

# Westhaven School

Ellesmere Road, Uphill, Weston-super-Mare, Somerset BS23 4UT

## Inspection dates

10–11 July 2018

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Leaders, including governors, have successfully tackled the school's areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection and have improved the quality of education and care that pupils receive.
- Self-evaluation is accurate. As a result, improvement plans are effective in driving forward school improvement.
- Senior leaders are ably supported by the wider staff team. Together, they show a passion and determination to provide pupils with the best learning experiences.
- Teaching is good. Teachers are highly skilled and passionate about their work. As a result, pupils make good progress and achieve well. However, teachers do not consistently challenge pupils, especially the most able, in order for them to achieve their full academic potential.
- There remains a small difference between boys and girls in the progress they make. Boys are not yet achieving as well as girls.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding that permeates the school. Pupils are kept safe and feel safe.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are impressive. This enable pupils to build high levels of trust with adults in a caring environment.
- Pupils receive high-quality careers guidance. This means that they are well prepared as they move into further education, training or employment.
- The wealth of information held by the school on the achievement of pupils is not yet sufficiently refined for the most important information to be used effectively to further improve pupils' progress.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils have a clear understanding of the school's high expectations of behaviour.
- Pupils talk with pride about their school. They enjoy all that the school has to offer. This is reflected in their regular attendance.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is not consistently secure in the teaching of phonics. This means that pupils do not have the skills to use their phonic knowledge in their work.
- Most parents speak positively about the school and welcome the care and the quality of education their children receive. However, they would welcome communication being improved and a few would like their children to be more academically challenged.
- Some pupils, especially in key stage 4, do not understand what they need to do to improve their learning.
- Leaders do not ensure that Year 7 catch-up funding is spent wisely.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by:
  - refining the information relating to pupils' achievement and progress to further increase its effectiveness in improving pupils' outcomes
  - diminishing the remaining difference between the performance of boys and girls
  - increasing the effectiveness of communication about the school's work with all stakeholders, particularly parents
  - ensuring that Year 7 catch-up funding is more wisely spent to further improve outcomes in reading and mathematics.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that pupils make strong progress in all years and subjects by making sure that teachers:
  - consistently provide the highest level of challenge to enable pupils to make even stronger progress, especially the most able
  - strengthen the systematic teaching of phonics across the school
  - consistently apply the school's assessment policy in order to provide pupils with guidance and support so that they know how to improve their work, especially in key stage 4.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Leaders, including governors, have tackled the school's areas for improvement, identified at the previous inspection, with gusto. They are ably supported by a driven and passionate team of staff. Together, they are united in their ambition and determination to ensure that pupils who attend Westhaven School receive a good standard of education and high-quality care.
- Leaders ensure that each pupil has access to a learning programme bespoke to their needs and carefully matched to their education, health and care plan. The school's approach, to ensure that it provides the correct balance of education, care and therapy, enables pupils to achieve well and make good progress.
- Leaders have clear procedures for checking the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. They hold teachers firmly to account for the quality of education they provide for pupils. Leaders do not accept underperformance. Indeed, staff told inspectors, 'Underperformance in teaching is not tolerated by leaders; however, they are quick to put in support.' Performance management is securely in place, which includes planned checks. This enables leaders to evaluate the difference that actions taken are having on improving pupils' outcomes.
- Pupils have access to a broad range of subjects, which strongly focus on developing key skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders have a clear purpose for their curriculum, which is well considered and implemented effectively. This ensures that it carefully meets the individual needs of pupils. For example, pupils in key stage 4 have the opportunity to study a range of courses alongside English, mathematics and science. Subjects studied include art, photography, land-based studies and creative media. Schemes of work for subjects ensure that there are regular opportunities for pupils to return to concepts taught to ensure that pupils' needs are well met.
- Pupils have the chance to engage in a wide range of enrichment activities in and out of school. Inspectors viewed the enjoyment and pleasure of pupils in a dance club. They relished the opportunity to demonstrate their routine, full of pride for their achievement. Trips, such as to Bristol Zoo and the Velodrome, are carefully linked to learning and also inspire and excite pupils. In addition, older pupils have the opportunity to undertake the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and have successfully achieved their bronze awards. Such opportunities raise pupils' confidence and increase self-esteem.
- The fundamental British values of respect, tolerance and rule of law are understood by pupils at an appropriate level for their age and stage of development. For example, older pupils have a good understanding of democracy, how laws are made and the importance of them being followed. This is because staff provide pupils with opportunities for discussion about current events in the news, such as Brexit, and how government makes decisions.
- The sport premium funding is used effectively. It is very well matched to stimulate pupils' love of sport and improve fitness. This was exemplified during the inspection. Pupils of all ages and abilities were excited about their sports day. Most participated

with enthusiasm and were eager to demonstrate their prowess in a range of challenges, including the obstacle and three-legged race. A parent described with pride how, as a result of the high-quality sports provision made available to pupils at the school, he was now able to play cricket with his son at home.

- Leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, the wealth of information relating to pupils' achievement and progress is not sufficiently refined to ensure that pupils make the very best progress of which they are capable, especially the most able. Leaders have the capacity to successfully make these further improvements.
- Leaders, including governors, ensure that additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils is put to good use. They carefully plan activities and purchase appropriate resources to meet pupils' needs. As a result, there is little difference in achievement between these pupils and their peers. However, Year 7 catch-up funding is not used as effectively to support pupils to develop their early skills in reading and the use of number.
- Many parents are very happy with the quality of education and care their children receive at Westhaven School. Comments such as 'staff are brilliant; they always go the extra mile', 'very dedicated staff' and 'we cannot praise Westhaven and all the staff there enough; it has been a life-changer' are just a few of the positive comments about the school. However, communication was raised as an area of concern by some parents. They comment that they are not always sure of the progress their children are making or given enough information at times of transition. A few parents comment that they would like to see their children pushed a little more with their academic work.

## **Governance of the school**

- The governance of the school has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Governors bring a high level of skill and expertise to support the school. They have a clear and accurate understanding of the school's work and share leaders' aspirations.
- Governors understand the wealth of information leaders present to them. They use this information effectively to inform school improvement plans. Governors challenge leaders and robustly hold them to account for the quality of education and care they provide. They gather their own evidence by undertaking a range of activities, which includes school visits.
- Governors closely monitor the finances of the school to ensure that the financial stability of the school continues. For example, they have a comprehensive understanding of how pupil premium funding is spent and the impact this has on improving the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. However, they have not checked the Year 7 catch-up funding with as much rigour. Consequently, this funding has not been utilised as well as it might.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There is a strong culture of safeguarding that permeates the school. There is a shared understanding by all staff and governors of the need to protect these vulnerable pupils from all potential risks.

Staff receive high-quality training and regular updates on keeping pupils safe. Controversial issues are not avoided. For example, staff have undertaken training on child sexual exploitation and the 'Prevent' duty. This means that staff are confident in the action to take should they have any concerns regarding the safety of a pupil.

- Staff, irrespective of their role, know the pupils and their individual needs extremely well. They monitor pupils carefully and are quick to respond if they notice any changes in pupils' behaviour or demeanour.
- Diligence is shown in staff recruitment and safeguarding. Records are detailed and of high quality.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Staff create a very positive atmosphere for learning through their passion and the caring relationships they share with pupils.
- Teachers show a strong desire to provide pupils with high-quality learning experiences carefully matched to their individual needs. Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy their time in school, which is clearly reflected in their regular attendance and the good progress they make from often low starting points.
- Teachers plan activities that excite and motivate pupils and capture their imagination. For example, in a key stage 2 class, pupils were learning about measurement by the making of 'mocktails'. They were carefully able to measure different juices and record the measurements. They were able to use mathematical vocabulary correctly and with confidence.
- Many of the pupils lack self-confidence. Teachers and teaching assistants are skilled in building pupils' independent learning skills, and encourage pupils to take risks and persevere. As a result, pupils achieve success academically and in their social development.
- Work across the curriculum has a strong focus on the development of pupils' skills in communication, reading, writing and mathematics. Typically, teachers plan tasks to carefully meet the needs of pupils. As a result, pupils make good progress. However, work viewed by inspectors show that pupils could make even stronger progress in the subjects they take, especially the most able pupils.
- Teachers do not consistently adhere to the school's marking and feedback policy, especially in key stage 4. Consequently, pupils do not receive the guidance they need in order to improve their learning.
- The teaching of phonics is not consistently strong across the school. This is because the subject knowledge of staff is too variable. This has an impact on the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make in their use of phonics to support reading.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.

- Staff are well trained to recognise signs of harm and abuse. They are vigilant and act quickly to deal with any concerns.
- Pupils welcome the routines put in place to support their learning and personal development. This is especially important to pupils who have autism spectrum disorder.
- Staff actively promote equality of opportunity well. Pupils are encouraged to participate in all the activities the school has to offer, irrespective of their gender or special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.
- Pupils enjoy school and this is reflected in their regular attendance, which remains above the national average. For the very few pupils who struggle to attend regularly, staff, including parent support advisers, work closely with families and other agencies to encourage the pupils into school.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are extremely well mannered, polite and respectful. Pupils who spoke to inspectors commented that, 'Staff respect us, so we respect them.'
- The school day starts calmly with smooth transitions from the time the pupils arrive in school. The daily morning welcome by staff to pupils on the playground supports a very positive start to the day. Inspectors heard a cheery response from pupils when asked, 'Are we ready to learn?' with a resounding, 'Yes we are.'
- During the inspection, pupils' behaviour in and around the school was impressive. The deep knowledge and understanding of the needs of each individual pupil known by staff enable them to quickly identify when a pupil is becoming anxious and agitated and needs time out. On such occasions, this is done thoughtfully and with minimal disruption to learning for other pupils.
- Pupils display positive attitudes to their learning, with good learning behaviours. When faced with challenges, they persevere and show resilience and fortitude. For example, pupils in a key stage 3 kinaesthetic mathematics lesson did not give up in a sharing activity. They supported each other in solving the challenge until its successful conclusion.
- Behaviour is monitored carefully to identify patterns and potential triggers. Individual plans are in place as appropriate to support pupils. De-escalation strategies are used effectively, which has resulted in a decrease in the number of physical interventions. Exclusions are used as a last resort and inspection evidence found that exclusions are rare.
- Breaks and lunchtimes are calm and sociable occasions. Staff and pupils eat together and enjoy each other's company. Adults provide positive role models for pupils, which helps them to develop positive social skills.
- Pupils told inspectors that bullying is extremely rare. They are confident that when there are squabbles and arguments, these are quickly sorted by staff.
- The behaviour policy is well known by staff and pupils. Leaders have high expectations of behaviour and expect the policy to be adhered to by all pupils. However, some staff shared a concern that occasionally the policy is not consistently implemented, which

can lead to some confusion.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Good

- Pupils' attainment on entry is typically well below that expected for their age because of their SEN and/or disabilities. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school's records, including assessments of pupils on entry to the school and work completed by pupils, validate that pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils develop their skills in communication, reading, writing and mathematics across a range of subjects. For example, key stage 2 pupils were able to successfully tell a story using puppets, understanding how voice can be used to portray different characters. In writing, learning targets are in place and staff support for pupils is directly linked to their targets.
- Pupils make good progress in developing their fluency of reading and in understanding what they have read. This was exemplified during the inspection when inspectors heard key stage 3 pupils read. They read with confidence and were clearly enjoying the books they had chosen. They were able to answer accurately the carefully selected questions posed by the adult to show their understanding of the text.
- Leaders provide pupils with high-quality impartial careers advice. This helps pupils to move into further education, employment or training when they leave the school. Work experience in Year 10 is carefully planned to meet the needs and aspirations of pupils. For example, pupils have the opportunity to gain experience in childcare, horticulture and veterinary practice. Aspirations for university are well supported, for example through visits to a local university. There are examples where previous pupils have been successful in gaining a degree in music, sport and computing. As a result, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
- Current pupils are making good progress. There is no discernible difference in the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. However, leaders recognise that there is more work to be done in order that pupils achieve their academic potential, especially for the most able. This is because, sometimes, teachers do not plan activities that sufficiently challenge pupils to make the strongest progress. Furthermore, leaders are resolute in their determination to ensure that there is no remaining difference between the progress boys make when compared to girls.

## School details

Unique reference number	109406
Local authority	North Somerset
Inspection number	10047981

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Foundation special
Age range of pupils	7 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	102
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Etchells
Headteacher	Tracy Towler
Telephone number	01934 632 171
Website	<a href="http://www.westhavenschool.org.uk">www.westhavenschool.org.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:reception@westhavenschool.org.uk">reception@westhavenschool.org.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Westhaven is a special school for pupils who have either moderate learning difficulties or, increasingly, needs on the autism spectrum. A number of pupils have additional medical or physical needs. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school offers flexible placements in partnership with mainstream schools.
- The percentage of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding is well above the national average.
- A very small number of pupils receive literacy and numeracy catch-up funding for Year 7.
- The school's extended provision includes a breakfast club and after-school clubs, which are managed by the school.



## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in classes, and most observations were conducted jointly with leaders. The quality of pupils' work was scrutinised.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, staff and governors. A meeting was held with an education adviser from the local authority. Inspectors took account of the 47 responses from staff questionnaires.
- Inspectors talked with a group of pupils to listen to their views about the school. The views of other pupils were gathered during lessons and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors heard pupils read.
- A wide range of documentation was examined, including the school's evaluation of its own performance, the school's improvement plan and information relating to pupils' achievement and progress. Records relating to safeguarding, attendance and behaviour were also checked.
- Inspectors considered the 26 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and 20 free-text messages were taken into account. Inspectors met with parents to listen to their views about the school. A telephone conversation took place with one parent.

## Inspection team

Jen Southall, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jen Edwards

Ofsted Inspector

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