

# Inspection of a school judged outstanding for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Northwood School

Pinner Road, Northwood, Middlesex HA6 1QN

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Inspection dates:

8 and 9 October 2024

## Outcome

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

The headteacher of this school is Mehul Shah. This school is part of Partnership 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, Roger Leighton, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Marianne Barlow.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive here. They embrace their school values and are proud to be part of its strong and caring community. All staff have high expectations for pupils to succeed and grow in every aspect of school life. Staff work extremely hard to ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to fulfil their potential. This enables pupils to achieve highly at school as they strive to be the best they can be.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are polite and respectful. They are also caring and supportive of each other. They share the high expectations that leaders and staff have for them and appreciate their support.

Pupils feel safe here. If pupils have any concerns, they know who to speak to and are confident they will be listened to. On the rare occasions when bullying happens, staff deal with it swiftly and decisively.

Leaders ensure that all pupils benefit from a huge range of extra-curricular enrichment activities, careers guidance and trips. The majority of pupils take up these opportunities and this greatly enriches their personal development and experience of school life.

Through the Interact programme, pupils are responsible for organising whole school charity events throughout the year.

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

Leaders maintain high academic standards and pupils typically achieve extremely well. This includes those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and those who are disadvantaged. The curriculum also reaches far beyond the academic and pupils are encouraged to flourish in their personal development as well.

The school's curriculum provides pupils with the opportunity to study a broad range of subjects in depth. In the sixth form, the curriculum caters for a wide range of students' interests and potential career pathways. Throughout the school, staff are skilled in adapting learning to support pupils' individual needs, including pupils with SEND. Leaders are quick to identify the needs of pupils with SEND and to initiate support. Prompt and effective help is provided for pupils who are at the early stage of learning to read and any who have fallen behind. This enables those pupils to quickly gain the knowledge and skills they need to become confident, fluent readers.

Teachers are subject experts. This helps them to know what to teach and the best way to teach it. They are skilled in adapting teaching to support and challenge all pupils. This helps pupils connect their learning to what they already know. For example, in a Year 10 design and technology class, pupils were able to explain the stages for making types of wood-working joints. They evaluated the relative merits of each of these for their current project.

Teachers check pupils' learning routinely in lessons and are quick to address any misconceptions that pupils may have. Pupils are encouraged to remember essential subject knowledge. They use this knowledge to help them understand new concepts. For example, in Year 12 history, students used their understanding of social and economic problems in early 19th century Britain to explain the rise of Chartism.

Pupils' attitudes to learning are exemplary. Pupils are very well prepared for lessons and listen to their teachers, and each other, intently. Disruption to learning in lessons is minimal.

Leaders provide extensive opportunities for pupils' personal development. There is a wide range of activities on offer, which pupils fully engage with. Pupils relish the challenge of leadership responsibility. The school council, house system, prefects and the student-led health and well-being team offer these opportunities. In addition, Stonewall School Champions help celebrate diversity and inclusion in the school.

Leaders provide pupils with informative and well-planned careers guidance. A variety of speakers give talks on employment opportunities and apprenticeships. Students are well prepared for higher education and employment.

Staff, including those new to teaching, receive ongoing high-quality training. Staff feel valued and supported by leaders in managing their workload.

The governing body knows the school very well. It challenge leaders rigorously to ensure that decisions are always made in the best interests of pupils. The governing body carries out its responsibilities very thoroughly.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **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 outstanding 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding for overall effectiveness in October 2018.

## **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>	137829
<b>Local authority</b>	Hillingdon
<b>Inspection number</b>	10345935
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<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>	1,007
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	152
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The Board of Trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Marianne Barlow
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Roger Leighton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mehul Shah
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.northwoodschool.org.uk">www.northwoodschool.org.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	2 and 3 October 2018

## Information about this school

- The current headteacher has been in post since September 2023.
- The school joined the Partnership Learning Trust on 1 September 2024.
- The school uses two alternative providers.
- 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

- 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 concentrated on three focus areas during the inspection. In doing so they visited lessons in English, mathematics, science, humanities, art, and design and technology. Inspectors spoke to groups of subject leaders and teachers from the subjects above. They also spoke to pupils in their lessons, in these subjects. Inspectors also visited PSHE lessons and spoke to leaders about careers support and information and extra-curricular activities and enrichment
- The inspection team looked at records of pupils' attendance and behaviour
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, teaching staff, support staff, early career teachers and trainees. The lead inspector also met the chief executive officer of the Partnership Learning Trust and the Chair of the Board of Trustees and other governors
- 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 the 71 responses to the Ofsted Parent View, 525 responses to the pupil survey and 72 responses to the staff survey.

## Inspection team

Laurence King, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Rebecca Drysdale

Ofsted Inspector

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