

# Inspection of West Thurrock Academy

Schoolfield Road, Grays, Essex RM20 3HR

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Inspection dates: 12 and 13 July 2022

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

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

Pupils come from many different backgrounds and faiths, but see themselves as one big family. They get lots of opportunities to talk and share their ideas with each other, for example through 'talk partners'. Everyone is respectful and wants to listen to what others are saying. Pupils feel happy as their beliefs and opinions are valued.

Pupils feel safe as they have an adult at the school they can turn to if they have a worry. They have learned to talk about these worries and identify feelings through 'zones of regulation' training. If any bullying does occur, it is dealt with sensitively.

Pupils want to learn. They include each other in their games at lunchtime. They generally behave in a calm and sensible way and know the behaviour system will be applied fairly if anyone does misbehave.

Pupils have some clubs to attend, and some trips and visits to go on. However, they would value a wider range of opportunities to explore their interests and talents.

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

Leaders have ensured a broad curriculum is in place that meets the ambitions of the national curriculum. Learning sequences are well planned to build across year groups and connect across subjects. This starts in early years foundation stage, where there is a focus on teachers ensuring that children securely learn speech and language skills and understanding of number.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They present information clearly so that pupils can understand it. Teachers ensure that learning links back to what pupils have done before. They explain difficult subject-specific vocabulary and provide pupils with lots of structured opportunities to use this in class discussion. This helps pupils to connect, secure and retain knowledge.

In the majority of areas of learning, including reading, writing and mathematics, teachers use assessment expertly to check what pupils know. Teachers use this information to ensure pupils get the right support, either to resolve any misconceptions or to challenge them further. As a result of this support, pupils achieve highly.

The needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are accurately identified and supported. For example, in mathematics, pupils get to use lots of physical resources to help them represent concepts. This means that they achieve well.

In a small minority of subjects, such as geography and art, pupils do not have the same opportunity to explore the subject in as much depth as they do elsewhere.

Assessment systems are not fully developed in these subject areas. As a result, pupils do not achieve as highly.

Leaders ensure there is a sharp focus on children learning phonics, right from Nursery. Children in Reception are confident to decode and blend as staff match books carefully to what they can sound out. Leaders ensure that from this secure phonics base, pupils have a rich variety of high-quality texts to read as they move up the school. This ensures that pupils are confident, fluent readers by the time they leave.

Pupils generally behave well. Teachers make lessons interactive. Pupils enjoy this and want to participate. For example, in religious education, they listened attentively to each other as they talked about their different beliefs. On the occasions when a small minority of pupils do not regulate their own behaviour, teachers use leaders' behaviour system to deal with this effectively.

Pupils' personal development is supported through a well-planned programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE). This enables pupils to make 'informed life choices' about issues such as alcohol and relationships. An assembly programme links PSHE with the school's motto of 'strength and courage', and helps pupils to understand what democracy and respecting other cultures mean. This is also interwoven into other curriculum areas. For example, in reading, pupils learn about difference by exploring a book about characters of different colours. While pupils do have some opportunities to develop their cultural understanding, these are limited.

The school is well led and managed. Governors have taken effective action to guide the school through a period of transition in leadership. During this period, a minority of parents have had concerns about communication, including some parents of pupils with SEND. Leaders are taking effective action to address this.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a culture where safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Leaders have organised appropriate training and updates, so safeguarding stays as a top priority. As a result, pupils at risk of harm are identified effectively.

Leaders work proactively with families to secure the support families need. Leaders have built strong relationships with external agencies.

Leaders have ensured that safer recruitment is managed effectively and that necessary checks are carried out on adults working in the school. Pupils' welfare needs are well catered for, both through appropriate education and pastoral support. A safe environment has been created where pupils can share any worries.

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

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

- A small minority of subjects are taught with limited depth. As a result, pupils do not get the opportunity to extend and deepen their knowledge in those subjects. Leaders need to ensure that pupils learn, in depth, across all areas of the curriculum.
- There is limited range of opportunities for pupils to participate in activities beyond the academic. This limits some pupils' opportunities to pursue interests in some areas, such as art and music, for example. Leaders should broaden provision to ensure that pupils' cultural development is fully catered for.
- A small minority of parents are unhappy with how leaders have communicated with them during a period of leadership transition. As a result, they feel their concerns have not been fully listened to or addressed effectively enough. Leaders need to ensure that they communicate effectively with all parents and take appropriate action to address parents' concerns.

## 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>	139991
<b>Local authority</b>	Thurrock
<b>Inspection number</b>	10227406
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	449
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Shona Stronach
<b>Acting Headteacher</b>	Emma Power
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.westthurrockacademy.co.uk">www.westthurrockacademy.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	9 July 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- An acting headteacher was in place for the inspection. A new headteacher has been appointed for September 2022.

## Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) 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.
- The school uses no alternative providers.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics, science, computing and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with curriculum leaders, looked at curriculum plans, 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, and/or visited lessons, in PSHE, geography, religious education and art. Inspectors also visited nursery provision.
- Inspectors met with the chair of governors, the acting headteacher, a senior leader and the special educational needs coordinator.
- Inspectors explored the school's safeguarding culture through viewing safeguarding records and procedures, meeting with a range of pupils and staff, and talking to safeguarding leaders.
- Inspectors considered the 25 responses and 18 free-text responses made by parents to the survey, Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors also considered the 26 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.

### **Inspection team**

James Chester, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Hayley O'Dea

Ofsted Inspector

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