

Inspection of Victory Park Academy

Wentworth Road, Southend-On-Sea, Essex SS2 5LG

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 May 2024

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

The headteacher of this school is Englantin Muca. The school is part of Parallel Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the interim chief executive officer, Angela Barry, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Jonathan Alvis.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils arrive at school having had previous negative experiences of education. Staff quickly get to know what pupils' specific needs are. This helps them to settle into school very well. They soon learn to re-engage with learning. Pupils develop very positive attitudes towards their education. This helps to improve their attendance and ignite ambitions for their future.

Staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils rise to these expectations. This helps them to achieve well. Many return to mainstream settings successfully. Some stay at school until the end of Year 11. These pupils gain the qualifications they need to be ready for their next stage of learning.

The chance to build positive relationships is highly valued by pupils during their time here. They are incredibly respectful towards staff, visitors and each other. They enjoy coming together as one community to eat breakfast and lunch in the dining hall. They value the chance to chat about their day with staff and their peers.

Pupils are proud to share their successes. They also enjoy celebrating the achievements of their peers. Pupils build their confidence and resilience through the wider enrichment offer. Highlights of the week include opportunities to take part in cooking or obstacle course racing.

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

The school has identified the important knowledge pupils will learn. They have broken this knowledge down into small steps and placed it into a clear sequence. Staff are well trained to teach the curriculum. Teachers typically have secure subject knowledge. This helps them to teach the curriculum effectively. As a result, pupils build their knowledge over time.

Pupils join the school at different points in the academic year. Most join with specific and significant gaps in knowledge. Many pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school has a clear and rigorous induction process. Teachers identify gaps in knowledge that pupils have. They also identify the specific needs of pupils with SEND. Teachers use this information to adapt the curriculum well to meet pupils' individual needs. For example, in personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, older pupils learn about the dangers of substance abuse. This is important learning they have missed because of their previous ad-hoc attendance in education.

Teachers typically provide pupils with appropriate work to secure important knowledge. For example, in mathematics, pupils have plenty of opportunities to become fluent in calculations. They use this fluency to help them solve more complex mathematical problems. In some instances, teachers do not provide pupils with work that is well matched to what they need. When this happens, pupils do not

secure some of the important building blocks of knowledge they need for future learning.

Reading is an important part of the school curriculum. Pupils in the primary phase have many opportunities to develop their fluency and love of reading. Secondary-phase pupils learn about different books through the curriculum. They benefit from the literature the school teaches them. However, they do not read enough for pleasure. There is not a clear approach to how the school will support them to do this. As a result, older pupils do not benefit from reading as widely as they could.

The school's PSHE curriculum is a crucial part of pupils' personal development. Pupils learn about respectful and healthy relationships. They also develop strategies to manage their feelings and emotions. The carefully planned careers programme teaches pupils about different options available to them after Year 11. Pupils value the impartial advice and guidance they receive.

The school has a sharp focus on improving attendance. The school helps families by finding solutions to the barriers they face so that pupils attend school more frequently. Most pupils improve their attendance. They also significantly improve their behaviour. The PSHE curriculum helps pupils understand and have ownership of their behaviours. This sense of responsibility is underpinned by the consistently high expectations staff have of pupils. Pupils develop into mature and responsible young adults who want to contribute to society and make a difference.

The school has significantly improved since the last inspection. Staff value the way leaders help them to manage their workload and well-being. The school has developed incredibly strong relationships with parents. Parents value the positive impact the school has on their children and families.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes the work teachers set for pupils is not well matched to what pupils require. This can lead to pupils not securing their understanding of the important knowledge they need for their next steps. The school should ensure staff provide pupils with well-matched work and activities to enable them to secure the important knowledge they need for their future learning.
- The school has not established a clear approach towards developing reading for pleasure for pupils in key stage 3 and key stage 4. This means these pupils do not develop a rich body of knowledge and vocabulary over time. They also do not benefit from broadening their horizons or developing their cultural capital. The school should ensure they have a clear approach towards developing the reading

habits of these pupils. This is so pupils benefit from experiencing a wider reading diet.

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	142938
Local authority	Southend-on-Sea
Inspection number	10323769
Type of school	Alternative provision
School category	Academy alternative provision sponsored
Age range of pupils	5 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	99
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jonathan Alvis
CEO of the trust	Angela Barry (Interim CEO)
Headteacher	Englantín Muca
Website	www.victorypark.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	9 and 10 November 2021, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up post in September 2022. Prior to this, he was deputy headteacher at the school.
- The school provides places for pupils who have been permanently excluded from school or for pupils who are at risk of permanent exclusion.
- Many pupils attend the school for a 12-week placement where they receive support to return to mainstream schools. Some pupils remain at the school for longer periods, especially in key stage 4. These pupils study a range of academic and vocational qualifications.
- The school does not use any other alternative provision.
- The school shares its site with Sutton House Academy. Sutton House Academy is a school for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. It is also a school in Parallel Learning Trust.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and

engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

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.
- Inspectors held meetings with the interim chief executive officer, the director of standards from the trust, the headteacher, senior leaders, the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, subject leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector held conversations with a representative of Southend local authority and the headteacher from Southend virtual school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English (including early reading), mathematics, PSHE and occupational studies. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector listened to pupils read. Inspectors also considered evidence from other areas of the curriculum.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 reviewed a range of documents, including behaviour logs, bullying records, attendance records, pupil records, minutes of academy council and trustee meetings, school development plans, external monitoring records and school policies.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents through their responses to the online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, alongside speaking with parents on the telephone. Inspectors also took account of responses to Ofsted's pupil and staff surveys.

Inspection team

Michael Williams, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sue Cox

Ofsted Inspector

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