

Inspection of White House Academy

Marshfoot Lane, White House Academy, Hailsham, East Sussex BN27 2FB

Inspection dates: 17–18 September 2019

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

What is it like to attend this school?

The headteacher, senior leaders and STEP Academy Trust have transformed this school in the last two years. Pupils, staff, and parents and carers who were at the school before the trust took over all agree that it is much better now. Leaders have eradicated poor behaviour. The school is now a calm place where pupils come to learn. One pupil explained that teachers have, 'introduced discipline back into our school'.

Pupils are confident, polite and well mannered. Pupils greeted inspectors regularly throughout the inspection with a warm handshake. They are proud of their school. Pupils behave as well at free times as they do in classrooms. Just occasionally, pupils lose concentration in lessons, but teachers are alert to this and help them to re-focus.

Pupils trust staff to look after them, to listen to their worries and to step in quickly to stop any rare cases of bullying. This makes the school a happy, safe place for pupils.

Pupils know that their teachers expect them to work hard and do their best. Everyone at the school is determined that each pupil will be able to read fluently and use mathematics confidently. Pupils rise to these expectations, so they achieve well.

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

Senior leaders, staff and the trust are very ambitious for the school. Leaders have introduced a well-designed, well-taught curriculum so pupils learn well. Teachers plan sequences of lessons that enable pupils to build their knowledge and skills securely. This is true for all subjects in the curriculum. Staff receive thorough training. They have a detailed knowledge of the subjects they teach, and also how pupils learn. Several staff are undertaking postgraduate qualifications, such as Master's degrees.

Senior leaders place a very high value on good conduct. Teachers expect pupils to listen carefully and always to be ready to answer questions. Pupils are attentive and take learning seriously. Pupils have responded well to the many changes that senior leaders have brought in. Pupils try their best and do well. As a result, achievement is rising, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers intervene quickly with extra help and support if pupils with SEND start to struggle.

Reading sits at the heart of the school's work. Leaders make sure that teachers help all pupils to become fluent readers. From the first day that children start in Reception, they start to learn to read using phonics. Teachers are clear about what children will learn and when they will learn it. They check that children have understood before moving on. Any pupils who struggle receive help to catch up. The teaching of phonics continues throughout the school. Pupils become fluent,

confident readers.

Teachers use the same approach to learning in mathematics. They introduce new learning one idea at a time. Pupils have time to go back and practise their previous learning. Pupils remember number facts and recall them quickly, so they develop fluency and accuracy in mathematics. However, they do not have enough opportunities to apply their learning in real-life situations.

Teachers use an exciting range of books that open a window on the world, past and present. Pupils read simplified versions of classic texts such as 'The Iliad' and 'Macbeth'. These provide a springboard into learning across the curriculum. Teachers sequence lessons well, so that pupils build on previous learning. Teachers check regularly to make sure that pupils have remembered what has been taught. Pupils talked eagerly about heroes such as Achilles and Ajax that they had remembered from learning about the Trojan War last year

All staff are determined that pupils will develop strong character so that they will become good citizens. Older pupils are keen to join the school's parliament. Members are proud of what they achieved last year and look forward to doing more this year. The school has various clubs that pupils enjoy and that enrich their learning.

In early years, children learn well across all areas and grow in knowledge and skills. Staff find out what children know and can do before planning activities to help them take the next steps in their learning. Many more children reach a good level of development as a result of improvements in the curriculum since the academy trust took over. Children had only been in school for two days at the start of the inspection and had settled quickly. They respond well to the clear routines, and learn happily together, cooperating and sharing well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Everyone puts pupils' needs first. All policies and procedures are geared to making sure that pupils are safe. Record keeping is meticulous. Staff receive regular training and updates so all are well equipped to take care of pupils.

Senior leaders set a strong example for others to follow. They carry out regular checks on all aspects of the school's safeguarding arrangements. For example, they check first-aid records regularly, looking for patterns of repeated injuries. Leaders follow up any concerns carefully. Other staff follow their example and are quick to notice and report any worries about pupils' welfare.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils learn well in school and are making good progress through the curriculum. Outcomes are rising across the school. However, in recent years, too few pupils have achieved the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2. This is because of a legacy of weak teaching in the years before the trust took over. Leaders should ensure that the many improvements in the curriculum result in pupils achieving high outcomes across the school.
- The curriculum enables pupils to learn well in mathematics. Pupils develop accuracy and fluency in arithmetic. They have opportunities to solve word problems. However, pupils would benefit from more opportunities to apply their learning to solve real-life problems and to use mathematical reasoning.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	145015
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10111105
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	171
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Isabelle Dennigan
Executive headteacher	Tim Mills
Headteacher	Alun Evans
Website	www.whitehouse-academy.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school has been part of STEP Academy Trust since 2017, when it was re-brokered from another multi-academy trust. The predecessor school was last inspected in June 2013 and judged to be inadequate for the second time.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We met with the headteacher throughout the inspection. Our discussions included: leaders' evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for improvement; the design and implementation of the curriculum and how well it enables pupils to achieve; the behaviour of pupils; and rates of attendance at the school.
- I met with three representatives of the trust and spoke to one of the trustees on the telephone.
- We considered reading, mathematics, geography and physical education in some detail. We carried out linked activities to gather evidence about how well the curriculum enables pupils to gain knowledge and skills. These included

discussions and meetings with senior leaders and, where applicable, the leaders of each of these subjects. Meetings were held with the special educational needs coordinator and the leader of early years.

- We visited lessons in different year groups, including Reception. Senior leaders joined in these lesson visits. We also spoke to pupils and teachers from these lessons. Where possible, we looked at the work of these pupils. I also listened to several pupils read.
- Several documents were considered as part of the inspection. These included the records and analysis of behaviour incidents and the school's development plans. Inspectors took into account 20 responses to Ofsted's Parent View survey, together with nine written responses. There was one response to the staff survey and none to the pupil survey.
- We carried out a range of activities to understand how well pupils are kept safe in the school. I had a meeting with the headteacher and looked at records relating to various aspects of safeguarding. This included looking at the record of the checks carried out on people who work in the school. We spoke to pupils, parents and staff throughout the inspection to consider their views and understanding of safeguarding.

Inspection team

Bruce Waelend, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Lesley Corbett

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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