

# Inspection of Waterman Primary Academy

The Boulevard, Rochford, Essex SS4 1QF

---

Inspection dates:

14 and 15 November 2023

## Overall effectiveness

## Requires improvement

---

The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Good**

Early years provision

**Good**

Previous inspection grade

Good

The head of school is Karen Collison. This school is part of HEARTS Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Debbie Rogan, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Vaughan Collier. There is also an executive headteacher, Don Wry, who is responsible for this school and three others.

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

Pupils at Waterman Primary enjoy the many responsibilities and opportunities they undertake. They are keen to improve the environment, for example the eco-warriors promote reductions in waste and paper usage. The school council makes sure that pupils' voices are heard. Pupils undertake the Hearts Promise, which provides a range of experiences they may not ordinarily have. There are many clubs, including dancing and water polo. Pupils make the most of the swimming pool they have on site.

Pupils have coped well with the high turnover of teaching staff they have seen in school. They are following recently established routines and are building positive relationships with new staff. Pupils have confidence that staff will help them if they have a worry or concern.

Children in the early years settle quickly into school life. Older pupils typically behave well. Sometimes, in lessons, they may stray off task. This is when staff do not pitch the curriculum to meet pupils' abilities or needs. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive variable support.

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

The trust has stabilised staffing at the school. All teachers are new to the school this academic year. Parents are not convinced that the trust has sustained the quality of provision. They express concerns that their children are not learning well.

The trust has put in place an ambitious curriculum. This takes into account the school's context of mixed-age classes. The curriculum helpfully builds pupils' knowledge and understanding progressively over time. There is an appropriate emphasis on widening pupils' vocabulary. In the early years, staff develop children's communication and language skills well. Staff show children how to take turns in conversation and how to ask questions.

Staff develop children's understanding of phonics sounds while in Nursery effectively. The trust has designed its own phonics programme, which exposes children in the early years to short, sharp bursts of learning. Staff carefully consider what children have learned. This means that the books pupils read are well matched to the sounds that they know. Staff quickly address any misunderstandings so that pupils do not fall behind. Most older pupils have formed positive reading habits. They talk enthusiastically about authors they have read. Those who are not so keen on reading can still recommend a good book and talk about the features they appreciate.

The trust's lead practitioners are coaching new staff on the best ways to teach the curriculum. Teachers are also getting to know the pupils, some of whom have complex needs. Due to this, teachers sometimes do not see when a pupil has misconceptions about the content they are learning. This means that pupils move on

too quickly to new material. They have not mastered what they need to before attempting the next step.

The support for pupils with SEND is variable. For instance, some support plans have longer-term targets that roll on from one review period to the next. This means they lack the shorter steps to help get the pupil to the longer-term target. Others sometimes lack specific guidance for staff to follow so that pupils with SEND can access the learning alongside their peers. The trust recognises the issue and is running a series of training sessions for staff. They have also recently employed specialist SEND staff who are setting up new provision for pupils who have highly complex needs. This cohort of pupils are starting a bespoke curriculum which is matched more closely to their needs. This provision is in its infancy.

In most lessons, there is a positive learning atmosphere. Where this sometimes falls short, trust practitioners are providing support to help those few pupils improve their behaviour. Pupils enjoy positive relationships with each other. They agree that school is an inclusive place. Children in the early years play cooperatively together. They learn the importance of sharing and taking turns on the play equipment. Children follow instructions well, tidying their chairs away and moving silently to the carpet.

There is a comprehensive wider development programme in place. Pupils have a thorough understanding of fundamental British values. They also know how to stay safe online. The school's use of outside speakers to complement the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum has made a lasting impression. Pupils have altered their use of social media as a result.

Trust leaders, governors and school leaders know what they need to do to strengthen the effectiveness of the school. They know that there is still more work to do to foster good relations with parents. Staff feel well supported, with both their workload and well-being.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- Some staff do not readily pick up on when pupils have misconceptions about their learning. This means that these pupils do not master the basics before moving on to complex work. The school should review its formative assessment processes, giving appropriate support to staff so that they can tailor the curriculum precisely to pupils' needs. This will ensure pupils build on what they know and can do.
- The support for pupils with SEND is variable. Some support plans do not help teachers adequately to make curriculum adaptations for pupils. Some specialist provision for SEND is new and has not had time to take effect. The current status

quo is hampering pupils' achievement over time. The school needs to continue with its plans to strengthen SEND provision so that this group of pupils learns as well as their peers who do not have SEND.

- The staff turnover has left the parent body feeling unsettled. Some have concerns that pupils do not behave as well as they should and that their children are not learning well. The school needs to do more to reassure parents, making sure they are better informed, so they fully understand and engage with the school's aims and actions for improvement.

## 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>	141715
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10287126
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	62
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Vaughan Collier
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Debbie Rogan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Karen Collison
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.hearts-waterman.uk">www.hearts-waterman.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	16 and 17 January 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The head of school took up post 18 months ago.
- The school has high mobility pupils. Currently, approximately a third of the school's cohort are pupils with SEND.
- The school does not use alternative provision. The school uses a specialist resource base at another local school in the trust.

## 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 met with the chair of the trust, the chief executive officer of the trust and trustees. They also met with the chair and vice-chair of the local advisory board.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, the head of school, senior leaders, subject leaders and staff.
- Inspectors spoke to parents when they came to school to drop off pupils as well as to those who requested telephone conversations.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography and art. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also considered the curriculum in other subjects, such as PSHE.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, around school and at social times. They considered pupils' views about behaviour in the school. They also spoke with staff about pupils' behaviour, and their workload and well-being.
- 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.
- Inspectors considered 14 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and 20 responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. There were no responses to the Ofsted pupil survey.

## Inspection team

Liz Smith, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Craige Brown

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2023