

Seahaven Academy

Southdown Road, Newhaven, East Sussex BN9 9JL

Inspection dates

9–10 November 2016

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The principal provides dynamic leadership focused on rapid and sustainable improvement. With senior leaders, she has created a culture of high expectations, which has transformed the school.
- The principal, senior leaders and governors are highly ambitious for the school. They have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and work effectively to ensure that all pupils achieve more highly.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. They are supportive and understanding of each other's similarities and differences. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils across the school make good and improving progress. Consistent and effective monitoring by school leaders ensures that teaching and behaviour are good.
- Leaders' close monitoring and work with individuals have ensured that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. The progress of disadvantaged pupils has improved rapidly.
- Leaders' work to improve the quality of teaching and learning has increased pupils' engagement and improved their progress.
- Pupils know how to improve their work because teachers use assessment and feedback procedures consistently.
- Teachers' hard work to improve literacy and numeracy skills is helping pupils to make good progress.
- Pupils are well looked after because pupils' welfare and safety are a high priority for leaders and teachers. Parents and pupils appreciate this. Leaders make good use of support from external agencies to help those who are struggling.
- Leaders and teachers value the support and challenge from the United Learning group, which has helped the school to improve.
- Most-able pupils and disadvantaged pupils do not make good enough progress.
- Exclusions have dropped significantly. Pupils' attendance has improved, sometimes dramatically. Some pupils, however, still do not attend regularly, especially a number of disadvantaged pupils.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve rates of pupils' progress so that:
 - differences are further diminished between the performance of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally
 - the most able pupils are provided with regular challenge to ensure consistent high achievement.
- Embed leaders' work to improve pupils' attendance, especially for disadvantaged pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The principal has taken robust and effective action to raise aspirations and expectations for all. Pupils and staff are clear that the school has improved rapidly since she became principal in 2014, and that the principal and senior leaders exemplify the academy ethos 'be ambitious, be determined, be the best!'
- Leaders have transformed the school culture, creating a vibrant yet calm environment to which pupils and staff are proud to belong. Senior leaders and governors know their school very well. Their evaluations of every area of its work are accurate. Sharply focused improvement planning and valued support from the United Learning group have led to rapid and sustainable improvements in behaviour, teaching and outcomes for pupils.
- Leaders have the capacity to lead change highly effectively. The introduction of a new behaviour management policy which highlights 'disruption-free learning' has improved pupils' behaviour and consequently their achievement in lessons. Exclusion rates have reduced as a result of changes in procedures and improved support available for pupils at risk of exclusion. Work to improve attendance has been slower to show an impact; however, recent improvements mean attendance overall is currently close to national averages. Leaders and governors know there is more work to do in this area and have set it as their highest priority.
- Senior leaders have ensured that staff training focuses on sharing what works best for pupils at Seahaven Academy. With middle leaders they have implemented new systems to monitor the quality of teaching and know individual teachers' strengths and areas for development well. Training is effective and linked to school priorities such as improving literacy and developing pupils' confidence. As a result, teaching is securely good, particularly in subjects such as English, physical education and drama.
- Leaders manage staff performance well. Staff who need it are given additional help to improve. Middle leaders value highly the support and challenge leaders bring to their work. Staff are enthusiastic and committed to improving the life chances of pupils. There are high levels of staff morale and trust in the leadership.
- The leadership of special educational needs and the variety of support available for vulnerable pupils is particularly effective. The special educational needs coordinator's work to ensure that all staff know how to meet the needs of these pupils has ensured that they are achieving well across the school. One parent commented, 'The support my son received academically and pastorally from the learning support team and all staff made it possible for him to move onto a level 3 course at college and I can't thank them enough.'
- School leaders use additional funding for Year 7 pupils who need to improve their literacy and numeracy skills highly effectively. Extra support is allowing these pupils to catch up and access the curriculum more successfully. One Year 8 pupil who has had help to improve her reading proudly commented that she 'wouldn't have been able to read this book a year ago'.
- The school uses pupil premium funding well. As a result, disadvantaged pupils have

made improved progress. A variety of strategies used to accelerate progress is helping disadvantaged pupils currently in school make good progress, particularly in English. Leaders have prioritised this aspect of the school's work, aiming to raise disadvantaged pupils' achievement further so that they achieve as well as other pupils nationally.

- The curriculum has been thoughtfully planned to meet the needs of pupils effectively, ensuring that they make progress in a broad range of subjects. Leaders have created an ethos of supporting others and that 'it is okay to make mistakes as long as you learn from them', which is helping pupils to achieve more highly. Some pupils attend community-based programmes, such as 'Albion in the community', which is run by a local football club to raise aspirations and support pupils to achieve well. Information, advice and guidance are tailored carefully so that pupils are well prepared for their next phase of education or training and for life in modern Britain.
- The school's spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision is strong. Pupils are supportive of each other and respect each other's differences. They value particularly personal, social and health education lessons where, in one pupil's words, they 'learn the proper stuff about life.'
- Pupils and parents appreciate the variety of extra-curricular activities run by the school, including the additional clubs and courses which challenge further the most able pupils. They particularly value the many sporting and performing arts clubs teachers run. Many pupils take advantage of early-morning and after-school homework help, and attend trips to places of interest such as the world war one battlefields. One parent said, 'I cannot praise the school enough for the increase in confidence of my son' as a result of attending school clubs.

Governance of the school

- Governance is very strong. The local governing body has a deep and accurate knowledge about the school and the local community. Consequently, together with the United Learning group, they support and challenge leaders effectively in their work to improve standards.
- Governors hold a wide range of skills, which helps them to hold school leaders to account and ensure that school priorities are appropriate. The governing body has challenged leaders to improve behaviour, the quality of teaching and achievement of pupils successfully. Rightly, governors have set their current priorities of improving attendance and improving performance of disadvantaged pupils further.
- Governors review effectively the impact of the school's spending on the progress of pupils eligible for additional funding. The chair of governors' keen interest in improving literacy and numeracy skills is ensuring that pupils who need to catch up get appropriate support. A specialist governor supports school leaders in their work to support vulnerable pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities so that these pupils are well looked after and achieve well. Governors ensure that leaders evaluate the impact of the pupil premium so that it is spent efficiently. Consequently these pupils have made improved progress.
- Governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements and are effective.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. A culture of care and support pervades the school. Pupils are safe and well looked after. A large majority of parents say their child feels safe at school.
- School leaders and governors have been proactive in promoting safeguarding among staff and pupils. Regular training and briefing updates ensure that staff understand their responsibilities and are vigilant in all aspects of safeguarding. Pupils know who to talk to if they have any concerns.
- Safeguarding procedures are secure and accurate records are kept. Leaders and governors ensure that people working in the school are checked appropriately. Leaders liaise well with external agencies if there are any safeguarding concerns about pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good and improving. As a result, pupils achieve more highly than they did in the past. Teachers' clear expectations for behaviour and good subject knowledge help pupils learn effectively.
- Pupils take pride in their work. This is reflected in their books, which are well presented, and in the respectful attitudes shown to each other in lessons.
- Teaching is especially effective in English and in the performing arts. In a drama lesson, for example, the teacher guided pupils skilfully to offer each other insightful feedback which helped them to improve their performances in a highly constructive way.
- Pupils and staff work increasingly well together in almost all lessons. In the vast majority of lessons there are strong relationships between staff and pupils, which pupils say have improved over the last three years. Teachers know the differing needs of pupils and give them extra support to enable them to succeed. Teaching assistants work effectively to help those with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well in lessons.
- Teachers work effectively across the curriculum to support pupils who need to catch up with literacy and numeracy. Pupils' literacy skills are improving as a result of the school-wide focus on reading. Pupils told inspectors they like reading books recommended by their teachers because it helps them understand the subject more. In science and geography lessons, inspectors saw pupils using techniques learned in mathematics to ensure that graphs and tables were accurate.
- Teachers use assessment well to plan learning that engages and challenges pupils, based on a thorough understanding of what pupils already know and can do. Pupils like the new assessments because they highlight clearly what they need to learn and where there are any gaps in their knowledge, which teachers then help them to address.
- Pupils know what to do to improve their work because of the consistent use of high-quality verbal and written feedback, which is targeted specifically on the particular needs of the individual. Pupils with low starting points and who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are especially well supported in this way. The

most able pupils, however, are not challenged as effectively to achieve greater progress.

- Homework is used consistently to check and extend learning and to instil good reading habits. Parents and pupils appreciate the extra-curricular support offered by teachers to help them achieve well.
- Teaching in geography and history has been less effective in the past, but recent improvements are now enabling pupils to achieve more highly.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Teachers and pastoral leaders have created a calm, vibrant community where the vast majority of pupils are respectful of each other's views and opinions. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are particularly well cared for by the learning support team. The school works closely with other agencies and with parents to ensure that pupils who have difficulties are well supported.
- Many pupils join the school lacking confidence in their ability to achieve. Leaders and teachers have created a nurturing culture where pupils' confidence has improved and they are not afraid to make mistakes. For example, in mathematics pupils were eager to show their answers to problems on the board, and helped each other to find where they needed to correct errors.
- Pupils take on responsibilities enthusiastically and enjoy contributing to school life. School leaders listen to prefects who represent pupils' views. As a result, teachers have offered Year 11 pupils additional teaching after school as a direct response to a pupil request. One parent commented that 'staff work hard to help all to achieve their full potential'.
- Pupils told inspectors they feel safe in school and online and know who to turn to if they have a concern. School records show that the use of derogatory or racist language is rare and reducing. A small minority of parents who responded to the online Ofsted questionnaires were concerned about bullying. Pupils agreed that a very small number of pupils could say upsetting things, but that this was rare and was dealt with swiftly by teachers.
- The small number of pupils who attend alternative provision are well cared for, with regular updates provided on the progress and welfare of these pupils.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good and improving. Pupils take pride in their work and in their school. Morning roll call, where pupils listen to important messages and teachers check that pupils are ready to learn, helps to set expectations of good behaviour. Inspectors saw high levels of support by pupils for each other in lessons, with pupils helping each other to achieve. In an assembly about remembrance, pupils listened with dignity and respect as the names of local casualties of war were read out.

- Leaders' and teachers' implementation of the new behaviour policy has had a substantial impact on improving pupil behaviour in lessons and across the school. Pupils understand how to behave and know that if they do not there will be swift and appropriate consequences. One pupil told inspectors she was achieving more highly because she and others were behaving better in class. However, in the very rare occasions when teaching is weaker, expectations and behaviour slip.
- Far fewer pupils are excluded from school as a result of poor behaviour than have been in the past. This is as a result of leaders' good work to help pupils who need it to understand how to behave appropriately.
- Attendance has recently improved to be close to national averages, as a result of leaders' prioritising this area for improvement. They work effectively with parents and pupils by highlighting the link between attendance, and achieving well at school and in later life. One pupil told inspectors she was more confident in her learning and doing better at school 'probably because I'm here more'. Leaders know there is more to do to sustain improvements in attendance, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' achievement is good and improving across a wide range of subjects, particularly in English, performing arts and physical education. While the first set of results of the new academy in 2015 were below government floor targets, early indications in 2016 show that pupils' attainment and progress at key stage 4 have improved rapidly and pupils now make more progress than the national average.
- Pupils join the school with attainment well below the national average and with particularly low levels of literacy and numeracy. Leaders' concerted efforts to address these gaps is now starting to show an impact and, as a consequence, pupils currently in school are making good progress and achieving more highly than previously.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils making good progress across a broad range of subjects is improving rapidly, particularly in English. This is as a result of a sharp focus by leaders on improving teaching, assessment and interventions for this group. Teachers know the individual needs of current pupils and additional teaching targets gaps in pupils' knowledge well. While disadvantaged pupils do not yet achieve in line with others nationally, the differences are diminishing rapidly.
- Pupils with low and middle starting points make good progress as a result of good teaching and targeted support. Key stage 4 results show that the most able pupils make less progress than other pupils nationally. The school is aware of this and has taken action to improve teaching and support for this group. This is starting to have an impact for current pupils; for example, in mathematics the most able disadvantaged pupils are achieving more highly because of additional focused teaching and improved feedback which helps them know what to do to improve.
- Pupils in history and geography have not achieved as highly as in other subjects. Leaders have acted swiftly so pupils are now making more progress in these subjects than they did last year. Similarly, in science, increased focus on literacy and numeracy is allowing girls to make more progress than previously.

- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. Teachers and teaching assistants provide good-quality teaching and support for these pupils, as a result of increased focus by leaders to ensure that teachers know how to meet the individual needs of all pupils.
- Pastoral leaders work closely with their colleagues so that there are effective systems in place to ensure that pupils who attend alternative provision achieve well.
- Pupils are increasingly well prepared for their next stages of education and training, because they are achieving more highly and receive quality information, advice and guidance about future careers. School information shows all pupils continued on to further education, training or employment when they leave school.

School details

Unique reference number	140679
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10024492

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	515
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Andrew Stephenson
Principal	Sarah Pringle
Telephone number	01273 517601
Website	www.seahavenacademy.org.uk/
Email address	office@seahavenacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- Seahaven Academy is a small secondary school serving the town of Newhaven.
- The school converted to be an academy in 2014. It is part of the United Learning group.
- The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and of those learning English is well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is above the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who have support for special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average and the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is well above the national average. The largest level of need is for social, emotional and mental health needs.
- In 2015 the school did not meet the government floor standards, which set out the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A small number of pupils attend an alternative provision at the Personalised Learning Foundation.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 27 lessons across a range of year groups and subjects. Some lessons were jointly observed with senior leaders.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, other staff, governors, a representative from the academy trust and pupils. Inspectors took account of 28 responses to the confidential questionnaires received from staff. They also telephoned leaders of alternative provision.
- Inspectors evaluated key documents, including the school’s strategic planning documents, external reviews, minutes of meetings, reports of attendance and behaviour, and records related to pupils’ safety and academic progress.
- Inspectors looked at a range of pupils’ work, and observed pupils’ behaviour in lessons, around the school and during breaktime.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents, taking into account the 78 responses to the online Ofsted parent questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors also considered the 59 free text responses. Responses to the online questionnaire completed by 64 pupils were also taken into account.

Inspection team

Catherine Old, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Peter Fry	Ofsted Inspector
Christopher Doherty	Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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