

Inspection of a good school: Westfield Academy

Stiby Road, Yeovil, Somerset BA21 3EP

Inspection dates:

4 and 5 October 2023

Outcome

Westfield Academy continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Simon Dallimore. This school is part of Westfield Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the headteacher, as chief executive officer, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Simon Bachrach.

What is it like to attend this school?

Westfield Academy is a happy, inclusive and caring school. The school's ethos is built on warm and respectful relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils feel well cared for. They say that bullying is rare. Many parents comment positively about how the school 'sees the qualities in every child'. Pupils behave well. When pupils struggle to meet expectations, they receive high-quality pastoral care.

Pupils learn from an ambitious and engaging curriculum. They learn a wide range of subjects in both key stages. Most pupils enjoy their learning. Lessons are calm and purposeful, and pupils learn effectively in most subjects. They are encouraged to read widely.

Pupils learn about other cultures. The school ensures that the physical and emotional well-being of pupils is prioritised. Pupils feel listened to. They have many opportunities to have their say about life in their school. There is a large and varied extra-curricular offer for all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged. Pupils are very proud of their school. The school's 'strive' values, including integrity and empathy, are demonstrated by the whole school community.

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

The curriculum has developed significantly in some subjects. The school has become more ambitious for all pupils. For example, more pupils now learn a modern foreign language at key stage 4 and study the full range of subjects in the English Baccalaureate.

The school has thought carefully about what pupils should learn and in which order. It has responded to weak outcomes in some subjects. In a few subjects, curriculum plans are still not precise enough. This means that knowledge is not broken down sufficiently, and some pupils, including some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), struggle to keep up.

Sometimes, teachers do not check that pupils have understood what they have been taught before they teach new content. This means that some pupils do not have a secure understanding of what is being taught. They cannot remember important information and, as a result, do not build on prior knowledge. The school has started to make improvements. The impact of this work is evident in most subject areas.

The school accurately identifies pupils with SEND. Pupils who require additional help are well supported. The school has prioritised literacy. Pupils are supported to write at length. Those who struggle with reading also have extra support, including those who need to catch up with phonics knowledge.

Low-level disruption is very rare. Pupils listen well in lessons and they are respectful to staff. During social times, pupils participate in a range of activities. Older pupils socialise sensibly and play sports in their own area of the school.

The school has a comprehensive wider curriculum programme. This includes regular sessions about how to stay safe, literacy, cultural development, and important lessons about relationships and mental health. Pupils remember these important messages. The school prides itself on the range of sports teams, clubs and musical ensembles it has on offer. Many pupils represent the school. There are no barriers to participation. Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, value these opportunities. Many pupils agree that 'there is something for everyone here.'

Pupils are well supported in making decisions about their next steps. All pupils undertake work experience in Year 10. Younger pupils enjoy visiting local colleges, and the school ensures all Year 11 pupils have independent advice about their next steps.

Leaders at the school have created an inclusive environment. Staff feel valued and empowered. They share the school's values, which has a positive impact on pupils. The school welcomes all pupils. It provides additional pastoral help for those who are struggling to engage. Trustees understand the school's strengths and areas for development and challenge leaders appropriately.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, the small steps of knowledge that pupils must gain are not clearly identified. As a result, pupils, including pupils with SEND, do not learn as well in these subjects as they do in others. The trust should work with teachers to ensure that pupils build consistently strong knowledge across all subjects.
- Staff do not always use assessment effectively. They do not check that all pupils have understood what has been taught before introducing new content. This means that some pupils have gaps in their knowledge that persist. The trust should ensure that teachers use assessment strategies consistently well so that all pupils can learn effectively in all subjects, and misconceptions are addressed swiftly.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. 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 would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in September 2014.

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	137203
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10297989
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,046
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Simon Bachrach
CEO of the trust	Simon Dallimore
Headteacher	Simon Dallimore
Website	www.westfieldacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	1 May 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized secondary school.
- The school is a single-academy trust.
- The school uses two registered alternative providers and two unregistered alternative providers.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, science, geography 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.
- The lead inspector analysed responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View.
- Inspectors also considered the views of pupils and staff in Ofsted's online surveys.
- Inspectors also spoke with groups of pupils, as well as talking to them in lessons and during social times.
- 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.
- An inspector met with the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator and discussed how pupils with SEND are identified and supported.
- Inspectors met with staff who oversee the personal development and behaviour of pupils.
- Inspectors met with school and trust leaders. The lead inspector met with members of the board of trustees.

Inspection team

Victoria Griffin, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Mike Thomas

Ofsted Inspector

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