

The FitzWimarc School

Hockley Road, Rayleigh, Essex SS6 8EB

Inspection dates

22–23 January 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- By the end of Year 11, most pupils make progress in line with the national average.
- In 2018, the proportion of pupils attaining a pass in English and mathematics remained above average, but the proportion of pupils attaining a good pass in both subjects declined.
- Not all teachers plan learning suited to the different abilities of pupils, particularly the most able. These pupils are not sufficiently challenged to achieve their very best.
- Work in some books shows that the expectations of pupils are not always high enough.
- Leaders have been unable to improve the progress made by disadvantaged pupils, which has remained below average for the past three years.
- Leaders' monitoring does not ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive the support they need to achieve well enough.
- The attendance and achievement of a small minority of pupils who are taught off-site are not monitored systematically.
- Leaders of subjects in which pupils underachieve do not contribute well enough to raising overall achievement.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have established a good sixth form. Students achieve well and most of them go on to study at university.
- School is a safe, stimulating and enjoyable place to be. Pupils are polite and respectful and conduct themselves well.
- Attendance is steadily rising. Fewer pupils are regularly absent from school.
- Safeguarding is effective. Procedures to keep pupils safe are robust and well maintained.
- A broad curriculum is enriched by a wide range of sporting, artistic and cultural activities, school trips and after-school clubs.
- Leaders have established good links with other local schools and the local authority.
- Parents and carers are very supportive. The school is oversubscribed.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Gain greater consistency in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - ensuring that teachers make full use of the assessment information they have to plan learning that is suited to the different abilities of pupils, including the most able, disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND
 - raising teachers' expectations of pupils and the quality of the work they produce.
- Raise overall achievement by:
 - systematically monitoring the progress made by pupils to ensure that – based on their above-average starting points – they make good progress
 - ensuring that leaders of subjects in which pupils underachieve contribute fully to securing further improvements to pupils' learning and progress
 - using the pupil premium far more effectively to improve the outcomes achieved by disadvantaged pupils
 - coordinating better provision and support for pupils with SEND
 - monitoring much more closely the attendance and progress of pupils educated off-site in alternative provision.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders evaluate the school as outstanding. Information about the school's overall performance in recent years and the findings of this inspection do not support this view. There are inconsistencies in teaching and the leadership of some subjects that lead to pupils not making the progress they are capable of, based on their starting points. Leaders' improvement plans do – in fact – show that they are aware of most of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- The actions of leaders to improve outcomes have ensured that pupils' above-average attainment has been maintained. They have had less success in securing improvements to pupils' progress. Leaders acknowledge that the most able pupils are not sufficiently challenged to build on their above-average starting points and go on to achieve higher grades in GCSE examinations.
- Leaders do not use fully the information gained from assessments and their monitoring to identify and articulate clearly the reasons why not all pupils make the progress expected of them. Links between the quality of teaching, subject leadership and the impact this has on pupils' progress in some departments are not clearly made.
- Good links with other schools and the local authority have provided leaders with a clear overview of what the school does well and what it needs to improve. Some action has been taken to address these issues. For example, overall attendance rates have improved. However, not enough has been done to tackle inconsistencies in provision and leadership.
- Leaders have made little impact on improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Spending plans and annual reviews do not express clearly what the barriers to learning are for these pupils or the full impact the school has had on enabling them to overcome these barriers. Leaders' recent actions to raise attendance and reduce the high rates of persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils are working. They acknowledge that more needs to be done in classrooms to enable these pupils to make better progress.
- The headteacher promotes a strong school ethos in which pupils are respectful towards staff, behave well and care for one another. He has overseen the development of a successful sixth form that staff, students and the local community are proud of.
- Recent changes in senior leadership have enabled the headteacher to develop new leaders and increase the school's capacity to improve further. Observations carried out jointly with senior leaders confirmed that they know what to look for. They shared accurately with inspectors what staff do well and what they could do to improve their teaching.
- The school provides pupils with a broad choice of GCSE subjects and a small range of vocational courses. Recent changes to the curriculum have increased the time allocated to GCSE study. The number of pupils entered for the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) has been low until recently. This year, the majority of pupils are now studying subjects included in the EBacc qualification.

- Most of the parents who responded to Ofsted’s online survey, Parent View, feel that the school is well led and would recommend the school to another parent.

Governance of the school

- The governing body includes a wide range of knowledge and experience, chaired by a national leader of governance.
- Governors feel that they are well informed by senior leaders. Their analysis has identified that ‘teaching to the middle’ limits the overall progress of pupils. They have challenged leaders to improve the quality of teaching. They feel that this is happening – slowly but surely – but more time is needed to establish this fully.
- Governors have monitored the use and impact of the pupil premium but spending plans in recent years have made little difference to improving the outcomes achieved by disadvantaged pupils.
- Governors do not monitor routinely how additional funding is used to enable pupils in Year 7 with low levels of literacy and numeracy to catch up.
- Governors have enlisted the support of the local authority to review the quality of provision for pupils with SEND and inform plans to determine how funding is used to improve the outcomes achieved by these pupils.
- Governors share the headteacher’s vision for the school. They have worked strategically to enhance facilities and establish post-16 provision.
- Overall, finances are managed effectively.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The single central record is complete and well maintained. Records show that all necessary checks are made when recruiting new staff to work with children.
- The designated leader – ably supported by a team of well-trained staff – oversees safeguarding well. Procedures to raise concerns are firmly established. Safeguarding matters and the actions taken to resolve them – and the monitoring of pupils’ safety – are recorded systematically.
- Links with local support agencies are well established. Communication with the local authority’s safeguarding team, social services and the police enables staff to maintain detailed records of the actions taken jointly to protect pupils from harm.
- Safeguarding training for staff – including the ‘Prevent’ duty – is up to date.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching is inconsistent. Strengths seen in some subjects are not replicated in others. This limits the progress made by pupils, particularly the most able.
- Regular assessments and testing provide teachers with information about how well each pupil is doing. However, not all teachers use this information to plan learning that

is suited to pupils' different abilities. At times, all pupils – including the most able and those with SEND – are given the same work to do. In some lessons, the most able are left unchallenged as they can cope easily with the work, but the less able struggle to complete tasks.

- Pupils behave themselves in lessons, even in the small minority of lessons where teaching fails to capture and maintain their interest. However, they become compliant and do not engage fully in learning. At times, questioning does not always probe pupils' understanding fully or encourage them to think hard about their learning and engage in discussion.
- The low expectations of some staff are clearly evident in pupils' books. In these lessons, pupils' work is often poorly presented. These teachers do not check that pupils take pride in their work. For example, they do not ensure that additional worksheets completed in lessons are stuck in to their books. The amount of work completed by pupils varies widely. Observations by inspectors revealed that disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND often produce much less work than others. This is left unchallenged by teachers.
- Routine monitoring by senior leaders and further training for staff are beginning to iron out some of these inconsistencies. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and their management of behaviour is consistent and based on strong relationships with pupils. Most teachers are confident in leading practical learning and in using interactive whiteboards to model what they want pupils to do. Information shared with inspectors by school leaders confirms that this is leading to recent improvements in pupils' progress.
- Basic skills in reading are taught well in key stage 3. Most pupils are confident readers. The least able readers show a firm grasp of phonics to help them decode difficult words. In mathematics, pupils demonstrate strong numeracy skills. In the small number of mathematics lessons visited by inspectors, they found that pupils' calculation skills were secure and regularly tested but noted few examples of reasoning and problem-solving in their books.
- Where teaching is most effective, teachers use their detailed subject knowledge and understanding of curriculum and examination requirements to plan learning that challenges pupils of different abilities. They encourage pupils to work by themselves for extended periods of time, without the support of teachers. Books show that they correct pupils' misconceptions regularly and provide them with good feedback about how to improve their work in line with the school's agreed procedures.
- Newly qualified teachers generally feel well supported. They value the support provided by their mentors and the training opportunities provided for them.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are polite and respectful, and wear their uniforms and kit for physical education lessons with pride.

- Prefects are great ambassadors for the school. They make a significant contribution to maintaining the orderly conduct of pupils at breaks and lunchtimes.
- Regular assemblies, skills-for-life studies in tutorials and a wide range of extra-curricular activities enrich pupils' lives and makes a good contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Participation in sport, the performing and visual arts and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award is high.
- Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school. They are taught about staying safe when using social media and about the risks attached to extremism and radicalisation.
- Careers guidance and advice are well established throughout both key stages. Pupils of all ages learn about the opportunities available to them, about the qualifications and personal requirements needed for future careers and about further learning at college or university. All pupils have a work experience placement in Year 11.
- Attendance has improved from below average last year to above average this year. Leaders can point to significant recent gains in raising attendance and reducing absence rates.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Throughout the inspection, pupils behaved well in lessons. Outside – at breaktimes and lunchtimes – behaviour was also good. Most pupils play games amicably together, gather in friendship groups and conduct themselves well in the dining hall.
- Pupils say that 'Discipline is strict, but it works.' They know the sanctions applied if they misbehave and respond positively to the rewards, such as house points and school trips.
- Pupils feel safe and free from all forms of bullying. Inspectors investigated this thoroughly. Pupils say that, when it does occur – mainly name-calling or pushing and shoving – they can go to any member of staff who will help them sort things out. They also said that homophobic language is seen as unacceptable by pupils.
- Leaders' records show that far fewer pupils are excluded from school compared to last year. The number of pupils removed from lessons and referred to the internal isolation room has also fallen this year.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Over the last three years, the progress made by pupils by the end of key stage 4 has remained in line with national averages.
- Leaders have identified that the most able pupils are not fully challenged to attain the higher grades in GCSE examinations. They recognise that teaching needs to be better planned so that this substantial and significant group of pupils are consistently challenged to achieve their very best. However, improvement plans do not identify what further actions are needed to ensure that all subject leaders contribute fully to raising achievement.
- Pupils – including the most able – usually attain better in mathematics than they do in

English. However, results in mathematics fell slightly in 2018. A higher-than-average proportion of Year 11 pupils attained a pass grade in English and in mathematics, but the proportion of most-able pupils attaining a good pass in both subjects declined.

- Information shared by leaders indicates that, currently, pupils are making improved progress. This information is based on tests carried out last term and the latest assessments by teachers. This positive picture of improved progress is not supported by inspectors' observations of pupils' learning in lessons or by scrutinising the work in their books. Inconsistencies in teachers' planning continue to lead to a lack of challenge for the most able pupils in a range of subjects. Key groups of pupils – particularly disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND – do not receive the support they need to enable them to progress well enough.
- Disadvantaged pupils have underachieved consistently in recent years. The pupil premium has not been used effectively to enable these pupils to achieve well. Until recently, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils has been too low, and this has contributed to their underachievement. Observations by inspectors confirmed that, currently, not enough is done in lessons to support these pupils with their personal organisation or in ensuring that they complete all of their work and engage fully in learning.
- Pupils with SEND do not make enough progress. Not all teaching is suitably planned to provide tasks that enable them to understand what they need to do and to remain engaged in learning. Teaching assistants are not always deployed effectively to enhance pupils' learning and progress. New policy and procedures to improve the outcomes achieved by pupils with SEND have not been implemented at this stage.
- The outcomes achieved by a very small number of pupils educated off-site in a range of alternative providers are unclear. Records of their achievements were not provided by senior leaders.
- Records maintained within school show that the vast majority of Year 11 pupils secure placements in further education, training or the workplace. A significant proportion of them progress into the school's sixth form.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- The new sixth form opened in 2016. In a short space of time, clear coherent leadership and the ambition to provide the community with its own post-16 provision have ensured its success. The sixth form is popular. Applications from Year 11 pupils within school and from schools in the surrounding area have steadily increased.
- In this – its first year of examinations – overall results achieved by students were good. Value-added measures show that students made good progress and attained well. The majority of Year 13 students went on to the university of their choice.
- Current assessment information shows that students' progress is broadly in line with that achieved in the same period last year. Most students in Year 13 are on track to achieve the ambitious targets set for them. The progress of students in Year 12 is not as strong, but leaders feel that this can be improved this year. Leaders' monitoring shows no significant difference in the current progress of disadvantaged students in the sixth form compared to others.

- Teaching is good. Inspectors observed some of the most effective teaching in the school in the sixth form. Teachers plan suitable learning for small groups of motivated learners. Relationships are good, enabling teachers to challenge and question students in depth and engage them in leading their own and others' learning. Regular assessments ensure that students' progress is monitored closely. Those at risk of underachieving are given extra support and are expected to complete regular personal study in the silent study room to help them to catch up.
- Students told inspectors that they are glad they made the right choice in selecting FitzWimarc for their studies. They say that there is a real sense of community and that it is easy to settle in because they know staff and the surroundings, and all of the staff are keen for them to do well.
- The curriculum provides a broad choice of subjects. Entry requirements are sufficiently high to ensure that students pursue appropriate individual study programmes. They begin Year 12 studying up to four A levels or a combination of A level and vocational awards. Students without pass grades in GCSE English or mathematics follow relevant courses to ensure that they gain essential skills in literacy and numeracy.
- Students' personal development, behaviour and welfare are good. Their enjoyment of learning is shown in their regular attendance. Good behaviour and positive attitudes are evident in lessons and in the sixth-form area. Good facilities are provided to enable students to study independently and under the supervision of staff. Students volunteer to listen to younger readers in key stage 3 read aloud, and work with primary-aged pupils in local schools.
- Suitable safeguarding arrangements are fully in place. Students feel safe in school. A pastoral programme includes regular lessons to raise awareness about sexual health and the risks attached to driving, substance misuse and knife crime. Careers guidance includes advice when applying for university and involves guest speakers and a work experience placement in Year 12.

School details

Unique reference number	141841
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10057800

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.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,588
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	150
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Guy Blakesley
Headteacher	Robert Harris
Telephone number	01268 743 884
Website	www.fitzwimarc.com
Email address	headteacher@fitzwimarc.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than average-sized school, serving the town of Rayleigh and its surrounding area.
- The large majority of pupils are White British. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is below average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below average. A higher-than-average proportion of pupils have an education, health and care plan.

- The school uses a range of alternative providers, including the Children’s Support Service, Basildon, Circles Farm, Kip McGrath and Southend YMCA.
- The school converted to an academy in 2015. At its last inspection in 2012, its predecessor school was judged to be outstanding.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 42 lessons. Most observations were carried out jointly with senior leaders to gain their views on the quality of teaching and pupils' current progress.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, two groups of pupils, three members of the governing body – including the chair – and one recently qualified and two newly qualified teachers.
- Inspectors observed the school's work. They looked at safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures, self-evaluation and improvement planning, minutes of governors' meetings, records of pupils' attendance and behaviour, monitoring of teaching records and other information provided by senior leaders.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' books in lessons. They also scrutinised pupils' work during four learning walks to observe the progress made by disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND.
- Inspectors considered 278 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Ofsted surveys of the views of staff and pupils were not used.
- This inspection was initially carried out under Ofsted's 'no formal designation' inspection arrangements due to the school having added a key stage of education (the sixth form). On the first day, the inspection converted to a section 5 inspection.

Inspection team

John Mitcheson, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Kathryn Herlock	Ofsted Inspector
Caroline Pardy	Ofsted Inspector
Peter Whear	Ofsted Inspector
Brenda Watson	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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