

# Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Wanstead High School

Redbridge Lane West, Wanstead, London E11 2JZ

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Inspection dates:

13 and 14 May 2025

## **Outcome**

Wanstead High School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Wanstead High School expects its pupils to be 'ready, respectful and responsible'. Pupils put these guiding principles into action through their positive attitudes in lessons and around school. Staff have high expectations for pupils' achievements and wider success. Pupils are confident and articulate learners who listen and express their views with thought and consideration. They achieve very well in almost all subjects.

The school has worked well to ensure that the quality of education is effective, and pupils' behaviour is strong. Pupils feel safe and enjoy coming to school. Sixth-form students exhibit exceptionally strong, mature attitudes to their education.

Most pupils describe the school as a place that is 'not just about achieving well, but also about building our characters'. They revel in taking part in the wide range of activities and opportunities that enhance their experience of school life. They are proud to represent their school in concerts, productions and sporting events. Pupils also participate in a wide range of clubs, notably in the performing arts and sports. They make strong contributions to wider school life, for example as members of the school council, prefects and subject ambassadors. Head pupils in the sixth form also lead the pupil leadership programme.

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

The curriculum is broad and ambitious. This includes a rich curriculum offer for the performing arts, including dance. The school makes sure that pupils develop their knowledge and skills progressively and make links in their learning. For example, in Year 7 science, pupils study how renewable energy technologies emerge. In Year 8, they build on their prior knowledge when learning about energy efficiency in homes and industries. Recently, the school has made changes to the modern foreign languages taught in key

stage 3 and key stage 4. As a result, an increasing number of pupils now study French and Spanish in Years 10 and 11 and achieve well.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They present learning clearly, select appropriate activities and ensure that pupils use vocabulary correctly. In the sixth form, the school has strengthened teacher subject expertise, ensuring that students are well supported to learn and apply subject content. Sometimes, checks on learning are not consistently effective. Where this happens, staff do not identify and rectify any difficulties pupils may have in understanding subject content. This can lead to gaps in some pupils' knowledge and allows misconceptions to persist in some areas.

The school uses a range of well-considered approaches to identify and support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). In the classroom, staff typically adapt activities to enable pupils to access the curriculum effectively. Pupils with SEND achieve well.

Reading is a top priority. The school promotes a love of reading during form time and through other activities. As a result, pupils develop secure reading and comprehension skills. Any pupils who fall behind receive timely additional support. This means they quickly gain the knowledge and skills to become more confident and fluent readers

The school has high expectations of pupils' learning and attitudes. Any low-level disruption is dealt with swiftly and effectively. In the sixth form, students demonstrate high levels of concentration and commitment to their learning. Pupils report that bullying is rare. Any such instances are typically resolved by the school in a timely manner.

The school's personal, social, health and economic education is well organised. Pupils learn about healthy relationships, the impact of drugs and knife crime, and how to stay safe and maintain their well-being. The school promotes careers education well. For example, it offers online learning and careers fairs. The school ensures that sixth-form students are well informed about their next steps, such as university and apprenticeship opportunities.

Leadership, including the governing body, has ensured that the focus on the quality of education is sustained. The school takes the right actions to improve pupils' achievements in subjects where this has not met the school's expectations. The school and governors have an accurate awareness of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.

Many parents and carers acknowledge the improvements made at the school in recent times. However, a minority of parents remain dissatisfied with the communication they receive from the school. The school is working well to address any concerns quickly and make sure that communication with parents is highly effective.

Staff are committed to the school and are proud to work here. They appreciate that the school is reflective and supportive, including making adjustments to school processes to help them manage their workload.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, teachers do not address misconceptions effectively to support pupils' progression through the curriculum. This results in gaps in some pupils' knowledge and understanding, including in the sixth form. The school should refine and strengthen its approaches to checking for and addressing key gaps in knowledge in subjects and ensure that all pupils develop a deeper understanding of the important content.

## Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in October 2015.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	102851
<b>Local authority</b>	Redbridge
<b>Inspection number</b>	10313888
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,444
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	250
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Ellen Lake and Ian Selby (co-chairs)
<b>Headteacher</b>	Emma Hillman
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.wansteadhigh.co.uk">www.wansteadhigh.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	8 January 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The headteacher was appointed in September 2022.
- The school uses five registered alternative provisions.
- 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.
- Since September 2022, the school has experienced considerable disruption due to essential building works.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteachers, assistant headteacher and director of inclusion.
- Inspectors spoke to a range of staff, including curriculum subject leaders, teachers and support staff. The lead inspector spoke to representatives of the local authority and the governing body.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: 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.
- Inspectors took account of responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. The inspectors also considered the responses of pupils and staff to Ofsted's online surveys.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils during lessons and social times.

## Inspection team

Ray Lau, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Jan Shadick	Ofsted Inspector
John Blaney	Ofsted Inspector

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