

# Inspection of Westhaven School

Ellesmere Road, Uphill, Weston-super-Mare, Somerset BS23 4UT

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Inspection dates:

14 and 15 June 2022

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Sixth-form provision

**Good**

Previous inspection grade

Good

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

The quality of education at Westhaven is inconsistent. Older pupils speak positively about the difference the school has made for them. Many did not have good experiences of education in the past, but they now are succeeding. They are well prepared for the next stage in their education. Nonetheless, leaders have rightly identified that the current curriculum does not meet the needs of pupils with complex special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The provision these pupils receive is too variable. It does not build their knowledge and skills sufficiently.

Staff care for all pupils well. There are very strong adult–pupil relationships. Pupils appreciate these. They feel that they have someone who will sort out their problems. Any concerns about bullying are taken seriously. The school is calm. Pupils behave well.

Parent satisfaction with the school is mixed. Some parents talk about their child ‘flourishing’ and ‘thriving’ in a ‘brilliant’ school. Others are disappointed. They do not feel that their child’s special educational needs are being met.

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

Leaders, the local authority and the governing body all agree that the school is in a period of transition. They are proud that following the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic, a significant increase in the numbers of pupils with more significant SEND admitted to the school and during a time of interim leadership, the school has continued to care for pupils well. Staff’s well-being is good and morale is high. They recognise there is work to do to re-establish a vision for the school going forward and to improve the quality of education overall. This work has begun.

Older, more able, pupils do well. Their curriculum is based on the qualifications and skills that they will need when they leave. Staff adapt the offer so that the range of qualifications matches pupils’ interests. Pupils go on to a range of different colleges where they are successful.

Leaders recognise that a few pupils need longer at school. They have created a bespoke sixth-form curriculum that is matched to students’ needs. This curriculum is sequenced to ensure that students gain the knowledge and skills they need to develop their personal and independent living skills. Staff ensure that students have opportunities to prepare for adulthood, for example travel training and budgeting.

The rest of the curriculum lacks coherence. Leaders ensure that the scope and expectations of the national curriculum are covered. However, they have not identified the key skills and knowledge that current pupils need to learn so that they are successful. This means that priorities in some subjects are not clear. It is also not clear how new knowledge is systematically built upon. Too often pupils are learning disconnected facts rather than understanding key concepts. Leaders have

not yet ensured that the curriculum and its implementation are adapted sufficiently for those with more complex SEND. Assessment is at a very early stage.

The school's approach to early reading is inconsistent. A range of different approaches have developed over time. Staff's subject knowledge is variable. Some pupils, sometimes with complex needs, are learning sounds and blends so that they are starting to read. Staff generally match reading books to the needs of pupils so that they practise their new skills. Staff ensure that pupils meet a range of different authors and texts. However, the lack of consistent practice and expectations throughout the school mean that pupils do not build their skills systematically. This means that pupils do not deepen their knowledge and cannot remember the books they have read.

Pupils are clear that they 'get along' with each other at Westhaven. They are very respectful of difference. They understand each other's SEND. There is a range of extra-curricular activities available. Pupils develop their interests and talents. Careers education and work experience widen pupils' outlook. The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Pupils behave well. Expectations are high. There is careful monitoring of behaviour by leaders. This means that trends are identified and training and support are offered when necessary. This work leads to improvement in pupils' behaviour.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created an environment in which pupils feel safe. Pupils are aware of how to keep themselves safe and can talk about issues such as bullying, discrimination or sexual harassment.

There are clear procedures for staff to report concerns. Experienced staff respond to these. Appropriate training is in place. The school has appropriate systems for checking and vetting new members of staff.

Interim leaders have already taken steps to develop a more coherent overview of different aspects of safeguarding so that these can be monitored more easily.

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

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

- The school's vision for the future is not developed sufficiently. This means that the curriculum intent, the structure of the provision and the priorities going forward are not articulated and shared. School leaders, governors and the local authority

should work together to ensure that they have a clear and ambitious vision for providing high-quality education for all pupils.

- Currently, the curriculum is not sequenced so that pupils build the knowledge and skills they need. It is not adapted sufficiently for pupils with complex or severe SEND. Leaders should continue to clarify the overall intent of subjects, in line with the aspirations and ambitions of the school. They should determine what pupils should know, understand and achieve by the time they leave.
- There are inconsistencies in the quality of education that pupils receive. This means that pupils are not developing the skills and knowledge they need systematically. Leaders should ensure that all staff have the knowledge they need to implement the curriculum effectively, particularly for pupils with complex SEND.
- The school has had a significant period of interim leadership. Some accountabilities are currently unclear so monitoring and evaluation have not brought about improvements. Senior leaders should clarify roles and responsibilities and ensure that appropriate staff have the skills and knowledge they need to improve the quality of education.

## 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

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| <b>Unique reference number</b>                    | 109406   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                            | North Somerset   |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                          | 10204987   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                             | Special  |
| <b>School category</b>                            | Foundation special   |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                        | 4 to 18  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                           | Mixed  |
| <b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>   | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>        | 190  |
| <b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b> | 10   |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>                      | The governing body   |
| <b>Chair of governing body</b>                    | Stephen Romanski   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                                | Tracy Towler   |
| <b>Website</b>                                    | <a href="http://www.westhavenschool.org.uk">www.westhavenschool.org.uk</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>                | 6 October 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005                  |

## Information about this school

- The school is currently being led by the deputy headteacher.
- Historically, Westhaven has been a special school for pupils who have either moderate learning difficulties or autism spectrum disorder. A number of pupils have additional medical or physical needs. All pupils have an education, health and care plan. Over time, pupils with more complex needs have been admitted to the school.
- In 2019, the school, at the request of the local authority, admitted a number of younger pupils with complex special educational needs, including severe learning difficulties and complex communication and interaction needs.
- The school has developed a small sixth-form provision for students for whom a mainstream provision may not be suitable
- The school uses three registered alternative provisions.

## Information about this inspection

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

- 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 representatives of the governing body, the local authority and the school's improvement partner. They met with senior and middle leaders and groups of staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics, personal, social and health education and art. 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 spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors looked at the policies and procedures used to keep pupils safe. They also reviewed the checks carried out by leaders on the suitability of adults who work in the school.
- Inspectors considered the free-text responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. They also considered responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

## Inspection team

|                                 |                         |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Stephen McShane, lead inspector | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Gill Hickling                   | Ofsted Inspector        |
| Tonya Hill                      | Ofsted Inspector        |

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