

Inspection of Westcliff Primary Academy

First Avenue, Dawlish, Devon EX7 9RA

Inspection dates:	24 and 25 September 2024
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Requires improvement
Personal development	Requires improvement
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Previous inspection grade	Good

The head of school of this school is Natasha Outhwaite. This school is part of First Federation 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 Walker, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Alex Walmsley.

What is it like to attend this school?

Westcliff Primary Academy is a welcoming place where pupils belong. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and positive. This gives pupils the confidence to talk with adults if they have any worries. It contributes to pupils feeling valued and safe. Many parents and carers describe the school as nurturing and supportive.

Since the previous inspection, pupils have not achieved well enough. The trust and new school leadership know this. They are working on the right things to bring about the necessary improvements. However, many positive changes have not had enough time to impact pupils' learning fully.

Pupils are beginning to benefit from the recently developed 'The Westcliff Way'. It sets the tone for how the school expects pupils to learn and behave. Many pupils show 'growing respect' by holding doors open for others and saying thank you. However, some pupils lose focus in lessons and struggle to complete tasks to a high standard. This tends to happen when learning does not match pupils' needs well enough.

The school supports pupils in being responsible and safe citizens. Enrichment activities, such as the Year 6 fundraising project, emphasise the importance of service to others. Visits from coastguards reinforce local beach safety.

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

The COVID-19 pandemic had a negative impact on pupils' learning and attendance. This, combined with changes in staffing and shortcomings in the curriculum, has slowed the school's progress in moving forward. For example, in 2023, pupils' combined attainment in Year 6 in English and mathematics was well below the national average. New school leadership has put the school on a pathway to raise aspiration. With support from the trust, they have quickly and astutely identified where improvements need to be made. Trustees ask probing questions to ensure that the school is moving forward at pace.

The school has improved the curriculum. In some subjects, staff teach the curriculum as the school intends. They revisit concepts and vocabulary to develop pupils' knowledge over time. For example, pupils build on their prior learning of privacy boundaries in computing to understand scamming. In history, older pupils explained the concept of invasion when comparing the Romans and Vikings. However, where important content is not clearly identified or sequenced, pupils do not gain the essential knowledge for future learning. This is especially notable in mathematics in key stage 2.

The standard of pupils' written work is not sufficiently high. Variability in the teaching of spelling, grammar, punctuation and handwriting hampers the quality of writing, including in the early years. As a result, some pupils do not acquire the writing skills they need to be ready for their next steps.

Reading underpins the school's curriculum. Staff have carefully mapped out the books pupils will encounter each year. These inspire pupils to read widely. Older pupils enjoy

discussing the techniques that authors use to engage the reader. The teaching of strategies to increase pupils' reading fluency is developing well.

The school has strengthened its phonics programme. From their first few weeks in school, children in the early years begin to learn the sounds that letters make. Staff check carefully to identify and support pupils who need extra help. As a result, fewer pupils need phonics catch-up support in key stage 2. Nonetheless, teachers do not always check what pupils know with the same precision in other curriculum subjects. Therefore, some pupils struggle to recall the essential knowledge they have learned before.

Clear systems are in place to identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) early and accurately, including in 'The Nest'. Staff give well-targeted pastoral support to help pupils overcome barriers to learning.

New leadership has raised expectations of attendance. Pupils' attendance is improving. However, sometimes, the adaptations made by teachers to support pupils, including those with SEND, do not match well to their needs. When this happens, these pupils struggle to learn the curriculum and interrupt the flow of learning for others.

Some pupils have a limited understanding of different faiths, cultures and fundamental British values. This hinders their readiness for life beyond school. However, the school fosters some aspects of pupils' personal development well. Pupils learn strategies for positive mental health. A careers fair inspires pupils to think about jobs they may choose to follow in the future. Debates and discussions about wider issues, such as peer pressure, help pupils make informed choices.

Most staff are positive about working at the school. They welcome and share leaders' ambition to improve the school. The school is well placed to bring about further improvements.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, including mathematics, the school has not clearly identified or sequenced the important knowledge it wants pupils to learn. This makes it difficult for pupils to deepen and connect their knowledge well over time. The trust and school need to define clearly the important knowledge that pupils need to learn and ensure it is well sequenced and implemented by all staff.
- Some pupils' written work contains basic handwriting, spelling, grammar and punctuation errors. It also lacks pride. These errors are not routinely picked up by teachers. As a result, pupils repeat the same mistakes. The trust should ensure that

the writing expectations across the curriculum are clearly established and teachers have the expertise to address errors.

- Some staff do not adapt learning well enough for different groups of pupils. As a result, pupils struggle to learn new concepts and lose concentration. The trust needs to ensure that staff understand how to tailor learning so that all groups of pupils build knowledge securely and focus on their learning across all subjects.
- In some subjects, assessment is not used with enough precision to check what pupils know and remember in lessons and over time. As a result, some pupils struggle to recall the essential knowledge they have learned before. The trust needs to ensure that staff are equipped with the knowledge to use assessment effectively to check on pupils' understanding over time and to inform future learning.

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	142390
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10334711
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	347
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Alex Walmsley
CEO of the trust	Paul Walker
Headteacher	Natasha Outhwaite
Website	www.westcliffpriacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 and 9 January 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school part of First Federation Trust, a multi-academy trust of primary schools in Devon, Dorset and Somerset.
- Several changes to leadership have occurred since the previous inspection. The head of school and deputy head of school took up post in September 2024.
- The school has a specialist resource base call 'The Nest'. The provision supports eight places for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The school currently uses two unregistered alternative provisions.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form

provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held discussions with the head of school, the deputy heads of school and other school staff. The lead inspector met with representatives from the trust board, including the chair of trustees and members the hub committee. He also met with the executive trust directors and the CEO of the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, English, mathematics, history and music. 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 discussed the curriculum in personal, social, health and economic education. Inspectors visited ‘The Nest’ classroom and reviewed documentation for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors listened to pupils in Years 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 reading.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: met the designated safeguarding lead; checked the single central record of adults working in the school; took account of the views of 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 observed pupils’ behaviour in lessons and during breaktime and lunchtime. They spoke with pupils and staff about behaviour.
- Inspectors spoke with a range of staff to discuss how the school supports their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the start and end of the school day. They considered responses to Ofsted’s online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. They also considered responses to Ofsted’s staff survey.

Inspection team

Dale Burr, lead inspector	His Majesty’s Inspector
Matthew Shirley	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Ryder	Ofsted Inspector

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