

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Breakwater Academy

Valley Road, Newhaven, East Sussex BN9 9UT

Inspection dates:

5 and 6 November 2024

Outcome

Breakwater Academy has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Sally Franceschi. This school is part of the STEP 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 (CEO), Paul Glover, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Ross Gardner. There is also an executive headteacher, Alun Evans, who is responsible for this school and four others.

What is it like to attend this school?

Parents and carers say that children 'come on in leaps and bounds' at Breakwater Academy. They are right. Expectations are high. Pupils work hard, meet expectations and are justifiably proud of their achievements. They explain enthusiastically that there is 'lots to learn'.

Carefully chosen visits, visitors and experiences help bring learning to life. Pupils learn about their community through taking part in local events and visits to museums and the fire station. They learn about the wider world through opera trips or through working alongside chefs, preparing and serving food.

Pupils play their part in making the school a friendly and happy place. They are passionate about the importance of the 'kindness and tolerance charters', which they helped to create. They feel respected and listened to. Pupils learn about the process of democracy through trips to parliament and meeting the local MP. They have used what they have learned to create their own pupil parliament at school.

Pupils mostly behave well. There are very few incidents of poor behaviour. Pupils are very understanding of the support some pupils need to help them to manage their behaviour. This helps to make the school an inclusive and welcoming place for everyone.

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

The school works closely with the families it serves. This helps staff to understand the needs of pupils. Any pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified quickly. Parents are positive about the understanding and care that is shown to their children.

The school's determination to get all pupils off to a strong start with their education is clear to see. Everyone understands the importance of early reading in this. Well-trained staff ensure that pupils learn phonics from the start. Regular checks ensure that anyone who starts to fall behind is given the help they need to catch up. Most pupils learn to read quickly and well. Pupils are keen readers. They relish the wide range of books that are read to them in regular story sessions.

An ambitious, well-structured curriculum is in place. This clearly sets out what pupils should learn from Reception to Year 6. With well-judged support from the trust, leaders have ensured that staff are well trained to deliver this curriculum. Teachers know what key knowledge pupils need to build on their learning. However, on occasion, this is not sufficiently well adapted so that all pupils, such as those who find reading difficult, can access it and be successful.

Pupils are keen and confident mathematicians. In Reception, children carefully spot repeating patterns. Pupils learn their times tables and how to solve increasingly complex problems as they move through the school. They enjoy the challenges they are set and are keen to share the methods they use. Teachers check pupils' learning both within lessons and over time. This helps ensure that any misconceptions are quickly addressed. Methods of checking knowledge in other subjects are not yet as well developed as they are in English and mathematics.

Children settle quickly into school in Reception. They learn to play and work together well. Adults clearly explain and demonstrate how they should behave. Throughout the school, pupils benefit from clearly established and consistent routines. Pupils explain that they are expected to listen, sit up straight and 'track the speaker' to help them learn. Pupils move around calmly. The school is an orderly environment. Pupils are safe, and feel safe.

Pupils like coming to school. They attend well. The school works closely with families to encourage regular attendance and to understand and remove any barriers to it. Everyone understands how important it is that children are in school and learning.

Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. The curriculum teaches them about themselves and others, including a range of faiths and cultures. This is underpinned by a strong emphasis on equality. Pupils say that the school is a place where everyone is included, equal and valued. A pupil summed up the views of many by saying, 'Being yourself is important. We can do that here.' The school is highly responsive to any incidents of intolerance, which are increasingly rare.

The trust, local governors and school staff work together well to make sure that the best interests of children are at the forefront of everything they do. Improvement priorities are carefully considered and actioned so that the school continues to move forward. Leaders make sure that staff's workload is considered as part of any changes that are made. Staff feel well supported.

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 is developing ways of checking what pupils know, remember and can do across the foundation subjects. This is not yet fully in place. This can make it difficult for teachers to build on what pupils already know in some subjects. The school should ensure that teachers' checks on pupils' learning are consistent, so that lessons build on what pupils know and can do in all subjects.
- Occasionally, tasks are not sufficiently adapted for pupils. When this happens, some pupils can struggle to learn some of the intended curriculum content. The school should ensure that staff are supported to consistently match and adapt tasks for pupils appropriately so that pupils learn the intended curriculum and experience success.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in May 2019.

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	143120
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10341813
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	160
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ross Gardner
CEO of the trust	Paul Glover
Headteacher	Sally Franceschi
Website	https://breakwateracademy.org/
Dates of previous inspection	21 and 22 May 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection. An executive headteacher from the trust works alongside the headteacher.
- The school has been sponsored by the STEP Academy Trust since September 2016.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- During the inspection, the inspector met with a range of school staff and held regular update meetings with leaders. The inspector also met with representatives of the trust, including the chair of the board of trustees and the CEO.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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.
- The inspector reviewed responses to Ofsted's parent, pupil and staff surveys.
- The inspector talked to staff to gather their views about the school, including their workload and well-being. The inspector met with several groups of pupils, as well as speaking to pupils during lessons, playtimes and at lunchtime.

Inspection team

Deborah Perkins, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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