

Inspection of Paignton Academy

Waterleat Road, Paignton, Devon TQ3 3WA

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 July 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders and staff promote a sense of belonging at Paignton Academy, with the view that 'we may be two sites but we are one school'.

Pupils feel safe at the school. They learn how to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy. Pupils know who to speak to should they have any concerns. If bullying occurs it is usually dealt with effectively. However, some pupils experience sexism from their peers.

Pupils' learning is strong in some areas of the curriculum. However, the curriculum is not always structured or taught well enough. So, pupils' experiences are too variable. This is especially the case for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Sometimes learning is disrupted by pupils' behaviour, which is not always dealt with consistently.

Leaders are keen for pupils to have 'genuinely memorable experiences' and provide a range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the recent school musical and the new theatre, taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh award and the sporting opportunities at the school. Pupils on the academy council take their leadership responsibilities seriously. They enjoy working with staff to develop their school.

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

The new headteacher has set a clear vision for school improvement. Leaders have begun to make improvements to key areas of the school. However, many important developments are in their infancy.

The curriculum does not have the ambition and scope of the national curriculum. This means many pupils experience a narrower curriculum than they are entitled to follow. The number of pupils learning English Baccalaureate (EBacc) subjects is growing, however it is a minority of pupils.

Curriculum leaders are enthusiastic and have sound subject knowledge. Leaders' understanding of what makes a strong curriculum is, however, too variable. While there are some strong curriculums with well sequenced content, this is not always the case. This means that, in some subjects, pupils' knowledge does not build securely on prior learning.

Most subject curriculums at key stage 3 are closely aligned with examination curriculums. For example, pupils learn from an early stage how to answer GCSE-style questions. However, this does not have the impact leaders intend. While pupils can recall examination skills, they do not develop the requisite depth of subject knowledge.

Assessment is used to check on what pupils know. It is most successful, although this is not routine, when used to question why pupils do not understand a particular topic. In the most effective cases, the curriculum and teaching are then adjusted.

The curriculum does not meet the needs of pupils with SEND. Staff do not always understand the needs of these pupils. As a result, pupils with SEND produce work below their capabilities. When pupils' needs are not met, learning is disrupted by poor behaviour. At the off-site specialist centre, new leadership is developing a purposeful and nurturing environment for pupils.

Leaders understand the importance of reading and have built it into the curriculum. However, the reading programme is in its infancy, so insecure readers are yet to benefit from this.

Trustees are supportive of the school. They have helped the school to develop close links with local providers to support pupils' next steps. However, those responsible for governance do not have a clear understanding of the school's weaknesses. They have not acted with urgency to ensure that priority areas, such as the provision for pupils with SEND, are improved.

There is a comprehensive programme of personal development that pupils find helpful and relevant to their needs. Pupils receive objective careers advice to help them to make informed decisions about next steps. As a result, pupils feel well-informed to progress to further education, employment or training. The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeship.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that staff, including early career teachers, are confident to identify and report concerns. Staff receive training that keeps them up to date with safeguarding practice and local risks. Leaders ensure that necessary checks are made on newly appointed staff before they start work in school. Trustees regularly assure themselves of the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding systems.

Leaders know pupils and families well. Leaders work with external agencies to find the right support to help vulnerable pupils and families.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including online. They are taught about healthy relationships. However, some pupils experience sexist language and attitudes as part of their daily life in school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils with SEND do not do as well as they could. This is because their needs are not clearly identified or understood. Teaching and the curriculum are not adapted effectively to meet their needs. Leaders are taking steps to improve the provision for pupils with SEND. It is important that these be enacted with urgency and impact to ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils with SEND.
- Leaders' understanding of what makes a strong curriculum is too variable. It is not always clear how content connects to prior learning or supports future learning. This means that pupils do not always learn well. Leaders have developed a well-structured professional development programme to support staff learning. They should ensure that this helps staff to better understand what makes a strong curriculum.
- Some pupils experience sexist language and attitudes from their peers. This affects their experience of school. Leaders need to carefully consider how this can be addressed effectively to ensure that a culture of respect is established.

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.

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	138863
Local authority	Torbay
Inspection number	10227950
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1437
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Gavin Jones
Principal	Derwyn Williams
Website	www.paigntonacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	29 September 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher joined the school in September 2021.
- The school is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- It has two main sites, at Waterleat Road and at Borough Road. Both sites educate pupils in key stages 3 and 4. The school also runs a specialist base for pupils with SEND.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEND is above average.

Information about this inspection

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

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the principal, senior leaders and representatives of the trust. Inspectors visited the Waterleat Road and Borough Road sites. Inspectors also visited the school's specialist provision.
- The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead, examined school records and discussed safeguarding cases.
- Inspectors completed deep dives in the following subjects: English, drama, history, languages, mathematics and science. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning, and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including the free-text responses from parents. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's pupil and staff surveys.

Inspection team

Tracey Reynolds, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Gill Hickling	Ofsted Inspector
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Sarah Watson	Ofsted Inspector
Steve Taylor	Ofsted Inspector
David New	Ofsted Inspector

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