

Inspection of Westbourne Academy

Marlow Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP1 5JN

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 June 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Requires improvement
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

The trust principal of this school is Nicola Hood. This school is part of 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 Pat Beanland.

What is it like to attend this school?

Since returning from the COVID-19 pandemic pupils have experienced a period of turbulence. During this time, their learning was disrupted by poor behaviour, which included not attending lessons. However, pupils value the new clear expectations and consequences trust leaders have brought in to address this. This is rapidly changing their experience to be much more positive. Pupils can now typically learn without disruption. Any missed learning is now rare.

Pupils have benefited from changes to the curriculum. These have made it broad and more ambitious. For example, pupils now have the option to study triple science. They have also benefited from how leaders have developed teaching. Pupils now get the support they need from teachers to close any gaps in their knowledge. They also recall and retain important information much more consistently and produce higher quality work.

Pupils value specified trusted adults and the range of staff who are on hand to support with worries and concerns. This helps pupils to be happy and safe because pastoral support is a real strength of the school.

Pupils participate in a range of enrichment activities, including cadets. These activities help them to develop their interests and social bonds well.

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

The trust recognised that standards of education and behaviour significantly declined following the return from the pandemic. Parents also picked up on this and their view of the school declined. The trust took all steps that could be reasonably expected to identify and address this. This included adding significant extra trust leadership capacity to support the school. However, some of these steps took time to work through, so pupils have not achieved as well as they might in 2023 examinations.

Leaders have developed the curriculum to ensure it is both broad and more ambitious. The uptake of subjects that make up the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) is increasing. This is providing more pupils with a foundation for future academic study. Pupils cover the full range of national curriculum subjects. The trust has worked with the school to ensure that the knowledge pupils learn in each subject prepares pupils well for post-16 education.

Leaders have implemented an effective programme of training and support to raise standards of teaching. This has included the introduction of consistent approaches to assessment and how teachers revisit and connect previous learning. Teachers address any misconceptions pupils have and close any gaps in their knowledge well. The trust has also reduced reliance on temporary teaching, which has aided this further.

Support staff are very knowledgeable about working with pupils with higher levels of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They enable them to access the curriculum well. However, some teachers do not use the information they have about other pupils with SEND needs precisely enough. They do not always make the changes to learning pupils need, to enable them to achieve as well as they might.

The school has ensured that pupils at the earlier stages of learning to read get precise support to help them catch up. However, the school has not developed a widespread love of reading.

The trust has taken decisive action to address unacceptable standards of behaviour and internal truancy. Pupils understand teachers' raised expectations and are clear about consequences. Nevertheless, some pupils still do not behave well enough around the school site and to a much lesser extent in lessons. This is because the new 'warm but strict' approach to promoting good behaviour, which is having a successful impact, is at an early stage.

The school is taking effective action to raise levels of attendance, working effectively with families to address causes of absence. Although this is improving attendance, rates are still slightly below national averages, so some pupils are still missing more learning than they should.

The school has put in place an effective and coherent approach to promoting personal development. Pupils learn about how to stay safe in relation to risks, including gangs and knife crime. They also learn age-appropriate information about relationships and important issues such as consent. Social development is promoted well through inter-house competitions, such as sports day.

Careers education is well promoted through fayres, one-to-one meetings and workshops. Pupils are supported to make informed choices about their next steps.

Trustees know the needs of the school precisely. They work highly effectively with trust leaders to raise standards. Staff feel that recent changes have impacted on workload and well-being, but they see why they have been needed.

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 has not ensured that some pupils behave well enough around the school site and to a much lesser extent in lessons. This means that some pupils are not respectful enough or do not take enough responsibility for their own conduct, including being on time and attending well, which in turn impacts on how well they achieve because they miss important learning. The school needs to

ensure that all staff follow the new 'warm but strict' behaviour policy consistently, both within lessons and around the school site, so that positive and respectful behaviour, which includes being on time and attending well, becomes the norm.

- Some teachers do not make use of the information that they have about the needs of pupils with SEND in order to make precise enough adaptations for them. This means that, on occasions, pupils with SEND do not get enough support to be able to access and understand important knowledge well enough. The school need to ensure that all teachers use the information they are given regarding pupils with SEND, to make precise adaptations to learning so that pupils with SEND consistently get the support they need to achieve well.

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 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	139288
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10332025
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,063
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Pat Beanland
Principal	Nicola Hood
Website	www.westbourne.atrust.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	5 and 6 March 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses two unregistered alternative providers and nine registered alternative providers.
- There have been several changes in principal since the previous inspection. In February 2024, the trust director of secondary education took on this position on an interim basis. An interim executive principal was also in place between March and June 2024. The current principal is a trust principal. This means they also have responsibility for other schools in the trust. To assist with the running of the school, there is also an interim head of school. A new, full-time permanent headteacher has been appointed for September 2024.

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.
- To discuss governance and trust leadership an inspector met with a representative sample of trustees and local governors. This includes the chair and vice-chair of trustees.
- To discuss the role of the trust an inspector met with the chief executive officer and deputy chief executive officer.
- Inspectors met with the principal, assistant headteachers, trust and school special educational needs coordinators, trust deputy director of safeguarding and school designated safeguarding leads, behaviour, attendance, and personal development leads, subject leaders, pastoral leaders and staff. An inspector met with the head of careers to discuss careers provision.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, geography, history, religious education and physical education. 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 considered the curriculum in some other subjects, including personal social and health education and relationships and sex education, languages, music and art.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, around school and at social times. They also visited seclusion areas and intervention support provisions.
- 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 also held dedicated meetings to explore attendance.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's pupil survey and Ofsted's staff survey. They considered responses to the confidential on line survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text messages.

Inspection team

James Chester, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Susan Sutton	Ofsted Inspector
Gareth Cross	Ofsted Inspector
Nicola Ready	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 looked after children, 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.

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/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: 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
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024