

Westbourne Academy

Marlow Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP1 5JN

Unique reference number (URN): 139288

Monitoring inspection report:

3 and 4 March 2026

At the most recent graded inspection, the following areas were identified as needing to improve:

Some pupils, including a significant minority who are persistently disruptive and defiant, do not behave well. Many staff feel unsupported in managing behaviour. Often, pupils' poor conduct disrupts learning and contributes to some pupils feeling anxious and worried. The school should implement a clear, consistent behaviour policy and ensure that all staff are supported to apply it effectively to establish a safe, respectful environment for all.

The school does not have a clear understanding of the specific needs of pupils with special educational needs/disabilities (SEND). The support that these pupils receive is inconsistent, and the separate spaces in which they work are not used well enough to provide targeted help. As a result, many pupils with SEND struggle to access learning. They do not achieve as well as they should. The school should improve its systems for identifying pupils' needs in a timely manner. It should also ensure that staff are equipped to adapt their teaching appropriately so that pupils with SEND achieve well.

The support for pupils at the earliest stages of reading is not coherently designed or delivered consistently well. The school does not have a sufficiently clear oversight of which pupils need help or how well they are progressing in building their reading knowledge. As a result, some pupils, including those with SEND, do not develop the reading fluency that they need to access the wider curriculum quickly enough. The school should ensure that its early reading support is timely, targeted to pupils' needs and closely monitored to secure rapid and sustained improvement in pupils' reading skills.

Some pupils experience derogatory language from their peers. Often, incidents are not reported. The school is not doing enough to challenge discriminatory attitudes or prevent them from happening. The school must take proactive steps to promote a culture of respect, where all pupils feel confident to report concerns and understand and demonstrate inclusion, equality and mutual respect.

Pupils' attendance rates are low and show little sign of sustained improvement. Too many pupils are regularly absent from school, which affects their learning, their personal development and their sense of belonging. The school should develop and implement a clear, strategic approach to improving attendance. It should identify and address the barriers that stop pupils coming to school and ensure that appropriate support is in place where concerns persist.

Leaders and trustees are taking effective action to improve the school but continued work is needed to remove the special measures designation.

HMCI is of the opinion that the school may appoint early career teachers.

The position regarding the appointment of early career teachers will be considered again during any further monitoring inspection we carry out.

During the monitoring inspection, inspectors focused on the following evaluation areas:

- Leadership and governance
- Achievement
- Attendance and behaviour
- Curriculum and teaching
- Personal development and wellbeing.

Leadership and governance

At the time of the last inspection, the trust appointed an academy improvement board to hold the school to account. Its members are independent of the trust with a proven track record of successful educational change. The board provides leaders with appropriate challenge to bring about the necessary improvements.

Leaders' work is having a positive impact. For example, pupils' behaviour has substantially improved. More pupils are attending school on a regular basis. The foundations for improvement in the provision for pupils with SEND and early reading have been introduced. Improvements in the programme for pupils' personal development are also in motion.

Leaders' action plans for rapid improvement provide clear guidance and milestones for leaders to work towards. Support from trust leaders, as well as several new appointments in the school, enables greater capacity for improvement. Staff are aligned with the school's vision for improvement. They see the difference their actions and unified approach are making. For example, the implementation of the new mobile phone policy has been most successful as staff and pupils are clear about what the new rules are. Leaders are sensitive to the demands they place on staff. They prioritise their workload and wellbeing, particularly in this time of change.

Safeguarding

At the previous graded inspection, safeguarding was evaluated as being effective.

Inclusion

Leaders have improved the process for identifying pupils with SEND. As a result, pupils, their needs and the strategies to support them are identified quickly and accurately. Leaders provide staff with clear information about pupils and the barriers they face. For example, pupils' information plans have been reviewed, improved and refined. Teachers now receive detailed information about the strategies to use to support pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan. This information is clear and precise. For example, leaders create clear, small steps as targets for pupils to achieve. Leaders have ensured that all annual reviews have taken place for pupils with EHC plans.

Leaders have strengthened the support pupils receive. For example, leaders have developed how they deploy teaching assistants. Regular contact between teachers and teaching assistants means they know how to support pupils with their learning in lessons. Leaders have provided teaching assistants with appropriate training. Particularly, to help develop their expertise in supporting pupils' learning in the foundations of reading, spelling and mathematics. This approach is in the early stages of implementation. While there is ongoing training for teachers, there remain inconsistencies in how well pupils with SEND are supported in lessons.

The school now has suitable processes in place to check how well pupils read. Leaders have introduced a reading 'village' where pupils receive bespoke guidance to help them to learn to read. However, as yet, pupils who are new to speaking English are not in receipt of the support they need. This is because staff have not yet received training on how to support this group of pupils.

Achievement

The impact of leaders' actions is not yet evident in terms of improvements in pupils' achievement. This is because staff are not consistently applying the training they have received. For example, the strategies to support pupils at the early stages of learning to read are not being used effectively across the curriculum. It is also the case that support for pupils with SEND is inconsistent in lessons. This means that these groups of pupils do not access learning effectively and therefore do not progress as well as they should.

Attendance and behaviour

Attendance remains low and below the national average. However, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school is beginning to improve. Pupils with SEND and those with EHC plans are now attending school more regularly. There are some early signs of improvements in the attendance of other pupil groups that leaders are monitoring closely. Leaders know they need to support pupils further to remove the barriers they face to school attendance. To this end, they have created greater capacity to help improve the

support that is available. More pupils are punctual to school. This is due to the introduction of clear routines and expectations that are followed by staff.

Behaviour is much improved. Suspensions and internal truancy rates have reduced substantially. Leaders have introduced new procedures for staff to follow. There is generally a consistent approach. The start to the school day is well managed. Pupils follow the new routines. For example, they lock away their mobile phones and line up for tutor time. Movement around the site is typically calm and purposeful. In the main, pupils are focused in their lessons. Pupils queue sensibly and chat amiably over food during social times.

While there are fewer reported incidents of discrimination and derogatory language, pupils often hear it. It remains the case that some pupils use profanity or abusive language in their everyday speech. Staff do not consistently address this.

Curriculum and teaching

Across the school, pupils' experiences in lessons are better because pupils' behaviour has improved. In lessons, pupils listen without distraction. The environment is conducive to learning. Teachers are starting to choose appropriate strategies to support pupils with SEND so that they can access the learning and achieve. There is still work to do to ensure that all staff use the information they receive about pupils with SEND and how to meet their needs, consistently well. It remains the case that some pupils cannot access all of the texts that are used across the curriculum. Leaders recognise this and have plans to deliver further training for staff.

Personal development and wellbeing

Leaders have focused sharply on changing the culture of the school so that pupils feel they belong here. They have overhauled the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum. It now includes a greater focus on diversity and respect for all. Assemblies reinforce this message. The reduction in incidents of racial discrimination show that this is beginning to have some impact. There is also more purposeful use of tutor time.

There is now a wide-ranging extra-curricular programme available to pupils. There are over 28 clubs and many leadership opportunities on offer. Many pupils take part in cadets. The team-building focus to this helps pupils forge friendships as they problem solve together. Opportunities to nurture and develop pupils' talents and interests in performing arts are well received by the school community.

Leaders and trustees should continue to work to address the priorities for improvement identified in the last graded inspection report.

About this inspection

The inspectors carried out this monitoring inspection under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005, and it was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require special measures following the graded inspection that took place in June 2025.

The school's previous inspection was carried out under the Education Inspection Framework (EIF) at that time. The renewed EIF took effect from 10 November 2025. The areas for improvement identified at the school's graded inspection have been cross-referenced to the relevant evaluation areas in the inspection toolkit for consideration on this monitoring inspection.

The purpose of this monitoring inspection was not to determine grades for any of the evaluation areas set out in the school inspection toolkit. The purpose was to identify and report on the school's progress in addressing priorities for improvement since the school's previous inspection.

Since the last inspection, the Academy Transformation Trust has restructured its central team. The school's assigned improvement partner has been in post since January 2026.

In response to the findings of the last inspection, the trust altered how it holds the school to account. The trust appointed an academy improvement board. Its remit is to drive forward rapid change to enable the school to improve.

There have been new appointments to the senior leadership team. This includes the school's vice principal, who is in charge of behaviour. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) joined the school in September 2025. The coordinator for pupils who speak English as an additional language joined in January 2026.

The school has changed its pastoral system. It has moved from vertical tutor groups based on the house system to one where pupils are grouped by year in their tutor groups.

During this inspection, meetings were held with the chair of the trust, the chief executive officer (CEO), the trust's school improvement partner and the chair of the academy improvement board. Inspectors also met with the principal, senior leaders, middle leaders, pastoral staff, groups of staff and pupils to discuss the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection.

Lead inspector

Liz Smith

His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector

Rowena Simmons

Ofsted Inspector

About this school

School capacity	1120
Number of pupils on roll	985
Resourced provision or SEND unit (if applicable)	No
Type of specialist provision (if applicable)	Not applicable

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked-after-children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

© Crown copyright 2026