

Inspection of Royal Wootton Bassett Academy

Lime Kiln, Royal Wootton Bassett, Swindon, Wiltshire SN4 7HG

Inspection dates:	26 and 27 November 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The headteacher of this school is Anita Ellis. This school is part of the Ascend Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Jane Coley, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Nicholas Adams-Nel.

What is it like to attend this school?

Royal Wootton Bassett Academy and sixth form has a strong sense of community. The school's values of respect, well-being, balance and aspiration are shared by staff and pupils. The school supports pupils to achieve well. They leave the school with the skills and qualifications they need to be successful in their next steps.

The school has high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Lessons take place without disruption and the school is calm. On occasions there are incidents of bullying. Pupils know that this is unacceptable and are keen to report it to adults. The school does not tolerate bullying and will act to address concerns. However, it also recognises that some pupils need further support to make sure incidents are resolved fully.

Pupils are proud to belong to one of the houses in the school. They enjoy the inter-house competitions that take place. The school provides a range of clubs to develop pupils' wider interests and talents. For example, clubs such as comic book club, competitive sport and Duke of Edinburgh. Students in the sixth form are role models to younger pupils. They volunteer as peer readers and sports coaches as part of their commitment to make the school one that they are proud to attend.

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

The school's curriculum is broad and ambitious. Subjects have set out what it is important for pupils to know and understand. The 'Bassett Lesson' includes time for pupils to recall their previous work so that they can make links to their new learning. Most subjects identify the most effective methods for teaching so that pupils can remember their learning well over time. Students in the sixth form have opportunities to stretch their understanding and develop their use of vocabulary in preparation for higher education.

Teachers are knowledgeable and passionate about sharing their subjects with pupils. However, how some teachers check that pupils understand does not identify accurately enough what pupils know or can do. This means that teachers cannot then adapt the curriculum to help pupils to address any mistakes or resolve gaps in their knowledge and understanding.

The school values reading as an important skill for life. The weakest readers are identified and supported effectively to improve their fluency and comprehension skills. Pupils are encouraged to develop a love of reading during lessons and through shared reading activities.

The school accurately identifies those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). It provides additional support to these pupils through facilities, such as Big Pod and Little Pod. The intention is that pupils with SEND learn the same curriculum as their peers. However, at times, teaching is not adapted precisely enough to meet the needs of these pupils effectively. Consequently, on these occasions, they do not learn as well as they could.

The school's 'I learn' personal development programme teaches pupils about healthy relationships, different cultures and how to remain physically and mentally well. Topics are age-appropriate and reviewed regularly to make sure that they remain relevant to pupils' lives in the local area. For example, the school provides workshops about keeping safe from knife crime. Pupils have a strong awareness of the fundamental values that are important in modern Britain. The Student Parliament includes cabinets which look at different areas of school life. Pupils feel heard by the school and are proud when their suggestions become a reality. Such as the introduction of the girls' rugby team.

Pupils receive effective careers education, information, advice and guidance. The school works with local businesses to provide pupils with experiences to learn about the workplace. Careers fairs and guest speakers help pupils to understand the future paths that are available to them. Students in the sixth form value the support they receive to make informed choices about education, apprenticeships and employment.

The school and trust seek to engage with all members of the school community. They gather regularly the views of parents and carers about different aspects of the school's work. The school is also considerate of the workload and well-being of staff, particularly those who are new to the profession. Staff are proud to work at the school.

The methods used to monitor and evaluate the quality of different aspects of school life do not provide leaders with accurate enough information about the relative strengths of the school. Consequently, the school is unaware of where plans are not being fully implemented and, therefore, are not having the full intended positive impact for pupils. The trust has begun to support the school with more accurate self-evaluation to inform future school improvement priorities.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On occasion, the curriculum is not adapted precisely enough to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. Consequently, these pupils do not learn those elements of the curriculum as well as their peers. The school should ensure that teachers have the information and support that they need to adapt the curriculum to meet the learning needs of pupils with SEND effectively.
- Assessment within the classroom sometimes does not help adults accurately identify pupils' starting points or gaps in their knowledge and understanding. This means that some pupils do not receive the support or challenge they need to learn as well as they might. The school should make sure that assessment routines check for understanding and that the curriculum is adapted accordingly in response.

- The systems and processes that the school uses to assure the quality of some aspects of the school's work are not effective enough. As a result, the school is unaware of where things are working as intended or not. The school needs to improve the effectiveness of assurance approaches and self-evaluation to inform future leadership and governance decisions.

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

Unique reference number	136911
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10344610
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1690
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	256
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Nicolas Adams-Nel
CEO of the trust	Jane Coley
Headteacher	Anita Ellis
Website	www.rwba.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	28 and 29 November 2013 under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Ascend Learning Trust.
- 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.
- The school uses four registered and five unregistered alternative provisions.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements

(quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, modern foreign languages, design and technology and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussion about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils’ work.
- The sixth-form provision was considered through the deep dives as well as through additional visits during the inspection.
- Inspectors held discussions with school leaders at all levels. Inspectors also spoke with teaching staff, support staff, trust executive leaders, governors and trustees.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils, including representatives from the pupil parliament and sixth-form students.
- Inspectors viewed a range of school documentation, including the minutes of governance meetings, the school’s self-evaluation documents and improvement plans.
- 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 considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, as well as responses to the staff survey and pupil survey.

Inspection team

Sara Berry, lead inspector	His Majesty’s Inspector
Gary Schlick	Ofsted Inspector
Alison Naylor	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Nicholson	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Raistrick	Ofsted Inspector

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