

# Inspection of The Sir Robert Woodard Academy

Upper Boundstone Lane, Sompting, West Sussex BN15 9QZ

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Inspection dates: 19 and 20 October 2021

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Sixth-form provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Requires improvement

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

The culture at this school is summed up by its motto, 'Aspire to Achieve'. From Year 7 through to the sixth form, pupils learn to think ambitiously about their futures. They are proud of their achievements and eager to meet their teachers' high expectations of them.

The school is a calm and orderly place for pupils to learn. Pupils treat each other with respect in lessons and during social times. Pupils feel safe at school and know who to go to if they have a problem. They trust their teachers because they are confident that they will receive support and guidance when they need it. This includes effective responses to any bullying.

Pupils, parents and carers feel proud of their school. They recognise that it is a place where teachers care about each pupil. One parent told us: 'I feel the teachers really know my daughter as an individual and teach her accordingly. We are really impressed with the school, the ethos and the staff.'

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

Leaders are determined that pupils receive a good education. They have created a broad curriculum to build pupils' knowledge from Year 7 through to Year 13. Careful thought has been given to what pupils should learn and in what order. As a result, they work with increasing levels of confidence and independence. They enjoy frequent opportunities to apply what they have learned to challenging questions, particularly in the sixth form.

Leaders and teachers have identified that some older pupils have gaps in their learning. There is a clear and consistent approach to recapping on prior knowledge which is effective for the vast majority of pupils. However, teachers do not always check whether this has been successful before moving on with the lesson.

Pupils find the teaching of key vocabulary useful when learning new ideas and expressing what they have learned in writing. Leaders have ensured there is a strong emphasis on this across the curriculum, including in the sixth form. This is benefiting all pupils, but particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Support for pupils with SEND is effective because pupils' needs have been accurately identified. Teachers understand these needs and the strategies that will help pupils to learn. Teaching assistants are well trained so they know how to support pupils. When pupils fall behind, effective strategies are used to help them catch up.

Reading is a priority in the school. Teachers use well-selected and challenging texts in different subjects. Reading for pleasure is promoted successfully through a range

of competitions and initiatives. Pupils who are struggling to read receive appropriate support to help them catch up.

Leaders have ensured that the school provides a rounded education where pupils develop personally as well as academically. Pupils are taught about the importance of listening to others. Some pupils are trained as mediators and work across year groups to provide support to one another. Pupils from Year 7 to sixth form enjoy a range of practical, sporting, creative and academic clubs. The arts are particularly valued in the school and participation in theatre, dance and musical events is high.

Pupils are inspired by a range of opportunities to learn about future careers. Alongside careers advice, there are visits to workplaces and universities as well as careers events involving local and national employers. Pupils' experience of careers education begins early but is particularly strong in the sixth form, where they receive increasingly tailored guidance.

Leaders have built on strengths in the school's pastoral system to create a purposeful culture where pupils focus on learning. The school's behaviour policy is well understood and applied by teachers. As a result, low-level disruption is rare. Behaviour incidents are dealt with quickly so that they do not become more serious. Leaders' actions have improved overall attendance. There has also been an improvement in the attendance of a small number of pupils who do not attend school regularly enough. Leaders recognise that there is still work to do to reduce these pupils' absence even further.

Trustees and executive leaders bring significant educational experience to the trust. Their effective challenge and advice support leaders to make quick and effective improvements. They understand the school's priorities and are well placed to identify the next steps in its development.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have been trained in how to identify safeguarding concerns. New staff are subject to the necessary pre-employment checks.

Leaders are aware of the biggest risks to pupils' well-being and safety. They track any emerging patterns so that they can act promptly to protect pupils. Where necessary, the school works effectively with external agencies to put in place support for pupils.

As part of their personal, social and health education, they learn about the risks they might face in the modern world and how to keep themselves safe.

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

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

- Sometimes, teachers move the learning on before all pupils have secured the prior knowledge they need. As a result, some pupils are then unable to access the next stage in learning well enough and get left behind. Teachers should use timely and systematic approaches to check that pupils are learning the curriculum as it is being taught.
- Despite leaders' work to improve attendance, rates of persistent absence are higher than they should be. Leaders should continue with their work to tackle this issue so that pupils attend school more regularly.

## 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	135744
<b>Local authority</b>	West Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10200873
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<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>	1296
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	92
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of Trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Patricia Pritchard
<b>Principal</b>	Kieran Scanlon
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.srwa.woodard.co.uk">www.srwa.woodard.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	15 July 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school uses three registered alternative providers and one unregistered alternative provider.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause. This means that pupils in Years 8 to 13 receive information about the full range of education and training options open to them. This includes opportunities for a range of education and training providers to speak to pupils about technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school has a designated Christian religious character.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this 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 school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors held meetings with a range of leaders, including the principal and members of the senior leadership team. They also met with subject leaders, pastoral leaders, the school's chaplain, teachers and a range of non-teaching staff.
- The lead inspector met with members of the academy council and Woodard Academies Trust, including members of the board of trustees, the chief executive officer and director of school improvement.
- Inspectors spoke to a wide range of pupils from each key stage.
- Inspectors took into account the views of parents submitted via Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, including a range of written comments.
- Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding by talking to leaders, including the designated safeguarding lead, and talking with staff. Inspectors also scrutinised the single central record, sampled case files and spoke to pupils, staff and those responsible for governance about this aspect of the school's work.
- Inspectors carried out six deep dives in the following subjects: English, mathematics, science, languages, history and design technology. This involved meetings with leaders, visits to lessons, discussions with pupils and teachers and looking at samples of pupils' work.

## Inspection team

Chris Ellison, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Alan Johnson	Ofsted Inspector
Catherine Old	Her Majesty's Inspector
Paul McKeown	Ofsted Inspector
Linda Culling	Her Majesty's Inspector

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