

Cecil Jones Academy

Eastern Avenue, Southend-on-Sea, Essex SS2 4BU

Inspection dates

5–6 December 2017

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders, governors and the trust have not moved swiftly or precisely enough to address the huge challenges they inherited when the school first opened in September 2015. They are not providing pupils with an acceptable standard of education in key stages 3 and 4.
- Safeguarding is ineffective. Leaders have not created a sufficiently strong culture, or systems that are rigorous enough, to support some of the most vulnerable pupils who need help.
- Leaders' monitoring, review and evaluation, in almost all areas of their work, are weak. Leaders have not shown the capacity to bring about sustained improvement.
- The governors and the trust are not holding leaders sharply to account for continued improvements in the school. They are too generous in their views about the impact of leaders' work.
- Staffing turbulence since the academy opened in 2015, including at leadership level, has brought substantial inconsistency in the quality of teaching and the management of pupils' behaviour across the school.
- Pupils' behaviour around the school has not improved rapidly enough since the academy opened. Too many pupils continue to display aggressive, boisterous and occasionally unsafe behaviours, which are not effectively managed by staff or leaders.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in key stages 3 and 4 varies significantly. Ineffective planning, temporary staffing and/or poor behaviour collectively mean that too often pupils' learning is weak.
- There is a significant number of parents who are very unhappy about the school's provision and the quality of communication with staff.

The school has the following strengths

- The sixth form is good. The small numbers of students in the sixth form achieve well, and enjoy their school experience.
- The director of progress, behaviour and welfare, appointed by the trust, is starting to raise expectations about the support required for pupils with complex behavioural needs.
- The principal has worked hard to make improvements for the pupils despite the lack of capacity within the school to support him.
- New leaders, appointed by the trust to add capacity to the school, are starting to identify the issues more precisely but it is too early to evaluate the impact of their work.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Urgently ensure that safeguarding is effective by:
 - making sure that the designated safeguarding leaders have sufficient support to address fully the volume of referrals made in the school each week
 - being attentive and vigilant to all concerns reported by staff and pupils, so that there is a coherent, well-recorded and thoroughly monitored response to the different emerging needs of vulnerable pupils
 - ensuring that there is a shared understanding among all staff about the wider issues that lie behind some pupils' behaviours, and how to respond to these issues appropriately
 - ensuring that all incidents of bullying are recorded as such in the school's formal log, so that leaders have an accurate oversight of issues in the school, and any emerging pupil needs, so that steps can be taken to address whole-school issues.
- Eradicate the inadequacies in leadership and governance by:
 - ensuring that leaders' self-evaluation and school development planning are precise, clearly identify the most urgent priorities, set sharp deadlines for improvements and establish clear lines of accountability
 - ensuring that leaders use their self-evaluation and development plans to measure accurately and routinely the impact that they are having on raising standards, and that governors use the documents to hold leaders to account effectively
 - ensuring that the principal has sufficient resources and staffing so that he can bring sustained improvements
 - developing the new monitoring systems for teaching, learning and assessment, so that leaders and governors have an accurate view of the quality of provision, and its impact on pupils' progress
 - developing simple yet effective ways to monitor and review the ongoing issues in the school, most notably in pupils' behaviour, attendance, achievement and the provision for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities
 - improving their work with parents and carers, so that they build positive, effective relationships with staff throughout the school.
- Raise standards in pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - further developing the behaviour system to ensure that staff use it consistently and

effectively both within lessons and around the school, so that pupils are confident in staff's ability to deal consistently and fairly with poor behaviour so that behaviour around the school improves significantly

- identifying the right support and strategies for pupils who exhibit significant difficulty in managing their own behaviour, so that incidences of extreme behaviour continue to reduce, and other forms of provision, such as managed moves to other schools, are more successful for the pupils
- diminishing the absence and persistent absence of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, so that the pupils' attendance is at least in line with the national average.
- Significantly raise standards in teaching, learning, assessment and achievement, so that pupils make at least expected progress, by:
 - raising teachers' expectations about what pupils can achieve, including the most able pupils, those from disadvantaged backgrounds, those who need to catch up, and those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities
 - ensuring that staff use assessment information to plan work that meets pupils' needs and engages the interests of pupils in the lessons
 - significantly reducing the numbers of pupils who lose focus in their lessons or become distracted.

An external review of the use of pupil premium funding should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of governance should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

It is recommended that the school should not appoint newly qualified teachers.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Since opening in September 2015, leaders, governors and the trust have not moved quickly or securely enough to overcome the culture of entrenched historic underperformance that they inherited. As a result, improvements are fragile, not well sustained and are not yet embedded.
- Leaders have not ensured that there is adequate staffing capacity to deal with the large number of safeguarding concerns raised in the school week on week. Consequently, safeguarding is ineffective.
- Despite his diligence, the principal has faced significant obstacles in establishing consistent staffing, including at leadership level, since the academy opened. There has been a reliance on temporary staffing, which has made improving teaching, behaviour and leadership extremely difficult.
- Leaders and governors have an overgenerous view of the quality of provision. This is despite specific concerns raised when Ofsted inspectors visited the school in May 2017. While the self-evaluation and school development plan broadly outline the issues facing the school, they do not clearly identify the problems, or how the leaders are going to address the issues rapidly and securely. The documents are not helpful to leaders in addressing the many problems in the school.
- Leaders' monitoring and evaluation of their work throughout the school are, more often than not, weak. Leaders collect an array of information, but are not routinely using the information that they have to really understand the depth of the problems that they face. This includes information about safeguarding, bullying, pupils' behaviour and attendance, and the provision for pupils in the classroom, including those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Leaders have not yet ensured that pupils understand the importance of equality and mutual respect. Pupils receive guidance about the importance of respect and tolerance through tutor time, lessons in personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) and in assemblies. However, there are a significant number of pupils who do not treat one another or staff with respect. For example, inspectors saw too many pupils ignoring a range of requests from staff during the break and lunchtimes.
- Leaders and governors do not have a sharp enough understanding of the difference that the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils, or the Year 7 catch-up funding, is making. Leaders' review of the impact of this funding is too limited because it is concentrated mainly on the assessment information provided by teachers. There is not a shared understanding about the barriers that pupils face, the rationale behind the spending, or the impact of this funding on pupils' academic and personal development.
- Despite the trust's inherent understanding of the challenges facing the school, they have not secured sustained improvements since the academy opened. The regular on-site activity of the chief executive officer has ensured that the principal has had day-to-day support, but both have been 'firefighting' emerging issues, rather than securing or embedding improvements.
- The principal has managed to recruit a more stable leadership at both senior and

middle leadership level. More recently, the trust has also appointed a new director of welfare and behaviour, who is working full time alongside leaders to raise standards. This trust employee has a much more thorough understanding of the issues facing the school, and is taking active steps to work with other local schools to improve alternative provision and support in the local area. However, this work is still in its infancy.

- The new vice-principal is using the trust-wide 'excellence framework' to review the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the school. Until recently, leaders and governors had an overwhelmingly generous view of the quality of teaching and learning. The work of the new deputy principal offers a more realistic view of the provision, and better guidance about what training staff need, but it is too early to see the impact of this work.
- Leaders, particularly the principal, have worked tenaciously to engage with parents and carers. On occasion, these relationships have been fraught and difficult. Moreover, the high levels of support and supervision provided to parents and pupils by the principal is not consistently matched elsewhere in the school. Too often, it is not until an incident develops and reaches the attention of the principal that it is dealt with appropriately and diligently.
- The recent implementation of some trust-wide policies has had some success. For example, the trust has introduced an appraisal system that now holds staff more securely to account for pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders and the trust have worked hard to create, implement and embed a curriculum which supports pupils' interests, and increases the number of subjects that they get a chance to study. Pupils speak highly of the extra-curricular after-school clubs that they can access, as well as the intervention programme for Year 11. In particular, leaders have strengthened the careers information and guidance within the curriculum to raise pupils' aspirations. This has encouraged more pupils to undertake post-16 and post-18 education, training or employment.
- Newly qualified teachers, and those new to the profession, are effusive in their praise for the support that they receive in the school from leaders. Although they acknowledge the challenges that they face in a number of lessons, they feel that the support they receive from leaders in the school is high-quality and very helpful.
- Leadership in the sixth form is a real strength in the school's provision. The leader has a thorough understanding of the 16 to 19 study programmes, and has created an individualised and high-quality provision for the small numbers of students who access it. Consequently, the sixth form is securely good.

Governance of the school

- The local governing body does not have a sharp enough understanding of the considerable issues that remain in the school. The governors do not challenge leaders sufficiently over the ever-changing school evaluation, especially over the evidence that leaders have to secure that evaluation.
- The governors are not effectively using the school development plan to routinely hold leaders to account against mutually understood and agreed priorities. Governors had

not identified the weaknesses in the school development plan, and therefore there is a lack of clarity about the strategic development of the school.

- The governors do not have a precise understanding of the academic standards in the school. Although they ask pertinent questions, too often they do not follow this through to challenge leaders about the progress that pupils are making from their varied starting points.
- The governors' understanding of the additional funding that they receive for disadvantaged pupils is too vague. They do not know the difference that this funding makes, or which aspects of this funding are currently working best.
- The governors are passionate and committed to the school, and visit regularly. They are keen to get better provision for the young people in the community. Governors wholeheartedly support the school leaders, and understand the significant challenges that they face. However, too often, governors provide support without the high levels of challenge required to really hold leaders to account for sustained improvements.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- Leaders have not ensured that the designated safeguarding leaders have the necessary capacity and support to be able to cope with the sheer numbers of referrals from staff on a weekly basis.
- Leaders make appropriate referrals to external agencies and keep these case files well. However, too often, other concerns raised about pupils are not dealt with thoroughly enough, especially about those pupils who sometimes exhibit real vulnerabilities in their mental health, or in their understanding of potentially harmful behaviours.
- Although leaders keep a record of bullying incidences and follow-up action, review of the safeguarding files elicited that examples of potential bullying had not been recorded in the central bullying log. Consequently, leaders were only aware of, and responding to, a small proportion of the concerns elsewhere in the school, identified by staff, pupils and parents.
- Leaders have ensured that the record of checks on staff recruitment is up to date, and that all appropriate checks are taken on staff prior to their employment at the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Teachers' use of assessment is underdeveloped. There are significant weaknesses in how some teachers use their knowledge of pupils' prior learning to plan appropriate learning activities which engage, motivate and challenge pupils to learn effectively.
- Too much learning is disturbed by poor behaviour. Too many lessons do not start punctually, or at all. Where they do begin, too many pupils are not engaged with the learning taking place. When this happens, pupils do not learn effectively.
- Teachers have inconsistent expectations of what pupils can achieve, and these expectations are often too low. More often than not, pupils, including the most able pupils, receive the same work irrespective of their ability. Teachers' planning does not

routinely ensure that learning links from one lesson to another, and that pupils' knowledge and skills are developing over time.

- Some teaching does not engage pupils' interests well. Activities are not well suited to the abilities and interests of pupils. This results in too many pupils losing attention, becoming disengaged and distracting others. This is particularly the case for those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, or where pupils need support to catch up.
- Leaders acknowledge that the work of additional teaching assistants to support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is not yet well developed. Teachers are not yet working alongside the other adults to ensure that there is clarity about how best to support pupils' needs.
- There are pockets of better practice in the school, most notably but not exclusively in the sixth form. Here, teachers use assessment to plan effective learning activities, support individual pupils when they fall behind, and use routine questioning to elicit more developed responses from pupils. However, this is not commonplace across key stage 3 and 4.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- Leaders, governors and the trust have not ensured that the designated safeguarding leaders have sufficient capacity to ensure an appropriate level of vigilance to the referrals being made by staff and pupils in the school. As a result, not all reasonable steps are being taken to ensure that pupils are kept safe.
- Staff are not yet meeting the full range of needs of vulnerable pupils in the school. Too often, pupils exhibit signs of potential distress or concern that are not dealt with appropriately. Although the school has a several professionals to support pupils, such as the school counsellor and key workers, the securing of these services to ensure that the right pupils get the right help, quickly and routinely, is weak. Staff's attentiveness to pupils' well-being, and their confidence to deal with these problems, is also inconsistent.
- Leaders' records of bullying are incomplete and not correct. Consequently, leaders are reviewing only a partial picture of the issues in the school, and do not know what the scale of the problem may be.
- Most pupils who spoke to inspectors do not believe that bullying is a problem in the school. Most also say that there is someone in the school that they could go to, if they had a problem. However, there are a significant number of parents who have identified concerns about ongoing bullying and the school's failure to deal with it.
- Upon reviewing some of the information available in the school, there are a number of pupils who do not have the skills or understanding about how to develop positive relationships. There is not enough work undertaken to support pupils to tackle issues, and to support them to make positive relationships with their classmates.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- Leaders have not dealt rapidly or effectively enough with the culture of poor behaviour.
- Leaders have brought some improvements. For example, pupils say that fighting has reduced significantly on-site since the academy opened. However, too often, pupils exhibit boisterous, antisocial and sometimes unsafe behaviour around the school. The inappropriate behaviour pertaining to a large core of pupils has a significant negative impact on the atmosphere in the school.
- Staff are not confident in the school's behaviour management system. Around a quarter of the 40 staff who completed Ofsted's survey do not believe that the system works effectively. Equally, pupils say that while call out to a senior member of staff is effective in removing pupils who are disturbing learning, teachers are too often ineffective in securing positive behaviour in lessons.
- Staff are either ineffective or do not tackle issues around the school consistently well. Inspectors saw numerous examples of staff failing to tackle antisocial behaviour and unacceptably poor language throughout the two days of the inspection. Furthermore, inspectors saw numerous examples of pupils ignoring the requests of staff.
- Leaders have not established effective strategies or actions to support the complex social, emotional and behavioural needs of a significant minority of pupils who exhibit extremely poor behaviours. Additionally, leaders have been unable to secure appropriate next-step provision for these pupils. This is leading to high numbers of failed managed moves to other schools. Consequently, the use of fixed-term and permanent exclusions, although reducing, is much higher than the national average.
- Attendance is below average and too many pupils are still persistently absent. Leaders work with pupils on an individual basis and, where this is the case, they can show examples of improvements in the attendance for some of the pupils. The number of pupils who are persistently absent has reduced slightly this year. However, the attendance of groups of pupils, such as disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, is very low and shows little sign of sustained improvement.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- The published outcomes for pupils since the school opened in 2015 indicate that many pupils in Year 11 have underachieved considerably from their varied starting points. Pupils often enter with attainment that is significantly lower than expected for their age.
- The progress that pupils made overall in 2016/17 remains below the national average, especially for those from middle- and higher-attaining starting points. This also includes disadvantaged pupils, whose progress was significantly below that of other pupils nationally.
- The achievement in different subjects is too varied. The overall progress that Year 11 pupils made in 2015/16 and 2016/17 in English, humanities and the wider curriculum subjects was below the national average.

- Leaders made some difference to the attainment of Year 11 pupils in 2016/17. This has been a particular challenge given the short time that they have had some pupils, and the entrenched historic underperformance of the predecessor school. In 2016/17 there was an increase in the numbers of pupils who achieved a good pass in both English and mathematics.
- Any improvements that leaders and the trust can point to with previous Year 11 cohorts are undermined by the evidence of poor behaviour and weak teaching, learning and assessment in year groups for the younger pupils. Pupils across all groups are not making consistent and sustained improvements in their learning, and lose ground on other pupils nationally. As a result, there is too much reliance on catch-up and additional support in key stage 4, particularly in Year 11.
- The funding for disadvantaged pupils is not being used insightfully to ensure that pupils in all year groups make the progress of which they are capable. This is especially worrying as a large proportion of pupils are eligible for this money. Leaders have not identified the barriers sufficiently, or used a range of information, to really get to grips with why disadvantaged pupils are lagging behind.
- The achievement in the school's small sixth form is a notable strength. The students make good progress in almost all subjects offered.
- Most pupils go on to appropriate next-step education, training or employment when they leave the school. Despite pupils' poorer achievement, leaders work hard to provide well-rounded information, advice and guidance to ensure that pupils have an increasing clear sense of the careers paths that they want to follow. This means that almost all pupils in 2016/17 secured a place in employment, training or education.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- The provision in the small sixth form is a real strength in the school. The principal and trust have ensured that, despite falling numbers, they have retained an effective provision for these students.
- Teaching, learning and assessment in the sixth form are good. Teachers know their subject content and examination specifications well, and use this knowledge to plan high-quality lessons for students.
- Students are highly engaged learners, who participate with enthusiasm and interest. As a result, over time, students from their varied starting points, make securely good progress in most subjects.
- Outcomes since the academy opened have continued to improve, and remain strong. The progress that students make in almost all subjects is at least in line with the national average. The overall progress that students made in 2016/17 was above the national average.
- Personal development, behaviour and welfare in the sixth form are good. Students are happy, responsible and feel well supported and safe. Students engage in a range of community, charity and school roles. The welfare provision ensures that any concerns about students are followed up tenaciously. The welfare manager in the sixth form knows pupils well and, alongside the sixth-form leader, keeps meticulous monitoring records about students' welfare needs.

- Leaders ensure that students are well prepared for the next stages in their education, training or employment. Students who spoke to inspectors were very appreciative of the support and guidance that they received, including to make applications to university, and for further education and employment. As a result of this ongoing work, almost all students achieve a sustained, appropriate next step in their education, training or employment when they leave the sixth form.
- The school's main curriculum offer is that of a broad range of level 3 provision, most notably A levels. Where a few students do not succeed on their chosen courses by the end of Year 12, leaders ensure that the students receive individual support to find an appropriate next step for them either within the school or within the local area.
- The leader in the sixth form has an insightful understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in the provision. This is leading the sixth form to go from strength to strength. For example, the leader's response to students' views has been to review the curriculum provision. He is now researching and implementing careful improvements to widen the curriculum offer from 2018/19 so that more pupils from Year 11 can access post-16 courses at the school when they complete key stage 4.
- Students are encouraged to undertake work experience and work-related learning as part of their sixth-form lessons. However, leaders are not yet satisfied that this is as wide-ranging as it needs to be. Leaders have a thorough action plan to work with students to ensure that all of these opportunities are meaningful experiences in line with students' aspirations and interests in 2017/18.

School details

Unique reference number	142077
Local authority	Southend-on-Sea
Inspection number	10039507

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Other secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	964
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	60
Appropriate authority	The Legra Academy Trust
Chair	Robin Marcus
Principal	Martin Ovenden
Telephone number	01702 440000
Website	www.ceciljonesacademy.org.uk
Email address	enquiries@ceciljones.net
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school opened as an academy in September 2015 under the sponsorship of the Legra Academy Trust.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding is above the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is broadly in line with the national average, including for pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- No pupils access alternative provision currently. A small number of pupils are beginning to access behaviour outreach provision through the Parallel Learning Trust.
- The school met the floor standards set by the Department for Education for the achievement of pupils in Year 11 in 2016.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning across the school in both the core and foundation subjects. Some observations were undertaken jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- Meetings were held with the chief executive officer for the Legra Academy Trust, the principal, senior leaders and middle leaders. Inspectors also met with the chair of the Legra Academy Trust, another member of this trust, and the chair of the local governing body alongside another governor.
- Inspectors scrutinised work from across different key stages, including in English, mathematics, science, history, geography and languages.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, development plan, minutes of governors' meetings, safeguarding records, and files of children looked after, pupils' progress information, and school policies and procedures.
- Inspectors analysed 63 responses from Ofsted's online survey of parents, Parent View, including free-text commentary provided by some parents. Inspectors also held telephone conversations with some parents.
- Inspectors analysed 40 responses from the Ofsted's online survey of staff.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils. Inspectors spoke informally to pupils at break, lunch and in lessons, and met formally with pupils, including students in the sixth form, to discuss their experiences. Inspectors also heard pupils in Years 7 and 8 read.

Inspection team

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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