

# Inspection of Wey Valley Academy

436 Dorchester Road, Weymouth, Dorset DT3 5AN

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Inspection dates: 11 and 12 October 2023

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The principal of this school is Thomas Neill. This school is part of Ambitions Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Sian Thomas, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Caroline Sard.

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

Pupils at Wey Valley feel happy and safe. The school prides itself on being at the heart of its community. Pupils feel a strong sense of belonging. The school is welcoming and inclusive. Pupils have positive relationships with staff. They are respectful and tolerant. Pupils know that derogatory language is not tolerated. They are supported to make good choices and be ambitious for their futures. Pupils and parents say that bullying is very rare, and that staff act quickly if it happens.

Pupils learn in a calm and purposeful environment. The 'right to learn' is at the heart of the school's ethos. Pupils enjoy their learning. They learn from an engaging and demanding curriculum. Pupils read widely and often.

Pupils embrace opportunities to enrich their learning through the wide range of extra-curricular opportunities. These include outdoor education and local and international trips, as well as regular visits from a range of speakers.

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

The school, with support from the trust, has responded to low published outcomes by improving the curriculum. Pupils now learn from an ambitious curriculum. Increasing numbers of pupils study the full suite of subjects which make up the English Baccalaureate. However, some of this work has taken place recently. This means that, while the new curriculum is having a positive impact, this is not yet reflected in the school's published examination results.

The curriculum is well planned. Teaching presents information clearly and checks that pupils understand before introducing new content. Pupils learn sequentially and build effectively on prior knowledge. However, where teachers' curriculum expertise is less secure, pupils do not learn as effectively. Staff make sure that pupils are engaged in learning. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn the same curriculum as their peers. Their needs are identified accurately and appropriate adaptations made. Pupils with SEND are well supported in 'The Hub' when they need additional help.

Wey Valley prioritises reading. It describes itself as a 'reading school'. Pupils explore social and moral issues when they read in 'DEAR' time. Struggling readers are supported to catch up. The school ensures that pupils can read well, so they can access the whole curriculum.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school site. There is very little low-level disruption. Pupils understand the school's expectations of them. The school successfully supports pupils who need help to meet expectations. They receive good-quality pastoral care. As a result, most pupils have positive attitudes towards school.

Some pupils do not attend well. Too many pupils are persistently absent from school. This means they are not learning from the strong curriculum at the school. They do not achieve well. The school has evaluated causes and patterns of attendance. It has designed interventions that have impact. However, improving attendance remains a priority.

The school's personal development programme is strong. Pupils know and understand how to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy. They discuss and debate ideas with their peers. Pupils feel heard. They have opportunities to take on leadership roles. Many pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. The school productions and successful sports teams are particularly popular. A significant number of pupils also take part in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

The school provides appropriate information about careers to all pupils. Older pupils are well informed about their post-16 options. Pupils experience the world of work through work experience. They receive careful guidance to prepare them for their next steps.

The school, with support from the trust, has improved significantly. There is strong leadership at all levels. Staff have been given clear direction and share the school's values.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- Too many pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those with SEND, do not attend school regularly. They miss too much learning. As a result, they do not achieve as well as they should. This is also having a significant impact on published outcomes. Leaders must strengthen their efforts to improve attendance so that all pupils are well prepared for their next steps.
- The implementation of the curriculum is not consistently strong. Where teachers' subject expertise or pedagogical knowledge is less secure, some pupils do not learn effectively. Leaders must ensure there is a sharp focus on developing all teachers' subject and pedagogical knowledge, so that all pupils learn successfully from the intended curriculum.

## 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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	147291
<b>Local authority</b>	Dorset
<b>Inspection number</b>	10288243
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	967
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Caroline Sard
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Sian Thomas
<b>Principal</b>	Thomas Neill
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.veyvalley-academy.co.uk">www.veyvalley-academy.co.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	18 and 19 January 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school joined Ambitions Academies Trust on 1 June 2019. Since this time, the school has undergone significant change.
- The school uses one registered and two unregistered alternative provisions.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, geography, art and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- An inspector also spoke to the leader who oversees the vocational curriculum.
- The lead inspector analysed responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors also considered the views of pupils and staff in Ofsted's online surveys.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils, as well as talking to them in lessons and during social time.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- An inspector also met with the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator and discussed how pupils with SEND are identified and supported.
- Inspectors met with staff who oversee the personal development and behaviour of pupils.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of Ambitions Academies Trust and the chair of the local academy advisory committee.
- The lead inspector also met with the chief executive officer and the director of secondary education from Ambitions Academies Trust.

## Inspection team

Victoria Griffin, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
John Weeds	Ofsted Inspector
Matthew Collins	Ofsted Inspector
David Simons	Ofsted Inspector

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