

Waterwells Primary Academy

Boulmer Avenue, Kingsway, Quedgeley, Gloucester, Gloucestershire GL2 2FX

Inspection dates

15–16 January 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have responded to the recent decline in achievement in English and mathematics. However, current actions are not bringing about the required improvements quickly enough. Teaching is not effective enough and pupils do not make consistently good progress.
- When monitoring teaching, leaders do not take sufficient account of its impact on pupils' progress. This restricts their ability to identify and resolve any weaknesses.
- Governors do not have a clear view of the school's performance. This limits their ability to hold leaders to account rigorously for the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Teaching is not consistently good across the school. Teachers' expectations are not consistently high. Consequently, some pupils do not make strong progress. This includes the most able pupils, too few of whom reach higher standards.
- Teachers do not consistently use assessment information in lessons to adjust tasks and move pupils' learning on quickly.
- Pupils are not making good progress in writing. Teachers do not develop pupils' skills of sentence construction, grammar and spelling sufficiently well. Key stage 1 pupils do not have consistently good phonics skills. This hampers their progress in reading and writing.
- Pupils do not demonstrate routinely positive attitudes to their learning. Off-task behaviour sometimes goes unchallenged and this slows progress.
- Parents and carers praise the effectiveness of staff in caring for their children. However, some parents do not feel well informed about the new system for managing behaviour and other changes to the way the school is organised.

The school has the following strengths

- Effective leadership and teaching enable children to make good progress in the early years.
- Improved support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils is resulting in better progress for these pupils.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is effective. Pupils feel safe and most enjoy coming to school.
- Leaders and governors ensure that the curriculum is broad and interesting. It develops pupils' wider knowledge across subjects.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that all groups of pupils make consistently good progress by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve, including the most able pupils
 - ensuring that teachers use assessment to adapt and respond to the needs of different pupils in lessons
 - ensuring that phonics is taught thoroughly
 - improving pupils' skills in writing, especially sentence construction, grammar and spelling.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, by ensuring that:
 - all leaders evaluate precisely the impact of teaching on pupils' achievement in order to identify and resolve any weaknesses promptly
 - senior leaders continue to develop systems for communicating with parents so that they are kept informed about the school's work and any new initiatives
 - governors have a full understanding of the school's performance, enabling them to hold leaders to account rigorously for the achievement of different groups of pupils.
- Ensure that pupils' learning behaviour is positive in classes across the school by:
 - further raising teachers' expectations of the standards of behaviour in lessons
 - monitoring the consistency of the implementation of the school's new behaviour policy.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders have not secured effective enough teaching to ensure that all groups of pupils make consistently good progress across the school, particularly the most able pupils.
- The support provided by the multi-academy trust has not resulted in swift enough improvements to the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. The executive headteacher and the head of the school have taken action to deal with the decline in achievement across the school over the past two years. However, new initiatives are not improving standards quickly enough in subjects such as writing. Leaders' evaluation of the effectiveness of their actions is not based sufficiently on the progress pupils are making and does not provide an accurate view of their impact.
- When monitoring the quality of teaching, senior and middle leaders do not measure its impact precisely in terms of pupils' achievement. Their feedback to teachers after reviewing learning in lessons and work in books does not identify sharply enough where teaching needs to improve. Consequently, weaknesses in teaching are not resolved quickly enough.
- Senior leaders have the complete confidence of staff. All are committed to making the necessary improvements to increase their effectiveness, as confirmed by the positive responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The strategy for improving teaching in mathematics to meet the higher demands of the national curriculum is improving rates of progress. Leaders provide staff with a range of training opportunities to help increase their effectiveness.
- The leadership of SEND is effective and additional funds are used to provide targeted teaching, leading to better rates of progress for these pupils.
- Leaders demonstrate a clear commitment to promoting equality and overcoming any discrimination. They have strengthened the support for disadvantaged pupils, both academically and in their personal development. The new programme to support emotional development is helping to improve attendance and attitudes to school for these pupils.
- The curriculum provides interesting experiences and widens pupils' knowledge, especially in science and history. Educational visits, visitors and after-school clubs enrich and develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and emotional skills well. The curriculum for writing has been changed to better reflect the deeper knowledge and skills expected of pupils by the end of Year 6. This aspect of the school's curriculum is not yet consolidated or having a full impact on achievement.
- Leaders work hard to promote the school's core values – believe, engage, succeed and try – and rewards encourage pupils to be responsible members of the school community. The new system for managing behaviour is underpinned by fundamental British values, helping to develop pupils' understanding of the rule of law and respect for each other.
- Leaders use the sport premium well. Pupils are enthused by opportunities to try new sports such as trampoline dodgeball. Staff are able to work alongside expert coaches to

develop their teaching skills. Pupils participate in a wide range of tournaments and competitions, both locally and further afield.

- The majority of parents who responded to the online survey, Parent View, are satisfied with the work of the school. However, a significant minority expressed concerns about leadership and felt that communication between home and school could be improved.

Governance of the school

- Governors are not sufficiently stringent or probing in checking pupils' achievement. They do not gain an accurate view of the school's work. For example, governors do not have a clear understanding of the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. As a result, they are unable to challenge leaders with sufficient rigour. They do not hold leaders to account strongly enough to ensure that pupils' progress is improving and that different groups of pupils achieve as well as they should.
- Governors manage finances effectively. They know how additional funds are spent to help disadvantaged pupils and to develop school sport.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding procedures are robust and well managed. Leaders place a high priority on pupils' safety and well-being. Designated staff are fully aware of their responsibilities and have clear oversight of all safeguarding matters. This is partly because the school benefits from using well-established procedures that operate across the multi-academy trust. Checks to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children are robust and up to date. For example, a representative of the multi-academy trust audits the single central record regularly to ensure that it is complete.
- Staff are trained appropriately to recognise when children might be vulnerable or at risk. They know the systems to follow and who to speak to should they have concerns about a child. Detailed online records are kept of ongoing cases so that staff can determine the right action to take and involve the right people. They work productively with external agencies when necessary in order to do this.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching does not have a consistently strong impact on pupils' learning and progress. Achievement in different year groups and different subjects has been – and remains – too variable in quality.
- Expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough. Too often, pupils are not sufficiently challenged in their work, especially the most able pupils in reading and writing.
- Teachers make regular assessments of work and discuss with leaders how progress can improve. However, they do not assess pupils' understanding and progress sufficiently well in lessons to adapt their teaching and the tasks to ensure that pupils' learning moves on quickly.

- Teachers do not teach the basics skills of sentence construction and grammar thoroughly enough to enable pupils to become fluent and accomplished writers. They do not identify errors in pupils' spelling, which limits achievement. They do not give sufficient emphasis to developing pupils' vocabulary to add interest to their work. For example, in Year 2, pupils have made little progress beyond joining sentences with 'and' and 'because' since the start of the year.
- The teaching of phonics has not been sufficiently effective. As a consequence, too few pupils met the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2018. Subsequently, this has hampered the development of their reading and spelling skills. Although showing improvement, some teaching still lacks challenge.
- The 'do it, stretch it, solve it' approach to teaching mathematics – introduced since the previous inspection – provides pupils with greater challenge, especially the most able. Calculation skills are taught well and, increasingly, tasks develop pupils' reasoning skills effectively, deepening their understanding of mathematical concepts.
- Teaching assistants work closely with teachers to provide helpful support to pupils with SEND to enable them to be successful in their learning. They are particularly diligent in providing close and effective support for those pupils with emotional needs.
- Disadvantaged pupils benefit from individualised support for both their academic and personal development, enabling them to become confident as learners.
- Teachers are keen to improve their practice and readily engage with the opportunities to work with colleagues across the multi-academy trust. Training to improve the teaching of reasoning skills in mathematics is leading to better progress across the school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders know their pupils well and are proactive in implementing strategies to help promote their mental and physical well-being. The recently introduced programme to support pupils' social and emotional development is having a positive impact on the confidence of vulnerable pupils. Running the 'daily mile' helps to promote pupils' fitness – both mentally and physically – so they are ready to learn.
- Staff have developed good relationships with pupils and these contribute to them feeling safe in school. Pupils say that bullying does happen but not frequently. Training during anti-bullying week helps them to know how to stand up for themselves. Also, they are confident that they can talk to a trusted adult and the problem will be dealt with effectively. A small minority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey expressed concerns about bullying. However, this view was not supported by inspection evidence or by conversations with pupils.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe through activities such as fire drills and road-safety training. They have an age-appropriate knowledge of how to stay safe online, knowing never to give out personal details to strangers. They understand that they

must tell a teacher or member of staff if they have any concerns when working on the computer.

- Pupils enjoy undertaking responsibilities such as being school councillors, house captains and library monitors. They support charities and help raise money by activities such as wearing something spotty for Children in Need day. This prepares them to become considerate citizens.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- The standard of behaviour in lessons is variable and the attitudes of some pupils to learning are not as positive as they should be. In a few classes, when the work does not challenge or engage pupils, a small minority do not focus on their learning, leading to low-level disruption. Sometimes, this behaviour goes unchecked by teachers and has a detrimental effect on progress.
- Most pupils are polite and well mannered. Their conduct around the school and at breaktimes and lunchtimes is sensible and orderly. The playground is a busy – yet positive – place, and pupils enjoy playing with the wide range of equipment on offer.
- Leaders have introduced a new system for managing behaviour this year. It involves a restorative approach to encourage pupils to take responsibility for their actions. It has brought about a noticeable decrease in the number of incidents of poor behaviour, reducing the need for exclusion. However, leaders have not fully evaluated its impact or communicated to parents effectively the potential benefits of this strategy.
- Overall, attendance has been broadly in line with the national average in recent years. There is an improving trend, both for all pupils and for specific groups. The school works well with families to reduce any persistent absence or lateness.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils do not make the consistently good progress of which they are capable across the school. In 2018, too few pupils achieved the expected standard for their age in reading, writing and mathematics in both key stages compared to the national average. Very few pupils achieved the higher standards. Consequently, pupils were not prepared well enough for the next stage in their education. Current standards of work show that these inconsistencies have not been fully overcome, particularly in writing. Too many of the most able pupils – including those who are disadvantaged – are not making the progress they should.
- Pupils do not make good progress in writing across the school and standards are well below those expected for their age. Very few pupils are working at greater depth in writing. Pupils do not demonstrate consistently the necessary skills of grammar and sentence construction to become good writers. Too many common spelling errors and a limited use of interesting vocabulary let their work down.
- The proportion of Year 1 pupils who met the expected standard in the phonics screening check in 2018 was well below the national average. The school's assessment data indicates that more Year 1 pupils are on track to achieve the expected standard

this year, although this proportion is not in line with the national average for 2018. Too few pupils are catching up in Year 2 to become fluent readers and competent in spelling.

- Older pupils read confidently and with a good understanding. They are encouraged to read widely through their studies, such as reading 'Goodnight Mr Tom' when learning about the Second World War.
- Achievement in mathematics shows improvement and pupils demonstrate competency in their calculation skills. Challenging tasks help the most able pupils to develop their reasoning skills, deepening their understanding of mathematical concepts. As a result, a greater proportion of pupils are on track to achieve highly this year.
- Pupils with SEND are making better progress than previously due to the well-planned help they receive. Their work is matched carefully to meet individual needs.
- Until recently, disadvantaged pupils did not achieve as well as others in school or nationally from similar starting points. Precisely targeted support this year is ensuring that their current progress matches that of their classmates.

Early years provision

Good

- Parents appreciate the effective arrangements for starting school. These ensure that children settle quickly into new routines, behave well and enjoy their learning. Parents praise the approachability of staff and welcome opportunities to become involved in their children's learning. They like the way their children are treated as individuals and nurtured in a caring environment.
- Children start school in the Nursery and in the Reception classes with a range of starting points, including several whose knowledge and skills are below those found typically. Across the early years, children make good progress in all areas of development. As they leave Reception, the proportion of children who achieve a good level of development is in line with the national average. Most children start Year 1 as confident learners.
- Staff supervise children well at all times. Children are encouraged to take responsibility and develop independence, for example by putting their drinks bottles away, clearing up after snack time and learning to put on coats by themselves.
- Teachers make the learning interesting to capture children's attention, for example in the 'missing numbers' game, where children showed good knowledge of numbers up to 20. Some children were observed busily making 'coral' bed collages to support their stories about 'Finding Nemo'. Such activities stretch their imagination and support their ideas for writing well.
- Children benefit from regular teaching in phonics, which underpins early reading skills effectively. Children's achievement is closely monitored and teaching is adjusted to increase progress. This year, teachers have introduced a successful range of activities to increase children's coordination skills to improve their letter formation when writing.
- Leaders check regularly on children's progress and use this information to plan learning that meets the needs of disadvantaged children well, particularly in their personal development. Children with SEND have their needs identified at an early stage. The

school works well with other agencies – such as the speech and language therapist – to meet these children’s need effectively.

- On occasions, the work planned for the most able children does not extend them to the full, and limits their progress.
- Good leadership and management have created a staff team that works well together. Staff receive appropriate training to enable them to support children’s learning effectively, including maintaining a high-quality learning environment both indoors and out. There is a clear view of the strengths of the provision and where further improvement is needed to ensure that the most able children are extended to the full in their learning.

School details

Unique reference number	139693
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10086881

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	381
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chairs	Richard Barnard and Samantha Stein
Executive headteacher	Kim Hoodless
Telephone number	01452 881 962
Website	www.waterwellsprimaryacademy.org.uk
Email address	admin@waterwells.academy
Date of previous inspection	23–24 June 2015

Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school. The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- Pupils are organised in 13 classes and a Nursery class. There are two classes for each year group except Year 6, which is one class.
- The school is part of the Robinswood Academy Trust, together with four other local schools: Robinswood Primary, Moat Primary, Hunts Grove Primary and Grange Primary.
- Responsibilities for governance are held jointly by the multi-academy trust and the academy board, which is a local body. Both boards receive a range of information from leaders and visit the school regularly.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is broadly average.
- The Nursery class is managed by the school.

- There is a breakfast club which is managed by the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning across the school. Most observations were carried out jointly with school leaders. In addition, inspectors made visits to classrooms, the dining hall and the playground, as well as attending assemblies.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the chair of the board of trustees and chair of the academy board, and school leaders.
- Inspectors spoke informally with some parents and considered their views. They took account of the 41 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as their written responses. They also took account of the 29 responses to the Ofsted staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including the school's improvement plans. They examined information on current pupils' progress, minutes of the meetings of the trustees and academy board, safeguarding procedures and the plans for the use of the sport premium.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read, talked with them in classrooms and evaluated samples of their work.

Inspection team

Sandra Woodman, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Wendy Hanrahan	Ofsted Inspector
Claire Mirams	Ofsted Inspector

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