School report
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Inspection of Marshalls Park Academy

Pettits Lane, Romford, Essex, RM1 4EH

Inspection dates: 30–31 January 2020

Overall effectiveness	**Good**
The quality of education	**Good**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Good**
Personal development	**Good**
Leadership and management	**Good**
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to attend this school. They like that the school has a strong sense of community. Parents and carers also speak highly of the education that their children receive. They are supportive of leaders' high expectations for pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning.

The headteacher, trustees and staff are committed to ensuring that all pupils achieve highly. This vision is shared by pupils. Pupils enjoy their time here. They appreciate that leaders and staff provide them with a calm and orderly learning environment.

Leaders have successfully raised expectations for the quality of pupils' learning. Across the school, pupils' achievement has improved. Pupils achieve well in a wide range of subjects. This includes in their GCSE examinations.

Leaders provide a wide range of extra-curricular activities aimed at developing pupils' character. Clubs for arts and sports are also very popular with pupils. They particularly enjoy opportunities to compete with other schools in volleyball and football.

Pupils behave very well. They show respect for their peers and teachers. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and caring. Pupils focus on their work in lessons. Around the school, they conduct themselves sensibly and considerately. When bullying occurs, leaders make sure it is dealt with promptly and effectively. Pupils feel safe here.

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

Leaders and trustees focus sharply on ensuring that pupils receive a high-quality education. Their work is centred on an ambitious vision for all pupils. In most subjects, leaders have secured considerable improvements in how well pupils achieve. This includes in their GCSE examinations. Crucially, leaders have put in place clear plans for what pupils should learn in most subjects. Expectations are high for all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders have also established effective systems to promote high standards of behaviour. This too enables pupils to learn well.

Leaders provide staff with high-quality guidance on how to plan and teach subjects effectively. Leaders' work has been particularly successful in English, religious education, science and history. In these subjects, pupils learn new knowledge in a logical manner. They progressively deepen their understanding of important ideas. Teachers are clear about which concepts and ideas pupils need to learn next. They are clear on how this knowledge builds on what pupils have already studied.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They select activities which help pupils to understand key concepts. However, this is not the case in modern foreign languages and mathematics. Some teachers lack the expertise to adapt subject plans effectively. Teaching does not take into account fully pupils' misconceptions or gaps in their knowledge. Sometimes, pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise aspects of learning that they find hard. This holds some pupils back from achieving as well as they could in these subjects.

Leaders are keen to increase the proportion of pupils studying the EBacc suite of subjects in Years 10 and 11. To support this aim, all pupils study a wide range of subjects in Years 7 to 9. However, plans for music, art, and design and technology do not enable pupils to study these subjects in sufficient depth. This reduces pupils' readiness to study more demanding content at GCSE. Leaders are aware of these shortcomings. They are redeveloping subject plans so that pupils learn a suitably broad and ambitious range of knowledge and skills. They aim to introduce these plans from September 2020.

Teachers have high expectations of all pupils with SEND. They understand and meet pupils' individual needs effectively. Across the school, pupils with SEND learn well.

Pupils behave well in lessons. They know it is important to try their best. Classrooms have a calm and productive atmosphere. Low-level disruption is rare.

Leaders promote pupils' personal development through a wide range of well-chosen experiences and activities. Pupils learn about other faiths and cultures. They have regular opportunities to reflect on moral issues. Teachers encourage pupils to think about their responsibilities as citizens and what they might learn from the experiences of others.

Staff enjoy working here. They appreciate leaders' support to reduce their workload and promote their well-being. Trustees are strong and knowledgeable in their work.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong culture of safeguarding. The welfare of pupils is always a priority here. Staff receive up-to-date training and understand their duties to keep pupils safe. They are vigilant in identifying potential risks to pupils. They report any concerns in a timely manner.

Leaders and staff are very knowledgeable about risks in the local area, such as knife crime. They take appropriate steps to educate pupils about how they can reduce these risks. Leaders work effectively with external agencies and ensure that pupils receive the right help when they need it. The pastoral team works closely with pupils and their families to understand pupils' needs.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In music, art, and design and technology, pupils in Years 7 to 9 miss out on studying some important content. Leaders have not ensured that subject plans enable pupils to gain sufficient depth and breadth in their knowledge. Leaders have suitable plans to address this by September 2020. For this reason, the transition arrangements have been applied in this case. Leaders must ensure that pupils' learning in art, music and design and technology provides similar breadth and ambition to the national curriculum in Years 7 to 9.
- In mathematics and modern foreign languages, teaching is not always sharply focused on ensuring pupils learn and revisit important concepts. Pupils do not develop their knowledge as well as they could. Leaders need to ensure that teaching enables all pupils, including those with SEND, grasp important knowledge securely. They should also check how effectively teachers use and adapt subject planning to support all pupils to produce work of a high standard.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can complain to Ofsted.

Further information

You can search for published performance information about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	144094
Local authority	Havering
Inspection number	10121507
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	996
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	John King
Headteacher	Neil Frost
Website	http://marshallspark.org.uk/
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Marshalls Park Academy converted to become an academy school on 1 April 2017. When its predecessor school, Marshalls Park School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged as requires improvement. It is now part of South West Essex Community Education Trust made up of five schools.
- The school is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below the national average. The school has a lower-than-average proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan.
- The school uses alternative provision for a small number of pupils at Goldtrowel, Lambourne End and Barking & Dagenham College.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We held meetings with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, subject leaders and leaders with responsibility for pupils with SEND.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, modern foreign languages, history and religious education. In each of these subjects, inspectors looked at curriculum planning with subject leaders, visited lessons, reviewed pupils' work, and held discussions with teachers and pupils.
- We evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding by reviewing the single central record, school policies, procedures and records. We met leaders with designated responsibility for safeguarding. This included looking at documentation and examples of actions taken to keep pupils safe. We also spoke with staff to check their understanding of how to keep pupils safe.
- We considered a range of evidence about pupils' attendance and punctuality.
- We observed pupils' conduct and behaviour during break and lunchtimes. We spoke to pupils formally and informally about their learning and to gather their views of the school.
- We considered 155 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including 99 written responses. We also took into account 47 responses to the staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey.
- The lead inspector met with three trustees including the chair of the trust board. We also looked at records related to governance.

Inspection team

Jeffery Quaye, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Bruce Goddard	Ofsted Inspector
Ben Thompson	Ofsted Inspector
James Whiting	Ofsted Inspector

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