

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Worthing High School

South Farm Road, Worthing, West Sussex BN14 7AR

Inspection dates:

4 and 5 March 2025

Outcome

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

The head of this school is Adrian Cook. This school is part of South Downs Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief education officer (CEO) and executive headteacher, Pan Panayiotou, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Richard Cohen. The executive headteacher is responsible for this school and one other.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Worthing High School are proud, positive and passionate about their education. They speak confidently about their school and benefit from the strong relationships that contribute to its positive ethos. Pupils get strong support from their teachers and receive valuable feedback on their progress. They appreciate the many opportunities to take on leadership roles in areas such as inclusion, charity work, literacy and sports.

The school has exceptionally high expectations for pupils' behaviour. It ensures that they feel safe, happy and supported. Pupils know they can turn to a trusted adult if they have any concerns. The rare instances of bullying are taken seriously and dealt with swiftly. The school actively encourages pupils to become caring and active citizens in the school and the wider community.

Pupils are fluent and enthusiastic readers. Reading is highly valued at the school, with pupils developing strong literacy skills that support their learning. Pupils enjoy their learning and value the academic lessons as well as sessions on mental health and neurodiversity. They are well informed about equality, sexism and misogyny. A broad range of extra-curricular opportunities, including sports, creative arts and social activities, enhances their experience. Many pupils also take part in trips abroad.

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

The school has put in place a curriculum that is carefully planned and sequenced to ensure balance and breadth. Content is engaging and personalised, and it frequently extends beyond the national curriculum. The curriculum for each subject area is suitably ambitious, with activities set out thoughtfully to help pupils learn more and remember more.

Disadvantaged pupils and those with special needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Their progress is in line with national averages, but they still do not achieve as well as their peers. The school is working hard to address this gap, but the attendance of these pupils means that they often miss too much important learning.

The specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND provides high-quality support for pupils, with education, health and care plans allowing them to develop their confidence and independence. A small number of pupils access entry-level qualifications, which has helped them approach GCSEs with greater self-assurance.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge and effectively adapt their teaching strategies to meet pupils' individual needs. Teachers structure new learning well, which ensures clarity and structure. Staff enjoy positive relationships with pupils, fostering an environment where pupils can thrive.

Reading is a strength, and pupils recognise its importance for their overall success. Pupils at an early stage of reading are well supported to quickly gain the knowledge and skills they need to become confident and fluent readers. Pupils' written work showcases their literacy skills, including the use of subject-specific vocabulary.

Through the personal development programme, the school promotes fundamental British values and the diversity of religious beliefs effectively. Pupils also learn about topics such as social media, scams and sexual exploitation in an age-appropriate way. The school reinforces this content through assemblies, tutorials and themed days.

Attendance remains an area for improvement and persistent absenteeism, especially among disadvantaged pupils, remains a challenge. The school is taking action and attendance is improving year on year. However, the school recognises that further work is needed to sustain improvements.

The school provides appropriate careers education. This raises aspirations and equips pupils with essential skills for future success. Staff successfully embed careers discussions within subjects. The school ensures that pupils who need bespoke careers guidance get the right support with this.

All staff are aware of the school's priorities for improvement. These priorities are supported through well-focused professional development and are checked by leaders through meetings, learning walks and feedback. Trustees and governors hold leaders accountable and maintain a secure understanding of school operations.

Staff well-being and workload management remain a priority. Well-being initiatives, such as the staff forum, provide a useful platform for open discussion and support. Collaborative support systems help to distribute workload effectively. Staff feel extremely proud to be part of the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils, do not attend school as often as they should. Consequently, these pupils miss important learning and do not achieve as well as they could. The school should maintain a rigorous oversight of attendance to ensure that the strategies for improved attendance are embedded fully.

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 good 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in March 2020.

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	139109
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10379868
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,062
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Richard Cohen
CEO of the trust	Pan Panayiotou
Head of School	Adrian Cook
Website	www.worthinghigh.net
Dates of previous inspection	10 and 11 March 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Worthing High School is part of the South Downs Education Trust.
- The school currently uses one registered and three unregistered alternative providers.
- The school has specially resourced provision on site for 18 pupils with significant social communication needs. Places are allocated in consultation with the local authority.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information 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 visited a sample of lessons, talked with groups of staff, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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 reviewed the policies provided on the school website. They looked at attendance records, behaviour logs and curriculum documentation. Inspectors met with leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector met with trustees and local governors.
- Inspectors looked at the responses to the Ofsted Parent View online questionnaire and additional written comments received from parents and carers. They considered the survey returns completed by staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Paul Metcalf, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Christie Ransom

Ofsted Inspector

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