

Inspection of Stewards Academy - Science Specialist, Harlow

Parnall Road, Harlow, Essex CM18 7NQ

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 May 2024

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

The headteacher of this school is Helen Ginger. This school is the sole member of Stewards Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Tessa Miller.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Stewards Academy have frequent opportunities to increase their confidence and to widen their experiences and interests. There is a broad range of clubs, from rocket making to crochet. Pupils can take part in musical productions and The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. Pupils develop their leadership skills when they become prefects or join the school council.

Pupils' experiences in lessons are not always as positive as they should be as the curriculum is not consistently taught well enough. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do not always receive effective support in lessons.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, have healthy relationships and look after their own mental health. However, not all pupils respect each other's right to learn and to be treated with kindness. Occasionally, overly rough, unkind and inappropriate behaviour goes unchecked. This frustrates and worries pupils who want to do well.

Pupils access a broad curriculum. Many pupils take a range of vocational courses in key stage 4, such as hospitality and catering. Pupils also learn about a range of careers and further education courses. This prepares them for the next stages in their education and employment.

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

The curriculum identifies key knowledge that pupils need to know to be successful. In most subjects, the curriculum clearly breaks down and details what teachers need to teach. Once pupils gain knowledge securely, they confidently move on. Teachers consider what pupils need to revisit, for example 'do now' tasks at the start of lessons support pupils to recap what they have learned before. However, in some subjects, curriculum plans do not precisely identify what pupils need to know. This makes it difficult for teachers to teach pupils the important knowledge they need that builds on what they have learned before.

Many teachers have sufficient knowledge to teach subjects well. In some areas, teachers explain new concepts in a clear and concise way. They also use apt questioning to spot and identify what pupils do not know. However, some teachers have not received enough training to plan and teach subjects well. As a result, lessons are not routinely engaging and planned carefully. When this happens, pupils struggle to learn more and remember more. They often do not achieve well enough.

Staff regularly check how well pupils can read. When pupils need help with their reading, trained staff support them to become confident and accurate readers. The school's 'Bridge' provision helps pupils with SEND to access the curriculum. The school makes good use of part-time alternative provision. This builds pupils' confidence and gives them skills for future employment. However, teachers do not

always know how to adapt the curriculum effectively in lessons so that all pupils can access it.

The school is working hard to improve standards of behaviour. This is beginning to have a positive impact. Leaders have high, clear expectations. Well-considered changes to school policy, the school day and the site have improved behaviour in and out of lessons. Staff do not, however, apply the school's behaviour policy consistently. This sends mixed messages to pupils about what behaviour and language are acceptable. Pupils, therefore, do not always speak kindly to each other, and lessons are sometimes disrupted by poor behaviour.

Pupils are supported to improve their attendance, well-being and aspirations. However, while the dedicated pastoral team supports pupils well, disadvantaged pupils do not attend school regularly enough.

The personal, social and health education curriculum is carefully planned. It prepares pupils for adulthood effectively. Pupils learn about topics such as the importance of diversity, the dangers of knife crime and radicalisation. Pupils learn how to contribute to the community. Prefects support Year 7 form groups and pupils raise money for charity.

The school makes effective use of support from a local trust. This is beginning to improve the quality of education for pupils. Trustees increasingly challenge leaders. Senior leaders usually have clear, realistic plans for improvement. Some leaders, however, do not always measure the impact of their actions effectively. As a result, their plans are not precise enough to improve outcomes quickly enough for all pupils.

Staff enjoy working here; they feel well supported with their well-being and workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school does not always identify clearly enough the key knowledge that pupils need to know. As a result, lessons do not always help pupils to learn and remember more, and pupils do not achieve highly. The school should provide training for staff to ensure that curriculum plans are clear in all subjects.
- Lessons do not always meet the needs of pupils, including those with SEND. This is because staff do not always have sufficient knowledge to teach the curriculum well enough. The school should ensure that all staff have the training to provide all pupils with engaging, high-quality learning experiences.

- Staff do not consistently apply leaders' high expectations of behaviour. As a result, pupils are not clear about how to behave, and this sometimes leads to disruptive behaviour. The school should ensure that the behaviour policy is followed consistently by all staff.
- Some leaders do not analyse the impact of their actions effectively. As a result, they sometimes do not identify patterns and trends, and do not analyse the impact of their work on all pupils. This means that their plans are not always precise enough to bring about sustained improvement. The school should ensure that leaders are trained to rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of the school's provision.

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	137552
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10295044
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,003
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Tessa Miller
Headteacher	Helen Ginger
Website	www.stewardsacademy.org
Dates of previous inspection	22 and 23 November 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Stewards Academy is working closely with and receiving support from Passmores Co-operative Learning Community trust (PCLC). The chief executive officer of PCLC is acting as chief executive officer of the Stewards Academy Trust.
- The school currently uses four unregistered alternative providers for pupils.
- 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.

- The lead inspector spoke to trustees. He also spoke to the chief executive officer of PCLC.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, geography, art, science and design and technology. 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 discussed the curriculum in some other subjects and visited a range of lessons.
- 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 held meetings with a range of leaders, including the careers coordinator and the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator.
- The lead inspector met with early career teachers and staff involved in the induction of new teachers.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at other times around school. They met with groups of pupils to discuss behaviour in the school.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of records relating to behaviour and attendance.
- The lead inspector considered the 68 responses and 46 free-text responses received during the inspection to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. He also considered the 67 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and the 178 responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Steve Woodley, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Brenda Watson	Ofsted Inspector
Sufian Sadiq	Ofsted Inspector
Susan Sutton	Ofsted Inspector

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