

Inspection of The Sweyne Park School

Sir Walter Raleigh Drive, Rayleigh, Essex SS6 9BZ

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 February 2023

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Requires improvement
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Ofsted has not previously inspected The Sweyne Park School as an academy school under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as, until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections.

Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection of the predecessor school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have high ambitions for pupils. The majority of pupils enjoy their learning. This is because leaders and teachers have worked to improve the curriculum and the quality of teaching. Teachers know their subjects well, and use this knowledge to make what they teach interesting.

Leaders' expectations for pupils to be 'ready and respectful' are not fully realised in the lived experience of pupils. Pupils say that their learning is disrupted in some lessons. They are frustrated that teachers do not use the new behaviour policy consistently. Behaviour at breaktimes and lunchtimes is not as orderly as it should be. A minority of pupils push and shove each other and use inappropriate language. Incidents of bullying, however, are rare and are resolved quickly by teachers.

Pupils, and students in the sixth form, benefit from a range of leadership opportunities, such as being on the school council and student leadership team. They are empowered to make positive changes at the school. There is a strong curriculum in place for pupils' personal development. Pupils enjoy the lessons they have to support this and can recall important knowledge they have been taught. They talk confidently about different world views and understand how people can be different from each other.

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

Historically, the outcomes that pupils achieved have been below average. However, leaders have taken decisive and effective action to address this. They have overhauled the curriculum, and subject leaders have thought carefully about the important knowledge they want pupils to learn and how best to teach it.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge, and use this to present subject content clearly. This helps pupils to build up their knowledge over time and to recall quickly what was taught before. For instance, in English, pupils use their knowledge of the origin of words to help make sense of new words. Leaders have made sure that assessment focuses precisely on the knowledge they want pupils to remember and be able to use. This 'KPI' approach to assessment is well embedded, and is used effectively to check how well pupils are progressing through the curriculum.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do well. This includes pupils in the specialist resource base. This is because of leaders' effective processes for identifying and sharing information about pupils' needs. Teachers use this information well to adjust their teaching. Pupils with SEND study the full curriculum and are keeping up with their peers.

Leaders recognised that behaviour needs to improve. They have already taken action to address this through introducing a new behaviour policy and restructuring the leadership of behaviour across the school. However, this has not, at this stage, had the impact leaders intend. The behaviour policy is not followed consistently by

teachers. Behaviour at breaktimes and lunchtimes is sometimes not as calm as it ought to be, and a minority of pupils behave poorly. This includes pushing, throwing objects and swearing. This behaviour has led to an increase in suspensions.

Persistent absence in some year groups means that some pupils are regularly missing out on important learning. Leaders know the circumstances of each individual who is absent regularly, and take action on a case-by-case basis. However, despite leaders' actions on both behaviour and attendance, their systems for monitoring the impact of this work are new and do not show them which actions work well and which do not.

There is a rich curriculum in place for pupils' personal development. Pupils and students receive appropriate careers information, education, advice and guidance. Teachers have been well trained to teach citizenship, personal and religious education, and pupils enjoy learning from them. Pupils are positive about the extra-curricular opportunities available to them. There is a broad range of clubs and activities on offer, as well as trips and visits linked to pupils' subject learning. Recently, for example, students in the sixth form visited New York as part of their business studies education.

There are high expectations for students in the sixth form. Strengths that are typical in the curriculum, teaching and assessment in the main school are typical in the sixth form. Students and teachers use 'independent progress plans' well to track students' progress through the curriculum. These help students to take responsibility for their own learning.

Trustees and governors are well informed about the schools' strengths and areas to improve. They provide appropriate and regular challenge and support to school leaders. Teachers and other members of staff feel valued and are proud to work at the school. Leaders consider and consult staff on any changes that might impact on their workload or well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established robust systems and processes for identifying and managing safeguarding concerns. Staff are well trained in their safeguarding responsibilities. When concerns are reported, detailed records are kept and swift action is taken. Leaders engage well with external agencies and seek help where needed to inform their safeguarding decisions.

Leaders have thorough checks for pupils who attend off-site alternative provision. They work closely with providers and external agencies to ensure that these pupils are safe and attending regularly.

Leaders carry out appropriate checks on adults before they start work in school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers are not consistent in their implementation of the behaviour policy. This means that some pupils do not always behave well in lessons and in social time. Leaders should ensure that teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and use the behaviour policy consistently to ensure they are met.
- In some year groups, pupils do not attend as often as they should, and too many pupils are persistently absent. This means that some pupils do not benefit sufficiently from the education provided by the school, and fall behind their peers. Leaders should ensure that these pupils are helped to attend school regularly.
- Leaders' monitoring systems do not check well how effectively their actions around behaviour and attendance are working. As a result, leaders lack the information to further their work in this area. Leaders need to refine methods of checking the impact of their work around behaviour and attendance.

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.

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	139534
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10265603
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,488
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	186
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jo Wincott
Headteacher	Katharine Dines
Website	www.sweynepark.com
Date of previous inspection	3 October 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Rayleigh Schools Trust.
- The school currently uses three registered alternative providers and three unregistered alternative providers.
- The school has a resource base for pupils with hearing impairment.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded 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 spoke with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders and other members of staff. The lead inspector also spoke with members of the local governing body, trustees and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors completed deep dives in these subjects: English, science, mathematics, modern foreign languages, art and history. 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 looked at curriculum plans for geography, design and technology and physical education.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, which included leaders' self-evaluation, the school development plan, records for behaviour and attendance and minutes from meetings of trustees and governors.
- Inspectors considered 196 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including 185 written responses from parents. They considered survey responses from 183 pupils and students and 113 members of staff.

Inspection team

Marc White, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Sue Smith	Ofsted Inspector
Likhon Muhammad	Ofsted Inspector
Susan Sutton	Ofsted Inspector
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