

Inspection of Ravens Academy

Nayland Drive, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex CO16 8TZ

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 February 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Inadequate

The principal of this school is Charley Minter. This school is part of the Academy Transformation Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Nick Weller, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Patricia Beanland, OBE. There is also an executive principal, Angela Lymbouris, who is responsible for this school and one other.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils have benefitted from rapid improvement in Ravens Academy. They now learn an ambitious curriculum. Pupils develop detailed knowledge. They enjoy and take pride in their learning.

Pupils have experienced significant disruption, because of difficulties with the site. This has not been the school's fault. Many pupils learn in temporary classrooms. They eat lunch in a tent. Despite this, pupils have been kept safe and they value school. They praise the strong support they get from staff. Pupils say, 'Ravens is a second home'.

There are high expectations of behaviour. Consequently, pupils concentrate hard in lessons, including in the early years. They politely take turns in discussion. Clear routines help pupils be calm when required. They are friendly and respectful.

Pupils participate in many opportunities. The vast majority of pupils attend the high-quality after-school clubs. At these, they extend the day's learning. Pupils who are disadvantaged build their wider knowledge, such as playing a musical instrument. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) develop their interests and skills, for example at the popular skateboarding club. These activities help pupils become more resilient and confident.

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

The trust and new leadership team have successfully addressed the issues from the previous inspection. They have done this while managing the problems with the site. This disruption has been a challenge for staff however, leaders, staff and pupils have got on with the job as a united community.

The school have ensured the curriculum meets pupils' needs. It plans closely how new content builds on prior learning. The curriculum identifies what specific knowledge should be assessed. This creates consistency across the school. As a result, pupils develop a lot of useful knowledge. The clarity of planning helps pupils with SEND learn confidently.

Pupils' published outcomes are not strong. However, these reflect the quality of education pupils used to receive, prior to improvements. In some areas, such as phonics, results are already a lot better.

Staff mostly teach the curriculum well. They have the subject knowledge they need. Where pupils have gaps and misconceptions, these get spotted and rectified. Consistently used approaches, such as 'flashbacks' and 'whole body listening', help pupils understand and remember important content. Teachers adapt learning skilfully where needed so that pupils with SEND can access it. That said, sometimes teaching does not support pupils as well as it could. For example, lesson activities do

not always help them apply their learning in depth. As a result, pupils do not always develop as rich a body of knowledge as they might.

Reading is prioritised. Phonics is taught effectively. The school carefully assesses how well pupils know their sounds. Teachers adapt learning if needed so that pupils can build on secure prior knowledge. Where extra support is required, this is regular and helpful. Pupils, including those with SEND, quickly learn to read with fluency. Pupils throughout the school enjoy reading.

Children do well in the early years. The school have ensured well-crafted activities help them to develop their language and communication. What children learn prepares them well for key stage 1, such as building up their knowledge of numbers. As a result, children engage happily with learning.

There is a well-considered behaviour policy. Staff apply this consistently. Pupils understand the expectations clearly. Any incidents get thoroughly resolved. The school deals with the underlying causes of any misbehaviour. Pupils get effective support with their well-being, including those with social and emotional needs. This helps them conduct themselves well throughout the day.

Attendance is lower than it should be. The school does a lot to address this. The school is resourceful in helping families who struggle to ensure their children attend. While this is the case, the school's actions have not had the impact leaders intend. There is more to do on this. A minority of pupils miss too much of their education.

The curriculum for personal development is effective. Pupils learn relevant content, such as about puberty. They articulate mature views, for example about friendships and healthy eating.

The trust provides strong support to the school. Where challenge is needed, trustees ask probing questions. Leaders receive helpful support from peers in other trust schools. This helps their well-being. Staff develop their knowledge through the wide-ranging programme of professional 'communities'. The trust keeps close oversight of safeguarding.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Staff are sometimes not as effective as they could be in delivering aspects of the curriculum. At times, they do not help pupils apply their learning in depth, and so pupils do not build up the rich body of knowledge they might. The school needs to make sure that staff get the support and guidance they require to deliver the curriculum consistently well.
- Despite the school's efforts, attendance is lower than it should be. This means that a minority of pupils are missing too much of their education. The school should review the actions it is taking to support pupils' attendance and do whatever it takes to improve this.

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	139641
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10288523
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	351
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Patricia Beanland, OBE
Principal	Charley Minter
Website	www.ravensacademy.atrust.org.uk/
Dates of previous inspection	22 and 23 February 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The principal was appointed in March 2023.
- The school has experienced high-level disruption. This has been caused by the buildings containing reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC). 70 per cent of the site has been closed to pupils. They have been learning in temporary classrooms for an extended period of time. The effect of this disruption is described and evaluated in the report.
- The school shares a governing body with another school in the trust. This is Kingsmoor Academy, in Harlow, Essex. There is a single chair of governors for both schools.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

- 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 principal, executive principal, other senior leaders, staff, and pupils. Inspectors also met with several trust leaders, including, remotely, the chief executive officer.
- As part of evaluating governance, the lead inspector met with two trustees, including the chair of trustees, and the chair of the local academy committee.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading and English, mathematics, geography, science and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, met with teachers, met with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- As part of evaluating the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors met with leaders, governors, staff and pupils. Inspectors scrutinised the school's single central record of recruitment and vetting checks. They considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documents, including curriculum plans, policies and documentation for behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, the free-text comments submitted by parents during the inspection, and the responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff. There were no responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for pupils. Inspectors spoke with many pupils during the inspection.

Inspection team

Charlie Fordham, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
John Crane	Ofsted Inspector
Simon Harbrow	Ofsted Inspector

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