

Inspection of Wymondham College

Golf Links Road, Morley, Wymondham, Norfolk NR18 9SZ

Inspection dates: 10 and 12 October 2023

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Sixth-form provision	Outstanding
Overall experiences and progress of children and young people in the boarding provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The principal of this school is Zoe Fisher. This school is part of Sapientia Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Jonathan Taylor, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Peter Rout.

Ofsted has not previously inspected Wymondham College under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged Wymondham College to be outstanding before it opened as an academy.

What is it like to attend this school?

At Wymondham College there is a palpable sense of aspiration. Pupils from all backgrounds flourish. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) get excellent support. Pupils new to the school or sixth form immediately understand and engage with the ethos. Consequently, pupils achieve exceptionally well.

Pupils benefit from a high-quality curriculum. From the start of key stage 3, they rapidly build up what they know. Students in the sixth form go on to ambitious destinations. Pupils articulate a rich understanding of their subjects.

Expectations for behaviour are high and established throughout the school. Older pupils model responsible conduct for younger ones. Boarders and day pupils alike live and breathe the school's values of pride, passion and positivity. They show considerable enthusiasm for learning. Respect and kindness are embedded in the safe culture. In all year groups, pupils are courteous and confident.

There is a huge range of opportunities. Pupils enthuse about the quality of these. There are clubs for all, such as music, debating, martial arts and gardening. Pupils compete at high-level sporting events. They start and run many of the enrichment activities. Pupils espouse the multiple leadership positions and charity events. This helps them develop deep character strengths.

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

It is a long time since the educational side of the school was inspected by Ofsted. Since then, the school has maintained and developed the high quality of safeguarding and all aspects of provision. The trust and leaders have built on longstanding traditions and strengths. This has ensured pupils experience a superb quality of education.

The curriculum, including in the sixth form, is broad and very well planned. It identifies ambitious aims for what pupils should learn. For example, almost all pupils study demanding subjects, such as languages at GCSE. Subject leaders give close consideration to the order in which pupils will learn content. For instance, pupils conduct science experiments once they have the knowledge they need to do them successfully. Wider experiences seamlessly extend pupils' learning. The meticulously planned curriculum empowers pupils to develop detailed and richly connected knowledge. As a result, pupils achieve to an extremely high level. This is especially so regarding disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND.

The curriculum delivery is highly successful. Teachers have strong levels of expertise and subject knowledge. The school and the trust ensure they access top quality training to continue to hone their skills. Staff in the sixth form teach to a high academic level. Teachers plan activities that help pupils build up knowledge in their subjects. Leaders build up a thorough picture of pupils' SEND so these are identified

with the greatest possible accuracy. These pupils get skilful support to access and understand challenging learning. Pupils can apply their knowledge in different contexts and situations with considerable assurance. This means they produce work of an impressive standard.

Reading receives a high priority. The weakest readers get the help they need. Those who are fluent but still lack confidence get regular support. Teachers skilfully assist pupils to understand texts with difficult and novel terminology.

The school has developed a deep-rooted culture of positive behaviour. Staff teach pupils expectations relentlessly and expertly. As a result, pupils embody the school's high standards for conduct. They have high attendance as they do not want to miss out on what the school offers. Pupils do not disrupt lessons, because they wish to learn. The need for sanctions is rare. Where they are used, pupils rapidly learn to regulate themselves better. Behaviour is exemplary.

There is an extensive and highly effective programme for personal development. Pupils learn difficult content in a way they find meaningful and relevant. They value this learning and articulate mature views, such as about safeguarding and consent. Pupils are taught how to overcome problems. Those who face personal challenges are very appreciative of the strong support they get with their mental health. As a consequence, pupils develop into exceptional young people. They are ambassadors and advocates for the school.

Pupils from Year 7 to 13 receive a strong and coherent careers education. They are equipped to make informed choices, such as about apprenticeships. A high proportion of pupils progress to higher education, including many to the most selective universities.

Trustees support the school with considerable commitment and skill. They know the school very well. The trust has recently reviewed the structure of governance and put in place one that meets the needs of the school effectively. Where trustees need to challenge leaders' work, they do this rigorously. The checks on safeguarding are regular and robust.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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 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	136481
Social care unique reference number	SC055089
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10211904
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	1,442
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	440
Number of boarders on roll	564
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Peter Rout
Principal	Zoe Fisher
Website	www.wymondhamcollege.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Wymondham College became an academy in February 2011. It founded the Sapientia Education Trust on the same date. The predecessor school of the same name was judged Outstanding in November 2007.
- The principal was appointed on 1 September 2022.
- Wymondham is the largest mixed state boarding school in the country. Approximately 40% of the cohort are boarders. The day pupils live in the local area. Boarders often come from much further afield, including internationally. The most recent social care inspection judged boarding to be outstanding in May 2019.

- The school uses one unregistered alternative provider.
- 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.

Information about this inspection

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

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.
- This inspection was carried out at the same time as an inspection of the boarding provision.
- Inspectors met with the principal, staff and pupils. Inspectors met with the chief executive officer of the trust, and other trust leaders. As part of evaluating governance, the lead inspector met the chair of the trust, and other trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, history, design and technology, art and science. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, met with teachers, met with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects, particularly physical education, computing, religious education and modern foreign languages.
- As part of evaluating the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors met with leaders, governors, staff and pupils. Inspectors scrutinised the school's single central record of recruitment and vetting checks. They considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documents, including curriculum plans, school development plans, policies and documentation for behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors considered the 293 responses to the online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, and the 309 free-text comments submitted by parents during the inspection. They considered the 132 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff, and the 246 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for pupils.

Inspection team

Charlie Fordham, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Aron Whiles	Ofsted Inspector
Carol Dallas	Ofsted Inspector
Sally Garrett	Ofsted Inspector
Jason Howard	Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023