

Inspection of Ravens Academy

Nayland Drive, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex CO16 8TZ

Inspection dates: 15–16 October 2019

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Early years provision

Inadequate

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Ravens Academy is a caring school where leaders and staff work hard to develop good relationships with pupils. Pupils are polite and usually speak to each other and adults with respect and confidence. They understand the school's behaviour system, which they say is fair. The school gives rewards for good behaviour and the pupils like this.

Pupils know who to speak to if they are worried about something and say that they feel safe. Bullying is not tolerated and, if it ever happens, it is dealt with swiftly by the adults in school. Pupils are happy to talk about their feelings and are given opportunities to do this.

Pupils say that they enjoy learning and that behaviour in lessons is usually good. There are opportunities for pupils to develop their interests through clubs and after-school activities, such as racket sports, choir and messy arts. However, the quality of education is inadequate because the curriculum and teaching are not planned well enough. There are too many gaps in pupils' learning.

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

Leaders, including the governors and leaders from the Academy Transformation Trust, know that the quality of education is not good enough. The trust is working with the principal to try and make improvements but outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics have been poor for too long and there is little evidence of improvement. The trust recognises that, in the past, it has not challenged the school's leaders to bring about the required improvements in the quality of education.

In key stage 1, pupils' phonics skills are too low and the teaching of early reading is not good enough, which is the same as in Reception. Too many pupils struggle to read fluently. Teachers have no clear understanding of what sounds the pupils should know by the end of each term. Reading books do not allow pupils to practise the sounds they have learned.

In key stage 2, a new reading initiative has been introduced so that pupils learn more words. Leaders hope that this initiative will help pupils better understand what they are reading but this has not yet had the impact needed for pupils with low starting points.

Pupils do not make enough progress in writing. The school introduced a new scheme last year and pupils enjoy the activities. Leaders say that writing is improving but this is not seen in the work that pupils produce.

The quality of the wider curriculum is inadequate. It is not clear in some subjects of the national curriculum what should be taught and when. In subjects such as science, art and geography, teachers do not know what pupils

have learned in previous years. This means that pupils cannot build on their knowledge. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) find it difficult to keep up as they do not always understand what to do. Teachers do not plan well enough to meet the needs of pupils with SEND.

In contrast with the majority of the curriculum, mathematics is well planned. Teaching develops pupils' understanding as they move from year to year. Teachers check what pupils know and give them the right support when it is needed. Pupils enjoy mathematics but the most able sometimes find it too easy.

Children in pre-school get off to a good start. They are happy and behave well. They show high levels of concentration, curiosity and enjoyment. Their learning needs in all areas are met, both inside and outside of the classroom. Adults model language so that children's speaking skills can develop effectively. They also adapt the planned activities to keep the children interested in their learning.

In Reception, children's phonics knowledge is not good enough and, as a result, they are not prepared for Year 1. Different schemes have been used without focusing on how well phonics is taught and learned. Children are confused between the letter names and their sounds, which makes reading difficult for them. They are given books to read with letter sounds they do not know, which stops them developing as fluent readers. Boys do not play well unless the activities are supported by adults. Adult-led activities are not always effective enough to develop children's speaking skills.

Leaders and staff are united in their desire to make sure that pupils develop into thoughtful and considerate people. Staff encourage pupils to talk about their feelings. They learn about different faiths and religions and the need to treat people equally. In assemblies, pupils celebrate values and the importance of good attendance. However, attendance continues to be below where it should be for all pupils and particularly for pupils with SEND.

Recent changes have been made to the school's assessment procedures to reduce the workload for staff. Staff told us that leaders care about their well-being and that they feel well supported by leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders provide general safeguarding training to staff to ensure that they understand the fundamental principles of keeping children safe. However, they do not target this training to the specific issues that might affect pupils in this area.

The strong pastoral team supports pupils and their families, in particular those that are vulnerable. Staff make good use of the online system to pass on their concerns to the right people.

The school keeps detailed, well-organised records of the suitability of staff to work in

school. Pupils learn how to stay safe in a range of contexts, for example they know about the risks they face online and how to avoid these.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders need to clarify and establish their overarching vision and aims for the curriculum. The curriculum needs to be planned well to help pupils build on what they have learned in the past. Activities need to be sequenced appropriately so that pupils acquire the skills and knowledge that they need to do better in every subject as they progress through the school. Subject leaders need to have a clear understanding of what is being taught in each year group and know the impact of the teaching on pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders need to urgently address the weaknesses in reading and, in particular, the teaching of phonics. There needs to be a consistent approach to how phonics is taught, with a clear understanding of which sounds pupils need to know and by when. The ongoing assessment of pupils' progress in phonics needs to identify any pupils who are falling behind so that they can be helped. Pupils need sufficient practice in reading books at the right level.
- Leaders need to ensure that the provision teachers make for pupils with SEND is well planned, delivered well and checked so that pupils' learning needs are met and outcomes improve.
- Leaders need to improve staff's knowledge and understanding about safeguarding pupils. All staff need to have a strong understanding of the specific risks that pupils at this school might face.

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

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| Unique reference number | 139641 |
| Local authority | Essex |
| Inspection number | 10110222 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Academy sponsor-led |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 406 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| CEO of trust | Debbie Clinton |
| Principal | Andy Bear |
| Website | www.ravensacademy.atrust.org.uk/ |
| Date of previous inspection | 14–15 July 2015 |

Information about this school

- This school became part of Academy Transformation Trust in September 2013. The predecessor school, called Ravenscroft Primary School, was judged as inadequate when it was last inspected by Ofsted.
- The school's first section 5 inspection was in July 2015. In March 2019, Ofsted conducted a section 8 short inspection.
- The school includes a pre-school provision.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who receive support for SEND is above the national average.

Information about this inspection

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

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

- We held meetings with the principal and senior leaders, including subject leaders and the special educational needs coordinator. A meeting was also held with governors. A telephone conversation was held with the chief executive officer of Academy Transformation Trust.
- The inspection focused on early reading, mathematics, science, geography and art. For these focus subjects, we discussed the quality of education with senior leaders and curriculum leaders, visited lessons, discussed with several groups of pupils their experiences of learning and looked at work in pupils' books.
- I spoke with an administrator to check safeguarding arrangements and records. I also met with two of the school's designated safeguarding leaders to judge the effectiveness of child protection and safeguarding procedures.
- We considered the three comments on Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire. There were no responses to Ofsted's staff survey or pupil survey.

Inspection team

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|---------------------------|------------------|
| Kevin Rae, lead inspector | Ofsted Inspector |
| Rachel Welch | Ofsted Inspector |
| Ali Pepper | Ofsted Inspector |

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