

# Inspection of West Row Academy

Beeches Road, West Row, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP28 8NY

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Inspection dates: 25 and 26 May 2022

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Early years provision

**Requires improvement**

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils say that they enjoy their learning. However, pupils are not learning well in some subjects. They are not always supported to gain the knowledge they need. Pupils often do not have the opportunities to practise what they learn. Pupils struggle to recall what they have been taught.

Pupils mostly behave well around the school. Pupils play well together at breaktimes and lunchtimes. However, some pupils are frustrated when other pupils' behaviour in class disrupts their learning.

Pupils enjoy the range of sports clubs and activities. As they get older, pupils take on responsibilities in school, such as reading with the younger pupils.

Pupils feel that staff care about them. Parents appreciate the extra support the school provides to families. Some pupils receive help from a school counsellor as part of the pastoral support team the school has set up.

Most pupils say that they feel safe. Pupils know what bullying is and say that when this happens in school it is dealt with quickly by teachers.

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

Some pupils are not yet developing a fluency in reading quickly. Staff are not ensuring that all pupils are accessing books which contain sounds and words that they have already learned. Pupils do not receive enough practice of reading familiar language. Leaders have introduced a phonics programme which is helping younger children, especially those in early years, to learn new sounds quickly and blend simple words and sentences. In some classes, teachers read stories daily and pupils talk enthusiastically about books they are reading. However, this is not commonplace among all classes.

Curriculum planning in several subjects is not well developed. In some subjects, leaders have carefully selected the knowledge that they want pupils to learn. Teachers are well trained in the delivery of this curriculum. They ensure that new knowledge is introduced clearly and that it builds on what pupils have learned before. Pupils' work therefore becomes more demanding. However, in several subjects, this detailed planning and staff training are not in place. As a result, pupils do not develop a rich understanding or knowledge in these subjects.

In several subjects, teachers do not routinely revisit what pupils have learned or check what pupils know and can do. Pupils' misconceptions and mistakes are not quickly identified. Pupils are therefore less able to remember what they have been taught and some continue to make the same mistakes.

Leaders have clearly identified the learning and developmental needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They ensure that these pupils access the full curriculum alongside their classmates. Where curriculum planning and delivery are stronger, these pupils learn well. However, like their peers, where curriculum planning and delivery are not well developed, these pupils are not making the progress in the curriculum that they should.

Children in the early years settle quickly. They learn routines and are kind to each other. They enjoy their learning. Leaders' new approach to early reading is helping children to learn new sounds quickly. However, staff do not ensure that children learn as much as they should in other areas of their learning. Staff do not use opportunities to develop children's vocabulary, knowledge and understanding in both staff-planned activities and through their play.

Behaviour around the school is calm. Pupils treat each other with respect and are polite. In lessons, most pupils behave well. Where there are pupils who struggle to concentrate on their work, staff do not always identify and support these pupils quickly. This leads to some low-level, off-task chatter and behaviour. Some pupils feel that staff do not deal fairly and consistently in line with the school policy when pupils misbehave.

Pupils learn about British values. They learn about their local community and take part in visits. They learn about the cultures and beliefs of others. However, there are weaknesses in the sequencing and delivery of the curriculum for personal, social and health education. Pupils' experiences are often too disjointed for them to develop a meaningful understanding of the wider world and their place in it.

The new principal has a strong understanding of strengths and weaknesses at the current time. She is starting to work with parents, a proportion of whom are frustrated by some aspects of the school's provision. Staff are positive about the changes being brought about by the new principal. The trust is working closely with her to improve provision. However, previously, trustees have been too slow to act to address weaknesses in areas such as the early years provision.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders prioritise safeguarding. Staff attend regular training and know how to report any concerns. Leaders and staff are using the new electronic recording system to bring together information to quickly identify any pupils needing help. Effective use is then made of a range of agencies to support these pupils. In lessons and through assemblies, pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe, inside and outside of school and especially online.

Leaders make sure that all required safeguarding checks are completed when recruiting staff. This ensures that all new staff are suitable to work with children.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Curriculum plans, staff training and staff's use of assessment for some subjects are underdeveloped. Pupils are not gaining a rich understanding and knowledge in these subjects. Leaders need to ensure that curriculum planning, staff training and assessment strategies are in place and well monitored, so that pupils access a high-quality curriculum and that those pupils who are struggling are supported effectively.
- Trustees and leaders have not ensured that staff are supporting children to develop language and knowledge across all areas of learning in the early years. As a result of this, some children are not well enough prepared for the challenges of learning in Year 1. Trustees and leaders need to ensure that staff are well guided through planning and training to develop children's language and knowledge across all areas of learning.
- Some pupils have reading books that are not well matched to their phonic level. Some pupils do not receive enough opportunities to practise what they are being taught in phonics lessons. Some pupils are not developing fluency in reading quickly enough. Leaders need to ensure that pupils read books which are closely matched to their abilities and that staff monitor this effectively.
- In a small number of classes, teachers are not consistently managing pupils' behaviour effectively. This leads to some off-task behaviour and low-level disruption in some lessons. This is a cause of frustration to some parents and pupils. Leaders should make sure that staff use appropriate strategies to support pupils to develop appropriate learning behaviours.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	145277
<b>Local authority</b>	Suffolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	10227587
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	230
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Julie Perry
<b>Principal</b>	Elisabeth Close
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://westrow-academy.co.uk/">http://westrow-academy.co.uk/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school joined the Eastern Multi-Academy Trust in December 2017.
- The principal has been in post since January 2022.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the principal, leaders and representatives from the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, computing and geography.
- For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors looked at school documentation and spoke with leaders, teachers, support staff, members of the academy council, parents, pupils and

representatives from the trust to find out the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding procedures.

- The lead inspector met with the chair and one other member of the academy council, as well as the CEO and other representatives of the trust, including a board trustee.
- Inspectors also spent time observing and talking with pupils in the dinner hall and in the playground at lunchtimes.
- The inspectors considered 55 responses made by parents to Ofsted Parent View, including 49 free-text responses.
- The inspectors considered the views in the 31 responses to the staff survey and 11 responses to the pupil survey.

### **Inspection team**

Heather Hann, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Michael Thomas

Ofsted Inspector

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