engage pupils in their learning and encourage them to explore ideas for themselves.
- In mathematics, the teachers are developing pupils' application of mathematics and problem-solving skills well. Pupils enjoy these lessons because they feel engaged in their learning.
- The school has a clear homework policy. Pupils complete the tasks that teachers set them and this in turn helps them to be more secure in their learning.
- The school has a clear and overarching assessment policy, supplemented by subject-specific guidance. This helps teachers assess pupils' work in a way that is meaningful and relevant to their subject. Teachers use this to quickly identify any pupils who fall behind and to provide extra support.

- Teachers use other adults in the room well to support the learning of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, school data shows that these pupils make good progress.
- On occasions, teachers do not provide work that is suitably challenging for the most able pupils. When this occurs, these pupils do not make accelerated progress and do not achieve the highest levels in their understanding.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are strong and they take pride in their work and their appearance.
- The school uses a range of approaches, including tutor time activities and lessons, to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. For example, in a Year 8 lesson, pupils discussed Paralympics and whether mental illness should be classed as a disability. Pupils were able to use their prior learning about mental health and well-being to contribute well to the lively debate, demonstrating their sensitive approach to this complex issue.
- Leaders have developed pupils' life skills, as well as academic skills. There is a wide range of opportunities for pupils to develop their leadership skills, including peer coaching and involvement in the school's parliament. One pupil commented, 'It is a real privilege to have these opportunities and it really helps me to develop my confidence and that of others.'
- Pupils receive highly effective impartial careers advice and guidance. Pupils receive detailed information about the different training courses and careers that are open to them. As a result, pupils are prepared well for their next steps when they leave school.
- The school has actively developed pupils' mental health and well-being through 'drop down' days. They have covered a range of areas, including health awareness, keeping safe and creativity.
- Pupils who spoke to the inspectors showed sensible awareness of issues such as radicalisation and extremism, online safety and homophobic behaviour.
- The school has been effective in developing pupils' spiritual, moral and social skills. Their awareness of cultural diversity is less well developed.
- Pupils are given strong messages about different types of bullying, including cyber bullying. Pupils say bullying is rare but they know who to approach if it does happen. They believe that the school deals with it quickly and effectively.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are characteristically courteous and confident. The atmosphere is calm around school and on corridors during social times and between lessons. Pupils enter and leave the school site at the beginning and end of the

day safely and responsibly.

- Almost all pupils, parents and staff who expressed opinions agreed that pupils' behaviour is at least good.
- The number of pupils excluded from school is in line with the national average. The proportion of repeat exclusions is low. This is because teachers manage pupils' behaviour consistently and have high expectations of the conduct expected in and out of lessons. There are clear and effective systems in place.
- Pupils are well-behaved and conduct themselves well, both in lessons and during social times. Attitudes to learning are a real strength of the school. Pupils arrive to lessons on time and are greeted at the door by the teachers.
- Leaders make regular checks on the attendance and behaviour of pupils who receive their education off the school site to ensure that these placements are going well and that pupils make good progress.
- As a result of focused, relentless and effective action by the school, attendance overall has improved and is now in line with the national average. Some groups of pupils still do not attend as well as others in the school.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' achievement has risen over the last three years. From achievement that was significantly below national levels, pupils across all years now make good progress across a range of subjects.
- Pupils arrive in Year 7 with starting points below the national average. By the end of Year 11, pupils' attainment is above that achieved by similar pupils nationally, particularly in English literature and science.
- Achievement at GCSE across a range of subjects was below the national level in 2015 but significantly above it in 2016. This improvement is due to the stronger focus that senior leaders have placed on improving the quality of teaching and the excellent support pupils have received.
- Previously, pupils' attainment in English language, geography and religious education was low. Attainment in these subjects has improved as a result of new and effective leadership in these subjects. These subject leaders have focused on improving the quality of teaching to ensure that pupils make at least the progress that they should.
- Pupils in mathematics made strong progress in 2016 and the school's current data indicates that outcomes will be similar this year.
- In 2016, the proportion of pupils who attained a GCSE grade C in English and mathematics increased substantially and is now approaching the national average.
- Pupils attain well in science, mathematics and English literature.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils, including the most able of them, in 2015 was weak. In 2016, disadvantaged pupils performed well across the curriculum and school data suggests this positive trend is continuing.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities did not make sufficient progress in 2016. A higher focus on more effective planning by teachers to meet the

needs of these learners and catch-up classes have ensured that their progress is now improving and is in line with the national average.

- Pupils are increasingly well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment because they are taking more appropriate qualifications and being taught more effectively. Combined with good-quality careers advice, this is giving pupils the confidence and self-assurance to progress successfully to appropriate places of education, training and employment.
- The most able pupils do not make accelerated progress across all of the subjects that they study. This is because teachers do not always ensure that these pupils complete work that is sufficiently challenging, and enables them to attain the highest levels.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- The leadership of the sixth form is good. The leader of the sixth form closely monitors the learning and ensures that good progress is made.
- The quality of teaching in the sixth form is good. Across a range of subjects, students engage in mature debate and discussion. The high quality of students' written work reflects their keen interest and enthusiasm for their studies. Teachers are skilled at using questions to extend students' learning and encouraging reflections. Feedback provided to students is rigorous and detailed and enables them to make greater progress.
- Post-16 students feel safe, valued and enjoy being in school. Consequently, retention rates have also improved significantly.
- Leaders have developed effective systems to improve attendance rates of post-16 students. Attendance is now in line with the national average.
- In 2016, students' progress on A-level courses was in line with the national average. Students following creative writing, chemistry and English made progress that was above the national average.
- Students who study work-related subjects attain well. In 2016, for example, the progress that these students made was above average. Students make good progress in these subjects because of highly effective teaching.
- A small number of students who enter the sixth form without a higher grade in GCSE English make good progress and gain C grades in the subject because of good curriculum provision and effective teaching.
- Safeguarding is effective in the sixth form because teachers are vigilant and effective systems are consistently followed.
- A great majority of pupils go on to higher education when they leave school and gain places at prestigious universities.
- Post-16 students have access to a wide range of enrichment opportunities, including university days, public speaking, photography and debating. Students told inspectors that these wider opportunities gave them greater confidence and prepared them better for life after school.

- Leaders have ensured that a strong programme of careers advice and guidance prepares students for their next steps in education, employment or training. Students are aware of the different routes, including university, employment and apprenticeships. Through this effective support, the number of students not in sustained education, employment or training after they leave the sixth form is very low.
- Post-16 students are positive role models to pupils in the younger years. They are proud of their school.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 139819 |
| Local authority | Northamptonshire |
| Inspection number | 10031184 |

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

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| Type of school | Secondary comprehensive |
| School category | Sponsored academy |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 18 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 967 |
| Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes | 74 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mark Mumby |
| Principal | Vivien Swaida |
| Telephone number | 01933 222830 |
| Website | www.weaversacademy.org.uk |
| Email address | Enquiries@weaversacademy.org.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 3–4 June 2015 |

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- Weavers Academy is an average-size school. Pupils enter the school with starting points significantly lower than the national average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.

- Weavers Academy is part of the Creative Education Trust.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language are well below the national averages.
- The school has a small sixth-form provision.
- The school meets the government's floor standards for what pupils should achieve by the end of year 11.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium funding is above the national average.
- A small number of pupils attend Overleys for part of their education.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 48 lessons, mostly jointly with members of the senior leadership team. During these visits to lessons, inspectors looked at pupils' books and spoke with pupils about their learning.
- Inspectors also held meetings with senior leaders, subject leaders and members of staff to discuss aspects of the school's work.
- The lead inspector met with the chair and another member of the governing body.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour between lessons, during breaktime and lunchtime, during which they spoke with pupils informally. Inspectors also met with groups of pupils formally and took into account the 38 responses to the online pupil survey.
- Inspectors considered the 42 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, and 28 free-text responses.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan. Inspectors also considered documentation relating to: teaching and learning; attendance; behaviour; achievement; governance; and safeguarding. An inspector scrutinised the school's single central register and checked the school's procedures for recruiting staff.
- An inspector spoke with representatives of the places of alternative provision that some of the pupils at the school attend.

Inspection team

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|-------------------------------|------------------|
| Ashfaq Rahman, lead inspector | Ofsted Inspector |
| Dick Vasey | Ofsted Inspector |
| Lynn Cox | Ofsted Inspector |
| Paul Sweeney | Ofsted Inspector |

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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