

Inspection of Westborough Academy

Macdonald Avenue, Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex SS0 9BS

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 September 2021

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Westborough Academy are happy and friendly. They enjoy being in school, and they show it in the warm and confident way they communicate with staff, each other, and visitors to the school.

In lessons, pupils are calm and focused. Pupils are clear about the expectations for them to behave well. They follow the rules and treat each other with care and respect. The youngest children in early years play and learn in a well-structured and cheerful atmosphere.

The school community celebrates its diversity. Pupils' personal development is important. They develop mature and open views about other people. Typically, pupils describe the atmosphere by saying, 'This school is all about being positive and people being happy with who they are'.

Pupils say there is no bullying, but that if there were any incidents, they feel reassured that it would be dealt with.

Pupils have a wide range of opportunities to develop their potential as they get older. There is equal opportunity for all at Westborough Academy.

The quality of education requires improvement. In particular, too many of the younger pupils do not get good enough help to learn to read quickly.

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

Leaders have planned a well-structured curriculum. In all subjects, they plan how pupils' learning should build on what they already know. In some subjects, such as science and physical education, this ensures that pupils develop deep knowledge and skills in these subject areas. However, leaders have not trained teachers effectively to assess pupils' learning. Teachers move too quickly onto the next learning before checking that pupils understand their work. Over time, this results in pupils having gaps in what they know. For example, Year 5 pupils in mathematics do not know their times tables well. This leads to pupils struggling with more complex problem-solving tasks.

Younger pupils are not developing their early reading skills. Teachers do not have strong subject knowledge in phonics to support the teaching of early reading skills. Staff do not ensure pupils are secure with sounds being taught before moving on to teaching the new sounds. Previously, teachers gave young readers books that were not matched to the sounds they know. Consequently, pupils' reading skills fell behind where they should have been. While leaders have reviewed this, it has caused too many pupils to struggle with reading. Leaders have put plans in place to address these issues, but it is too early to know what difference this will make to pupils' reading development.

Leaders promote a love of reading. In class, pupils enjoy listening to teachers read to them. The older and more confident readers describe how they enjoy the books they read independently.

Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Leaders skilfully and accurately identify pupils' needs. They review support plans and carefully consider pupils' needs as their plans are reviewed. Leaders talk regularly with both parents and outside agencies to ensure pupils with SEND get the help they need. Leaders give staff thorough training in supporting these pupils. They then follow this up and check how effectively staff are doing this. Consequently, pupils with SEND achieve well.

The quality of education, including in early reading, in early years is better than in the rest of the school. This is because there is a well-thought-through curriculum for children's development from their starting points up to when they enter Year 1. All adults are aware of how to deliver this effectively. A focus on language at the planning stage helps children develop their language and communication skills well. This includes for the high proportion of children who speak English as an additional language.

Leaders have high expectations of behaviour. They have reviewed the policy and trained staff so they know how to apply it. Consequently, pupils know where the boundaries are and follow what leaders expect so learning is not disrupted

Leaders instil the school's values through the curriculum. Leaders are resourceful in drawing on the diversity of the community to teach pupils about different cultures. Leaders link wider activities meaningfully to what pupils learn in the classroom. Leaders help pupils, including the most disadvantaged, begin to prepare for their futures.

Those responsible for governance are in a time of transition. The new trust is keen that governors support and challenge leaders more closely. Many governors are new to their roles and have not been trained in how to do this. Governors and leaders know this, and it is a priority for them.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders deal with concerns promptly and sensitively. They keep detailed and ordered records. Leaders refer cases quickly to agencies when they need to. Leaders know the safeguarding risks in the local area, such as the increase in county lines activity. They train staff to know how to safeguard pupils appropriately and raise pupils' awareness of the risks they may face. Through the curriculum, pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Staff have not received effective training on how to assess what pupils know and remember so they know when to move pupils on in their learning. Because of this, in some subjects, including mathematics and phonics, pupils do not build their next learning on secure knowledge, and so do not develop their skills as well as they should. Leaders need to make sure staff know how to check learning effectively and know when pupils are ready to move on in their learning.
- Those responsible for governance are in a period of transition and have not received the training they need to hold leaders to account effectively. Governors are not confident in monitoring leaders' work. The trust should ensure that governors are trained well so they are able to confidently use the information they are given to challenge and support leaders and check leaders' work to improve the school.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

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	145010
Local authority	Southend-on-Sea
Inspection number	10200561
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	485
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Murray Foster
Headteacher	Tonya Brook
Website	www.thewestboroughschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	n/a

Information about this school

- The school opened on 1 July 2017 as part of The Challenger Multi-Academy Trust. Since September 2021, it has been part of South East Essex Academy Trust.
- The headteacher was appointed when the school opened.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, other leaders, staff, pupils and those responsible for governance.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents, including the school improvement plan, and school policies.
- Science, history, mathematics, modern foreign languages and early reading were considered in detail to evaluate the quality of education. In each subject, inspectors carried out meetings with subject leaders, lesson visits, and

discussions with staff and pupils. Inspectors also looked at pupils' work and heard pupils read to a familiar adult.

- Inspectors reviewed the 57 responses that were submitted by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 35 free-text responses. Inspectors also considered the 29 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

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