

Inspection of Ercall Wood Academy

Golf Links Lane, Wellington, Telford, Shropshire TF1 2DT

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 November 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders and staff expect the best of every pupil and have high aspirations for their futures. Leaders provide pupils with a wide range of experiences to support this, including external talks about college, jobs and apprenticeships. Leaders are rightly proud of this work. Almost all pupils move on to sixth forms, colleges or training at the end of Year 11.

Staff warmly welcome pupils into school each morning. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive and respectful. Pupils who have difficulties with their mental well-being spoke highly of 'Mountain Rescue', the schools pastoral care system. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. If bullying occurs, most pupils are confident that school staff will deal with it quickly and effectively.

Most pupils feel safe and enjoy attending school. However, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do not receive all the support they need. As a result, they do not learn as well as they could, and many reported that they do not enjoy school.

Teachers have thought carefully about what they want pupils to learn and are ambitious for pupils to do well. However, teachers do not always check pupils' understanding in a timely way or correct any misconceptions they may have. This hinders learning.

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

The principal has a clear vision for the school. Since his appointment, he has made significant positive changes to the way the school operates. The principal and his leadership team are ambitious for what all pupils can achieve, including pupils with SEND. All pupils follow a wide range of subjects at key stage 3 and an increasing number of pupils follow the English Baccalaureate in key stage 4.

Leaders plan the curriculum well, and topics are taught in a logical order. Teachers have good subject knowledge. However, their use of assessment is inconsistent. When teachers use assessment well, for example in mathematics, they check whether all pupils have understood their work before moving on. Where this happens, pupils make strong progress. However, in too many subjects, teachers do not always check what pupils know and understand. Mistakes in work go unnoticed, and misconceptions persist. This hinders pupils' progress, and pupils often repeat mistakes in future work.

Currently, teachers do not adapt the curriculum well enough for pupils with SEND. Leaders have made sure that teachers have the information they need to support these pupils, but teachers do not routinely use this to good effect. Too often, pupils with SEND struggle to access the work expected of them in lessons. This holds

pupils back. As a result, overwhelmingly, pupils with SEND told inspectors that they do not enjoy school.

Leaders have recently introduced several initiatives to support and develop reading in weaker readers. For example, pupils who struggle to read as well as they ought to receive support in phonics. This work is at an early stage but is beginning to bear fruit. Leaders are committed to developing this work further.

Leaders set high expectations for behaviour. They are rightly proud of how behaviour has improved in recent years. The behaviour policy is consistently applied across the school and pupils understand what is expected of them. As a result, the number of incidents of inappropriate behaviour has reduced.

The school provides pupils with effective careers advice and guidance. This starts in Year 7 and culminates in Year 11 when pupils begin to consider an application to university. This work helps pupils to make well-informed decisions about their next steps.

All staff speak highly of the regular training and coaching they take part in. This includes those new to teaching. Staff are proud to teach at the school.

Trustees and members of the governing body have high expectations for what the school and its pupils can achieve. The trust provides support to the school and is integral to the school's continuing improvement journey.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff receive regular safeguarding training. They report any concerns quickly. Leaders act on these concerns in a timely manner, making effective use of external agencies where needed. As a result, pupils and their families get the right help they need quickly.

The school completes all the appropriate checks on all adults who work at, or visit, the school.

Leaders have made sure pupils learn how to keep themselves safe through the curriculum. For example, leaders have worked with a theatre company to teach all pupils about consent as part of a healthy relationship.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some teachers do not check carefully enough on how well pupils have learned what has been taught. As a result, some misconceptions go unnoticed and persist. When gaps in knowledge are identified, these are not always addressed.

Leaders should ensure that all teachers know how to make effective, regular checks on pupils' learning to help inform their plans and teaching.

- Too many pupils with SEND have negative views of their learning. They do not make the progress they should in many subjects. While teachers have the information they need to support pupils, they do not always use this sufficiently well to meet pupils needs. Leaders need to make sure that all staff use this information well and have the expertise to modify their teaching to best meet the needs of pupils with SEND.

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](#)' 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.

School details

Unique reference number	145707
Local authority	Telford & Wrekin
Inspection number	10241471
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	949
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mike Briscoe
Principal	Richard Gummery
Website	www.ercallwood.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Ercall Wood Academy converted to become an academy school in July 2018. When its predecessor school, Ercall Wood Technology College, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to require improvement.
- The school is a member of the Learning Community Trust.
- The school uses part-time alternative provision at 7 local providers. This provision is part of a service commissioned from Telford and Wrekin Local Authority.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors focused on the following subjects: mathematics, German, geography and science. Inspectors examined leaders' plans, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and talked with pupils about the way these subjects are taught. They also looked at other subjects, including English, drama and business studies, to check how they are planned and taught.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents. These included information about behaviour, attendance, the school curriculum and improvement planning. The school's website was also checked.
- Inspectors talked to staff and leaders about safeguarding arrangements. They examined how leaders make employment checks on staff and scrutinised further safeguarding records. They also asked how incidents reported by pupils are recorded and analysed.
- Inspectors observed informal times of the day to evaluate safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors held meetings with trustees and governors, the principal, senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers and pupils. They also talked informally to pupils and staff to gather general information about school life.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, and free-text comments. Inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's staff survey and pupil survey.

Inspection team

Lois Kelly, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Helen Reeves	Ofsted Inspector
Nicola Walters	Ofsted Inspector
Steve Byatt	Ofsted Inspector

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