

Inspection of West Gate School

Glenfield Road, Leicester, Leicestershire, LE3 6DG

Inspection dates: 22–23 June 2021

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Inadequate

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school where everyone makes sure that pupils' well-being and safety come first. Pupils told inspectors that they like their teachers and feel safe at school. They are happy to welcome new pupils, saying, 'We all get on well with each other.'

Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. They were very clear that there is no bullying at the school. They said this is because they trust staff to keep them safe.

Staff encourage pupils to express their opinions, for example through the school council. Pupils can take part in activities to prepare them for life beyond school. When it is safe, these activities include visits to local shops and cafes, sports competitions, road safety and learning about healthy lifestyles.

Staff make sure that pupils learn well in relation to their individual targets. There is a strong focus on helping pupils to develop the best ways of communicating. Many make a positive start with reading and mathematics.

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

The school has improved significantly since the last inspection. Leaders, staff and governors are united in their ambition for all pupils to receive a high-quality education. This is expressed through the desire for all learners to 'achieve their best and fulfil their potential'.

Leaders have rewritten the curriculum to cater for pupils' wide-ranging needs and abilities. Staff carefully assess each pupil's needs on arrival at the school. A pupil will then join one of four curriculum pathways. Staff continually adapt the curriculum to ensure that each pupil develops the knowledge and skills that are best suited to their needs. Over recent years, leaders and staff have ensured that the curriculum pathways have become well established. The pathway leaders are developing confidence and expertise in monitoring how well the curriculum is delivered across each pathway.

Children in the 'Explorers' pathway (early years and Years 1 and 2) settle well because the curriculum is closely matched to their needs. They make a strong start in learning to communicate and interact with others. Across the rest of the school, pupils continue to learn and develop well within an increasingly ambitious curriculum.

Leaders have adopted a systematic phonics programme to support the teaching of early reading. Inspectors observed pupils applying their phonics knowledge effectively when reading unfamiliar words. Pupils' enjoyment of reading was clear to see. They were rightly proud of their achievements.

Children in the 'Explorers' pathway make a strong start in early mathematics. Similarly, older students in the 'Preparations' (post-16) pathway receive good support to gain accreditations and qualifications, including GCSEs, where appropriate. The mathematics curriculum is well sequenced for these learners. In some other areas of the school the mathematics curriculum lacks clarity. Leaders are in the process of refining the mathematics curriculum to ensure that it sets out precisely what pupils in all pathways should know, and when.

Pupils in the 'Preparations' pathway also study some other national curriculum subjects such as science or history, in an adapted form. These studies sit alongside other important areas of the curriculum such as communication, independent living and employability. Curriculum leaders are currently finalising plans to ensure a precise overview of the key content that teachers should deliver, and when, in the national curriculum subjects.

Leaders and staff provide access to careers education, information and guidance for older learners. This is delivered in conjunction with an external provider. Leaders recognise that the member of school staff with oversight of this area requires further training to fulfil their role.

Some pupils with severe social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs can experience a high degree of anxiety. This means they may struggle to regulate their behaviour. Staff are skilled in supporting these pupils so that they learn to manage their emotions. This minimises any disruption to learning. Inspectors saw pupils behaving well and interacting happily with staff and with their peers, within their 'bubbles'. There was strong evidence of positive relationships, leading to a happy and productive atmosphere around the school.

Leaders and staff promote pupils' personal development well. They make sure that pupils are aware of key values such as tolerance and respect. Pupils learn about a range of cultures and beliefs through a series of 'faith days'.

Governance has improved significantly since the last inspection. Governors are closely involved in the life of the school. They make sure that they check for themselves the actions that leaders take to improve the quality of education provided for pupils. They are well equipped to hold leaders to account. Governors fulfil their statutory duties, including in safeguarding.

Staff morale is high. Staff value the support they receive from leaders. All staff who responded to Ofsted's online survey said they enjoy working at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

A safeguarding leader is attached to each 'bubble'. This ensures that every concern, however small, is quickly addressed. There are strong systems for reporting and following up concerns. Leaders and staff work effectively with a range of external

agencies to ensure pupils' safety. Pupils receive regular guidance about how to keep themselves safe, including online. The school's pre-employment checks meet statutory requirements.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

The school's curriculum is not yet sufficiently coherently planned in some subjects. However, it is clear from the actions that leaders have already taken to plan next year's curriculum, and train staff in how to deliver it, that they are in the process of bringing this about. For this reason, the transition arrangement has been applied in this case.

- Curriculum planning in mathematics and in adapted national curriculum subjects is not yet sufficiently sequenced in all the curriculum pathways. This has led to some inconsistency in how the curriculum is implemented. Leaders should ensure that, where national curriculum subjects are taught, the curriculum sets out the knowledge and skills which pupils should acquire, and when.
- Some of the curriculum pathway leaders are in the early stages of developing their roles. They do not yet have an accurate overview of the quality of education provided in their pathways. Leaders should ensure that curriculum leaders develop the expertise and skills required to fulfil their roles.
- Staff responsible for careers education have not received the necessary training for their role. Leaders should ensure that school staff and external providers work together effectively to provide impartial guidance to pupils about their next steps in education, employment or training.

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 are the school and you are 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 [here](#).

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	131099
Local authority	Leicester
Inspection number	10184545
Type of school	Special
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	176
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	18
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brian Jones
Headteacher	Rhian Richardson
Website	www.westgate.leicester.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	16–17 October 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and most other senior leaders have all been appointed since the last inspection.
- The chair, vice-chair and a number of other governors have taken up their roles since the last inspection.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school's leaders and have taken that into account in the evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, curriculum pathway leaders and a range of staff and pupils. An inspector met with the chair and vice-chair of governors and representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked closely at the quality of education in reading and mathematics and in the four curriculum pathways. This involved speaking with leaders, pupils and staff, visiting lessons, listening to pupils read and reviewing samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding by reviewing the school's record of pre-employment checks and by holding a meeting with the designated senior leader for safeguarding to discuss the school's policies and procedures. Inspectors spoke with a range of pupils and staff to evaluate the school's safeguarding culture.

Inspection team

Christine Watkins, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Dave Gilkerson	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jackie Thornalley	Ofsted Inspector

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