

Inspection of Westcliff High School for Boys Academy

Kenilworth Gardens, Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex SS0 0BP

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 November 2023

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headmaster of this school is Michael Skelly. This school is part of Westcliff High School for Boys single academy trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the headmaster, Michael Skelly, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Fiona Colwell and Anthony Cole.

Ofsted has not previously inspected Westcliff High School for Boys Academy under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged Westcliff High School for Boys to be outstanding, before it opened as Westcliff High School for Boys Academy as a result of conversion to academy status.

What is it like to attend this school?

There are high expectations for what pupils can achieve. Pupils consistently rise to meet these and achieve exceptionally well. They produce high-quality work across the curriculum. Pupils are proud of the school and feel privileged to attend here.

Pupils demonstrate high standards of conduct and extremely positive learning attitudes in lessons. They work together to support each other across a range of situations. These high standards of behaviour prevail outside of the classroom and across other activities. Pupils recognise that the school helps them to develop their character. They describe this as 'being the best versions of themselves'. This happens through assemblies, tutorials and personal, social, health and economic education lessons.

Service to others is incredibly important to pupils. This is reflected in the extensive range of leadership roles available to pupils. They take leading roles in organising and running charity events. A significant number of pupils are part of the school's combined cadet force. Pupils are proud of this part of the school and the chance it gives them to develop wider attributes. This, and other opportunities, helps pupils become effective leaders and communicators.

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

The school has designed a highly ambitious and well-thought-out curriculum. It is academically rigorous and goes far beyond the requirements of the national curriculum and examination courses. All pupils learn rich and important knowledge that prepares them well for their next steps. Many go on to study at university.

Teachers are experts in their subject. The school's well-planned programme of staff development contributes to this expertise. As a result, the curriculum is taught exceptionally well. Teachers plan and teach challenging, yet well-pitched, lessons. They ask well-selected questions to help pupils connect what they are learning to what they already know. Pupils are regularly encouraged to debate and discuss their ideas. They do this respectfully and consider the views of others. Teachers use assessment effectively to ensure that pupils can use their knowledge reliably.

The school encourages pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. For instance, many attend lunchtime sessions to receive help with their homework or to improve pieces of practical work. Under the guidance of their teachers, they develop the habits they need to help with future study.

Pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve well. The school has effective processes for identifying the needs of pupils with SEND. Teachers receive the information and training they need to ensure that pupils with SEND receive high-quality teaching.

The school wants pupils to become lifelong readers. This starts from the moment pupils join the school. They have regular opportunities to read challenging texts across the curriculum and during tutorial periods. The school gives pupils time to reflect on their reading and to discuss key themes from the books they read. This contributes to a strongly shared love of reading.

The school has incredibly high expectations for what pupils can achieve. Sitting at the heart of these expectations is the school's 'learner profile'. This outlines the attributes that pupils will need to develop their mind, character and individuality. It is well integrated in all aspects of the school's work. As a result, pupils consistently demonstrate positive attitudes and dispositions to their studies and to each other.

There is a wide and enriching co-curriculum programme, including a range of teams, clubs and societies. These build on pupils' interests or help to broaden their horizons. This includes the chance to learn about astronomy, practise Latin or to debate current affairs. Pupils value these extensive opportunities and high numbers take part in this exceptional offer. Many of these activities have been initiated and are led by pupils.

The information that pupils receive about careers is comprehensive and of high quality. Pupils have many meaningful opportunities to experience the world of work in each year group. This includes work experience, work shadowing and visits by local employers.

The sixth form typifies the strengths seen elsewhere. The sixth form is integral to the main school. Students in the upper school help pupils in younger years with their studies and to support their well-being, for example through tutoring and peer mentoring. This creates a strong sense of community.

Leadership across the school is inspirational. Leaders are proud of the school's history but continually look for ways to improve it. This helps everyone realise highly ambitious goals. Trustees and governors bring a broad range of experience. They provide effective support and challenge to the school. Everyone is committed to achieving the very best for pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

Unique reference number	136272
Local authority	Southend-on-Sea
Inspection number	10211905
Type of school	Grammar (selective)
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,282
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	371
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Fiona Colwell and Anthony Cole (Co-chairs)
Headteacher	Michael Skelly
Website	www.whsb.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school uses two registered alternative providers.
- 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.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school 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. Inspectors also met with teachers at the early stages of their career to discuss the support they receive.
- The lead inspector met with trustees and governors. This included the chairs of the board of trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, geography, science and computing. 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.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- 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.

Inspection team

Marc White, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Susan Sutton	Ofsted Inspector
Steve Woodley	His Majesty's Inspector
Mireille MacRaid	His Majesty's Inspector
Lucie Calow	Ofsted Inspector

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