

Westwood Academy

Beresford Close, Hadleigh, Benfleet, Essex SS7 2SU

Inspection dates

30 November–1 December 2017

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| Overall effectiveness | Outstanding |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Outstanding |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Outstanding |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Outstanding |
| Outcomes for pupils | Outstanding |
| Early years provision | Outstanding |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Good |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The leadership of the school is exceptionally strong. The headteacher and deputy headteacher, ably supported by subject leaders, successfully drive a shared ambition for all pupils to be the best they can be.
- Leaders instil confidence in all staff. There is a learning culture within the school that ensures that all staff have the skills and knowledge they need to make sure that all pupils thrive.
- Governance is highly effective. Directors support and challenge the headteacher and executive headteacher effectively, and make a valuable contribution to the continuing development of the school.
- The proportion of children who achieve a good level of development at the end of the early years is consistently above the national average. The children make excellent progress from their starting points.
- In 2017, every pupil in Year 1 reached the standard in the phonics screening check.
- More pupils reach and exceed the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stages 1 and 2 than is seen nationally. This high achievement has been sustained over time and represents significant progress.
- High-quality professional development ensures that teaching across the school is consistently strong. Accurate assessment enables teachers to plan effective and interesting lessons. Precise guidance helps pupils to improve continuously.
- Teachers and support staff know pupils very well. They demonstrate excellent subject knowledge and ask insightful questions to engage pupils in discussion and ensure that they understand.
- The curriculum provides pupils with broad and enriching experiences. Exciting themes capture pupils' interest and enthusiasm, and ensure that they make good progress across all subjects.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary in lessons and around the school.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They know that their children are happy, safe, well cared for and achieve highly. They value the effective support that the school provides for their children.
- Leaders have a highly accurate understanding of the school's effectiveness. Their plans to develop the school further are precise and informed. They recognise that the library area needs further development and that pupils will benefit from more equipment to use during lunch and playtimes.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Implement existing plans to improve:
 - the library provision
 - opportunities for pupils' personal and physical development by providing more, high-quality, equipment for pupils to use during play and lunchtimes.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher is uncompromising in his commitment to promoting the trust's values and ensuring that all pupils achieve as well as they can. He is very ably supported by the deputy headteacher and other leaders. All staff share these high expectations of what pupils can achieve. The success of each and every pupil is at the heart of all the school does.
- Leaders within the school and the trust have established highly effective systems and structures to ensure that pupils thrive both academically and socially. Leadership capacity is very strong at all levels.
- The monitoring of all aspects of school life is incisive, thorough and constantly drives improvements. Areas identified for current development include improving the library to enhance pupils' learning, and improving resources to support pupils' play at breaktimes.
- All staff benefit from high-quality training and support, which ensures that their work is of the highest quality and that their own career plans are well supported. A 'leadership academy' has been established to develop leadership across the four schools in the trust. Several staff, including the headteacher, began their teaching careers at Westwood and have flourished as a result of excellent and innovative professional development opportunities within a culture of reciprocal learning provided through the trust.
- Leaders, including subject leaders and teachers, work well together to check pupils' progress. There is a detailed and accurate approach to assessment, which allows leaders to monitor precisely how well pupils are progressing in relation to their challenging targets and the expectations of the national curriculum. This information is used very effectively to ensure that any pupils who need it get the right support to prevent them from falling behind. Consequently, the progress of all groups is consistently strong across all subjects, including in English and mathematics.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used highly effectively and ensures that they make good progress and achieve well. Many older disadvantaged pupils achieve even better than other pupils nationally and some make exceptional progress. Pupils are well equipped for the next stage in their education.
- Innovative use of the additional funding for sport broadens pupils' access to a range of sporting activities and specialist teaching, which has also helped to upskill staff. Following pupil consultation, the school has refined the extensive range of opportunities it provides. These now include free clubs for ballet, cheerleading, short tennis, multi-skills and dodgeball. Last year, the school won the district sport competition for the first time.
- Provision for all pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is very well led and managed, including the allocation of the additional funding. The individual plans for the pupils are particularly effective in providing the right support.

- The curriculum offers an extensive range of learning experiences. Pupils make useful links between different areas of the curriculum, which consolidate their subject-specific skills. British values and the trust's values of collaboration, challenge, perseverance and innovation permeate the curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to take charge of their own learning. They enjoy choosing from, and challenging themselves with, the options that teachers provide for them within every lesson. Extra-curricular activities, clubs, visits and visitors to the school supplement and extend pupils' learning. During the inspection, Year 6 pupils were excitedly following up on the previous day's visit to Chelmsford Museum, as part of their learning about the blitz.
- This rich and varied curriculum leads to high academic achievement across all subjects as well as successfully developing pupils' personal and social skills. The importance of being a good, caring citizen is evident through the way that pupils engage and cooperate with each other. Pupils are very well prepared by the end of Year 6 for the next stage in their learning.
- Parents spoken to during the inspection and those who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, expressed overwhelming support for the school. They appreciate the wide-ranging opportunities given to their children and value the kindness, care and understanding shown by staff. A typical comment was: 'Westwood Academy is an amazing school. I am so happy my son attends this school. I love the community spirit and the fact that all teachers know all pupils. Mr Archer is a fantastic headteacher who is well liked by the children.'

Governance of the school

- The board of directors provide strong governance, and take full accountability and responsibility for the performance of the school. Directors are highly skilled and knowledgeable. They know how to analyse data on the performance of pupils. Visits to school help the directors to gain an incisive understanding of the school's priorities and progress towards these.
- The directors are extremely committed and take their roles and responsibilities very seriously. They ensure that finances are managed effectively, including checking on the effect on achievement of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils, physical education and sport.
- Meetings are strategically focused. Directors have evolved a highly systematic approach. Their monitoring is aligned to the core central plan for development. This ensures that they challenge and support leaders appropriately.
- Appropriate checks are made to ensure that statutory duties are met regarding safeguarding pupils and employment of staff. Directors have a strong commitment to ensure that pupils are safe.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a high level of vigilance across the school. Leaders ensure that all staff receive regular and up-to-date training on all aspects of safeguarding pupils. Careful records show when staff have undertaken training and when this is due for renewal. All newly appointed staff and volunteers receive a thorough induction so that they understand

their responsibilities for keeping children safe and know what to do if they have any concerns about pupils.

- Leaders are passionate about ensuring that children's needs are met and persistent in how they follow up any safeguarding concerns to ensure that timely action is taken. Clear and detailed records are kept of the actions taken to support vulnerable pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Consistently high-quality teaching is at the heart of the school's success in ensuring that pupils make outstanding progress and achieve very well. Teachers and teaching assistants have very high expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge. This, combined with highly accurate assessment, enables teachers to plan and deliver well-structured learning, which challenges all pupils appropriately, including the most- and least-able. As a result, the interest and engagement of all pupils is sustained.
- The teaching for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities enables good progress from their starting points. The 'One Plans' identify the pupils' individual needs and next steps accurately. The plans ensure that appropriate support and stimuli engage the pupils. The plans also help to build partnerships with home.
- Questioning is used by teachers and teaching assistants to check pupils' understanding and to challenge them further. They provide good opportunities for pupils to engage in discussion in pairs and groups. This helps pupils to develop their reasoning skills.
- Teachers provide pupils with different challenges, according to their ability. This encourages pupils to take responsibility for their own learning by deciding which challenge would suit them best. Teachers skilfully guide younger pupils to decide which challenge is most appropriate for them. Older pupils increasingly take responsibility for their own learning by deciding their own level of challenge.
- Classroom environments are highly stimulating and provide excellent support for pupils' learning. Displays, key questions, prompts and modelled examples help pupils to find answers and solve problems. They support the development of independence in learning very well.
- The teaching of reading across the school is very strong. Younger children make excellent progress with their early reading because of the systematic and rigorous approach to the teaching of phonics.
- Writing in topic work provides good opportunities for pupils to apply their writing skills and increases their experience of writing in different genres.
- In mathematics, pupils' books across the school show good evidence of the impact of the new approach to improving reasoning skills. Additionally, a high level of challenge is evident. Pupils are encouraged to talk through their methods of calculation with their peers so they can learn from one another. Pupils in Year 6 gave highly confident explanations about their work, showing that they had an in-depth understanding of the concept of ratio and proportion.
- Checks on pupils' progress are frequent and embedded into teachers' daily practice. Guidance to pupils on how they can improve their work is clear and helpful. Pupils read

and respond to teachers' comments, which is very effective in supporting pupils' learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- All staff share a strong commitment to supporting pupils' emotional well-being. Adults know all pupils very well. Staff are well trained to identify and report concerns of any kind, which are acted upon in a timely manner.
- Pupils are confident and articulate when talking about their work. The school has a focus on promoting the key skills of collaboration, challenge, perseverance and innovation. The habits of successful learning are embedded early. From the Nursery upwards, children develop independence and perseverance in their learning.
- Relationships across the school are excellent. Pupils appreciate the care and understanding that staff show them. Pupils learn to appreciate the different views and beliefs of their peers and are kind to each other. Consequently, the school is a very harmonious place in which to learn, where everyone is valued for who they are.
- Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations in school, at home and online. In every lesson involving the use of information technology, teachers remind pupils what they should and should not do when working online. Those spoken to showed a clear understanding of online safety. During the inspection, all classes received road safety sessions. The school provides e-safety advice for parents, including workshops, which give 'top tips' for ensuring that their children stay safe when working online.
- Pupils say they feel safe and parents agree with this. Bullying, including discriminatory bullying, is very rare. Pupils are adamant that any concerns that they raise are dealt with quickly and resolved effectively.
- The breakfast club provides pupils with a good start to the day and ensures that pupils are ready for learning.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils' conduct in lessons and around the school is never less than exemplary. Attitudes to learning are highly positive and make a strong contribution to pupils' outstanding learning and progress.
- Parents, pupils and staff are overwhelmingly happy with the standard of behaviour in the school. The school is successful in meeting the needs of the small number of pupils who have difficulty in managing their own behaviour. High-quality adult support and skilled interventions enable the pupils to succeed.
- Attendance is higher than the national average, reflecting pupils' enjoyment of attending school. No groups of pupils are disadvantaged by having low attendance. The school promotes the importance of attending regularly through its website and frequent newsletters. Any absences are assiduously tracked and the school works closely with parents who find it difficult to get their children to school on time.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Children start the school with the knowledge, skills and understanding that are below those typically seen. By the time they leave school at the end of Year 6, pupils are extremely well prepared for secondary school because of their high levels of achievement and their understanding of how to be successful learners. They achieve standards that are above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics as a result of the excellent progress they make in these subjects. This outstanding progress has been maintained over time.
- In 2017, the proportion of pupils who achieved both the expected and higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stages 1 and 2 was significantly above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who reach the standard in the Year 1 check of phonics knowledge and skills has remained consistently above the national average. Impressively, in 2017 all Year 1 pupils achieved the required standard. Pupils continue to enjoy and make progress in their reading throughout the school, becoming increasingly fluent. Pupils spoken to were excitedly looking forward to the completion of the relocation of the library.
- Evidence from book scrutiny and the school's internal tracking information about current pupils' progress indicates that outstanding achievement is being maintained across all classes in all subjects.
- Pupils apply their learning well and make connections between their learning. They practise and reinforce their skills in reading, writing and mathematics very well, so that they deepen their learning and understanding.
- The writing that pupils produce in all areas of the curriculum is of a high standard. Pupils apply their writing skills well, including writing in different genres. This is seen, for example, when they write reports on scientific experiments they have conducted.
- The progress that disadvantaged pupils make is at least as good as, and often better than, that of other pupils nationally. This is because the school meticulously monitors the progress of the pupils and identifies very precisely their individual needs. This means they receive exactly the right support to enable them to succeed.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points.
- The most able pupils make outstanding progress, in line with their peers, as a result of excellent teaching, which provides them with appropriately high levels of challenge.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Many children enter the school with starting points that are below those typically seen. Careful observations and analysis of assessment ensure that leaders swiftly identify any gaps in children's development. Effective adult support and provision are put in place to ensure that all children make the best possible progress. As a result, most achieve a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year and this proportion has been above the national average for three consecutive years.

- The early years is led very effectively and staff work as a cohesive team. Planning is precisely tailored to meet the needs of each individual child. There is a strong emphasis on developing children's use of speech, language and perseverance. Consequently, all children make rapid progress from their starting points, including those who are disadvantaged and those who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- The learning environment across the early years is highly stimulating both inside and out. Children benefit from a wide range of opportunities to explore and investigate. Skilled interventions from adults extend children's interests into learning. There are plentiful opportunities to develop children's skills in reading, writing and number. For example, children in the role play area were writing shopping lists. One had recognisably written 'sausages' and 'chicken nuggets'.
- Leaders have recently taken over the Nursery provision and relocated the Nursery alongside the Reception class in an effort to increase the number of children who enter the Reception Year working at typical levels. Children in both the Nursery and Reception areas showed sustained levels of concentration when engaged in self-initiated or staff-led activities.
- The school provides good opportunities for children in the Reception class to be prepared for the move to Year 1 in term three. Similarly, children from the school Nursery and other local nurseries have the opportunity to spend time in the Reception Class and for staff to get to know them and their individual needs. Children are more than ready to meet the increased demands of Year 1 at the end of the early years.
- The school meets the welfare requirements of the early years fully. Both indoor and outside environments are safe and secure. Parents are extremely positive about the provision their children experience. One commented: 'This school is outstanding! The progress that my child has made since he started Reception to present is astonishing.' Parents enjoy contributing to their children's learning journeys through the online system.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 137030 |
| Local authority | Essex |
| Inspection number | 10031549 |

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Academy converter |
| Age range of pupils | 2 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 244 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair | Mike Simmonds |
| Executive Headteacher | Simon Harbrow |
| Headteacher | John Archer |
| Telephone number | 01702 559467 |
| Website | www.westwoodacademy.org |
| Email address | admin@westwoodacademy.org |
| Date of previous inspection | 20–21 September 2012 |

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.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is lower than the national average.
- A large majority of pupils come from a White British background and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- The school meets the current government minimum floor standards for primary schools.
- Children in the early years attend full-time provision in the Reception class and part-time provision in the Nursery class.
- The school runs its own breakfast club and after-school provision.
- The school became an academy in September 2011 and is the lead school in the South Essex Academy Trust. The trust sponsors two other schools. Staff from Westwood Academy work closely with colleagues in the other schools.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching across the school in all classes. This included joint observations of learning with the headteacher and executive headteacher. Inspectors listened to pupils read and scrutinised work in pupils' books in all current classes. They also looked at work that pupils had completed during the previous academic year.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about their experiences of school, with some conversations taking place during play, lunchtimes and around the school.
- Discussions took place informally with parents when they were delivering their children to school. Inspectors took account of 71 responses to the Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 53 electronic comments.
- Meetings were held with three directors and senior and middle leaders.
- Inspectors also took account of 34 responses to the staff survey and 43 responses to the pupil survey.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised. The documentation included all aspects of safeguarding pupils, the school's information about pupils' progress, school development plans and self-evaluations. External reports were also considered.

Inspection team

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|----------------------------|------------------|
| Joan Beale, lead inspector | Ofsted Inspector |
| Annie Hookway | Ofsted Inspector |
| Simon Webb | 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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