

Woodlands Primary Academy

Church Walk, Bradwell, Great Yarmouth, NR31 8QQ

Inspection dates 9–10 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy	
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils' attainment throughout Key Stage 2 is too low. Although improvements have been made to standards in reading and mathematics, standards in writing remain too low.
- Pupils' handwriting, its neatness and the pride they show in their work, are not good enough.
- Pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar are not accurate enough.
- Teachers have changed the way they mark pupils' work but this is still inconsistent in practice. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use the feedback they are given to improve their work.
- In too many lessons, the tasks provided for pupils are too easy or too difficult for them to promote good progress.
- Teachers do not always check on pupils' learning during lessons. Consequently, they are unsure of the success of their teaching and cannot make changes so that all pupils achieve well.
- Changes to senior leadership means a new team is being created which is yet to have a full impact on improving teaching and learning.
- A significant number of parents feel the school does not engage with them well and there is insufficient communication.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and the head of teaching and learning have worked hard to keep the academy running smoothly during a turbulent period.
- Changes to staff, and the move to the new Trust and local governing body, have strengthened the academy's leadership and its capacity to continue improving.
- The academy has developed an effective and creative curriculum. This is having a positive impact on pupils' learning, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The academy provides pupils with good pastoral care. Pupils talk about feeling safe and how well the adults help them learn and develop.
- The rapidly improving provision in the Reception classes and Key Stage 1 is at an early stage but already helping raise pupils' achievement in those areas.
- Improvements have been made in Years 3 to 6 and standards are rising. They are yet to be fully evident in outcomes.
- Gaps in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and the others are narrowing. Pupils at an early stage of learning English are helped to make good progress.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed pupils' learning in 21 lessons or parts of lessons. A number of lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher and the head of teaching and learning.
- Meetings and discussions took place with the headteacher, representatives of the Creative Education Trust, members of the governing body, staff, pupils and parents.
- Inspectors examined samples of pupils' work, some jointly with the English and mathematics leaders, and several pupils read to the inspectors.
- Inspectors took account of the 87 responses to the online parent survey, Parent View, as well as the 116 responses to the academy's own recent questionnaire. The inspectors also talked to parents and took account of the 32 questionnaires completed by staff.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documents produced by the academy, including data on pupils' progress and attainment, procedures for safeguarding, and the academy's own evaluations of its work. They considered reports to the governing body and minutes of their meetings, and the academy's action plans for raising attainment.

Inspection team

Geof Timms, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Linda Griffiths

Additional Inspector

Lynn Lowery

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Woodlands Primary Academy is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The predecessor school, called Woodlands Primary School, became a sponsor-led academy in July 2013. This first arrangement was dissolved and the academy became part of the Creative Education Trust in March 2015. When the predecessor school was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged as inadequate.
- Children attend the early years provision in the two Reception classes on a full-time basis.
- Since the academy was set up, there have been a significant number of staff changes including senior leaders. The headteacher was in post at the time the school became an academy.
- Almost all pupils are White British. A small number of pupils join the academy from Eastern European countries and are learning English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- A below-average proportion of pupils are disadvantaged and supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school runs a breakfast club each morning. There is a privately-run nursery on the school site. This is inspected and reported on separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that more of the teaching has a positive impact on raising pupils' achievement by:
 - consolidating the new marking system and ensuring that pupils have enough opportunities to act upon the feedback they are given
 - ensuring that the tasks provided for pupils are appropriately matched to their needs and not too easy or too difficult
 - regularly checking pupils' progress in lessons and changing the activities if learning is not secure.
- Improve pupils' writing by:
 - teaching good handwriting skills and improving the presentation of their work
 - improving the accuracy of their spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Strengthen the leadership and management by:
 - securing the changes to leadership roles to ensure that all leaders have a clear impact on raising pupil achievement
 - seeking to improve the engagement of parents in the work of the academy and ensuring effective systems for communication with them.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The academy has been through a turbulent period since it opened, with a change of sponsor and a number of significant staffing changes. These changes have slowed progress. Although current leaders have worked hard to ensure the academy has continued to run smoothly, not enough has been done to ensure teaching, behaviour and achievement have been good enough to help pupils make good progress, particularly in Key Stage 2.
- There are plans to complete the leadership team by the end of this term. In addition, new teachers have been appointed for the new school year so there will be less temporary staff in place. The leaders are aware of the need to extend their influence across the school and ensure more of the teaching is at least good and that all staff are helping to raise pupils' achievement. The leadership of reading and mathematics has already had a positive impact on pupils' achievement and this is reflected in rising standards and improved data.
- A significant number of parents are concerned about staffing and how well the school communicates with them about changes, particularly regarding their children in Key Stage 2. Of the parents who completed Parent View, over half said they would not recommend the school to others. However, the school's questionnaire, which had a larger response, was more positive about the school's work. The school is developing its new website and provides parents with a fairly typical range of methods of communication. More remains to be done for the school to overcome the parents' perceived weaknesses in communication.
- Although the academy had to change its sponsor recently, this has been a positive move. The Trust is providing a good level of support and challenge for leaders, and has a clear vision for the future of the academy. Regular contact with advisory staff is helping identify and rapidly improve areas needing development.
- Leaders have extensive systems in place for checking on the success of the work of the academy. Lessons are observed, pupils' work and data scrutinised, and regular meetings with teachers check on pupils' progress. Accurate self-assessment shows leaders are aware of the academy's strengths and weaknesses. Good action plans set out the academy's further improvement.
- Leaders have been effective in identifying and addressing any weaker teaching through appraisal and other systems for checking the success of teachers' work. Efforts have focused on improving teaching and learning through a wide range of extra training for teachers. Even so, changes to staffing have resulted in a lack of consistent practice throughout the academy. Leaders are active in seeking out and using good practice in other schools to spread good ideas.
- Leaders have developed a very clear system for recording and tracking pupils' progress from next September when the current system of levels will be withdrawn. This system is being adopted by other schools locally as a good exemplar.
- Additional funding for the disadvantaged pupils is used well to support their learning through effective interventions and other support for a wide range of activities. Leaders plan and track this funding and its impact on pupils' progress well. Because of this, gaps in attainment with other pupils have rapidly narrowed since the academy opened.
- The extra funding provided for sporting activities is used very effectively. This provides pupils with access to good quality coaching and teaching so they can take part in a wide range of sports. The school has a good level of success in a range of sports events and competitions. Participation in sporting activities has risen.
- There is a good curriculum, which is broad and balanced. Good links are made between subjects so pupils can use their skills in different ways. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain through a range of activities, such as educational visits and learning about different faiths and cultural differences. The academy ensures pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. British values are promoted well through a range of activities to emphasise the importance of tolerance and respect. In Year

5, for example, pupils completed a topic on historical and modern aspects of crime and punishment. The academy promotes equality of opportunity well so that good relations are fostered and there is no discrimination.

- Safeguarding requirements are met. Policies and procedures are implemented effectively.

■ The governance of the school:

- The Trust has been effective in overseeing finance, personnel and payroll issues since it took over the sponsorship of the academy. Locally, a new governing body has been set up and is in the process of auditing its membership skills and future needs to ensure its continued effectiveness. Governors are knowledgeable about the academy and the quality of teaching as some have been involved since it was formed.
- Governors have a good knowledge and understanding of the academy's data on pupils' progress.
- Governors carry out their statutory duties. Together with leaders, they ensure that all safeguarding requirements are met. They are appropriately involved in decisions about teachers' pay and ensure that this is linked to performance. They know what the academy is doing to tackle underperformance.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. This is because in some lessons pupils do not demonstrate very positive attitudes towards their work and learning. On these occasions, they are not fully attentive or engaged, and they cause some low-level disruption which affects the learning of others.
- Pupils' conduct around the academy is good. They respond to adults, including visitors, well. Lunchtimes run smoothly and behaviour in the dining room is good. At break times, behaviour is generally good.
- Pupils enjoy being given responsibilities. They talk enthusiastically about being 'caring crusaders', prefects or members of the school council. They raise money for a range of local and national charities. Older pupils enjoyed helping with activities at the younger pupils' sports days.
- The breakfast club provides pupils with a calm and enjoyable start to the day.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Most of the parents who responded to Parent View or who spoke to inspectors said their children were safe and happy at the academy. Pupils talk very positively about the academy's pastoral care. They value the support they receive if they have problems at home or if they have specific learning needs that they need help with. They all say that there are adults in the academy they trust and would talk to if worried about anything.
- Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes bullying and how to deal with it. They say it is very rare and gets sorted out quickly if it occurs. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe when using computers or other technology.
- The academy carries out systematic risk assessments for all activities, on and off the site, including for the woodland walk. Staff are appropriately trained in first aid and child protection. Pupils who have been hurt praise the help they get and the way they are looked after by staff.
- Although attendance is currently below average, leaders work hard to encourage full attendance. A much reduced number of parents keep their children off school without good reason. Most pupils are punctual.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The academy has seen a significant amount of staff turbulence since its formation. This has sometimes been beyond the control of leaders or has been as a result of efforts to improve the quality or provision for pupils. Even so, it has meant some inconsistency in provision which leaders know needs to be rapidly addressed through further training and permanent appointments that will ensure staffing is more stable.

- Teaching requires improvement because it is yet to have sufficient impact on raising standards throughout Key Stage 2. Not all teachers ensure that the tasks they provide for pupils meet their specific needs. In some cases, tasks were too easy for pupils and their lack of engagement resulted in poorer attitudes towards learning. At other times, the tasks were too difficult and the expectations, especially of some of the less able pupils, were much too high and resulted in the pupils becoming frustrated. Talking to some pupils in lessons showed they did not know exactly what was expected of them.
- Teachers do not always check pupils' understanding during lessons sufficiently to be able to ensure that pupils understand the tasks they have been assigned. This results in some missed opportunities to change the activity to make it more suitable for the pupils' learning needs.
- Teachers have recently improved the way they give pupils advice when marking their work or feeding back orally. However, teachers do not always provide enough time or opportunities for pupils to act upon their advice so that it has a clearly positive impact on their work.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of the quality of pupils' handwriting or how neatly they set out and present their work. However, some very effective displays of pupils' work celebrate their achievements well and provide effective support for their learning. Teachers in all classes have created a bright and interesting environment which encourages learning.
- Where pupils' learning is strongest, they have good opportunities to talk about their work and share ideas. For example, in a strong Year 3 lesson on identifying and using adjectives, pupils addressed the task with real enthusiasm and enjoyment. This was because they shared their ideas and the talk was focused on the task.
- Teachers provide pupils with clear targets and this helps pupils to understand how well they are doing and the progress they are making. The teaching of reading and mathematics has improved, and this is beginning to be evident in pupils' improved achievement. However, the teaching of spelling, punctuation and grammar is not yet as effective.
- Teachers and teaching assistants ensure that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are accurately identified and any one-to-one or small-group teaching is well-matched to their needs. Because of this, they often make good progress from their different starting points. Some of these pupils are able to talk knowledgeably and positively about how the academy has recognised their needs and supported their learning.
- The teaching of pupils at an early stage of learning English is good and this helps these pupils make rapid progress in learning English. The teaching of disadvantaged pupils, in classes and in small groups, is shown by the current data to be successful in narrowing any gaps in their attainment.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The progress made in Key Stage 2 by the pupils who left at the end of 2014 was significantly below that expected in reading, writing and mathematics. However, improvements to progress made in the early years and in Key Stage 1 have been successful in raising those pupils' standards.
- Efforts to do the same in Years 3 to 6 are beginning to have a positive impact, as shown in the academy's data, but this is yet to show consistently in the outcomes at the end of the year or in the work produced in every class. Recent improvements to the teaching and leadership of reading and mathematics are having a positive impact throughout the school. However, pupils' writing remains an area for further improvement.
- The academy's data, supported by evidence from work in pupils' books, show that more pupils are making at least the progress they should from their different starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. The pupils in Year 6 are on track to attain standards that are much better than in 2014 and which are much closer to the national average. Writing standards are poorer because pupils' handwriting skills are poor and their attainment in punctuation, spelling and grammar is well below average when compared

with the latest national data. The academy has improved the proportion of pupils reaching higher than expected standards in Year 6, although this remains inconsistent throughout the school.

- In 2014, the pupils in Year 2 reached above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Current progress is good, as seen in books and the school's data. This is due to effective teaching and the improving start children get in the Reception classes. Current Year 2 pupils are making at least the progress they should in all three subjects and are on track to achieve similar levels to last year, although fewer are on track to reach the higher levels.
- The results of the Year 1 check on pupils' skills in phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) are in line with the national average. This shows good progress in relation to their starting points, especially with regard to their reading skills and vocabulary. Pupils' basic reading skills have improved over the past two years and most of them develop a good level of interest in a range of books.
- Progress in mathematics is improving rapidly throughout the academy and many pupils say it is one of their favourite subjects. This is because teaching has improved through knowledgeable and effective leadership. Progress in writing remains weaker because too many pupils have poorly developed handwriting skills and their spelling, punctuation and grammar lack accuracy. Many pupils achieve well in other subjects, such as music, art and design and physical education.
- Throughout the academy, the most-able pupils make similar progress to their classmates and so their achievement requires improvement. In some lessons, activities provided do not challenge the higher attainers sufficiently.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make progress similar to their peers so their attainment also requires improvement. Even so, there are examples of good progress for some of these pupils and the academy is beginning to meet their needs well. For example, in Year 5 these pupils are making progress that is slightly better than that of their classmates in reading, due to the effective support they are receiving.
- In 2014, the gap between the attainment of the disadvantaged pupils and others in Year 6 showed they were over two years behind their peers in mathematics and almost three years behind other pupils nationally. Disadvantaged pupils were over a year behind other pupils nationally in reading and almost a year behind in writing. They were around two terms behind their classmates in reading and writing. However, the current data show that the gaps this year have narrowed to about a term behind pupils nationally and the others in their classes in mathematics, reading and writing. This is due to the good support currently provided for them in classes and in small groups when appropriate.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- A number of recent changes to teaching and planning have yet to have a full impact on children's learning and progress. This requires improvement. Current data show they achieve in line with the levels found nationally by the end of the Reception year. Children join the academy with broadly typical levels of development for their age. However, many children's reading and writing, their knowledge and understanding of the world and their creativity, are often well below the level expected.
- Teaching is often good so children are now better prepared to start in Year 1. Resources and facilities available outdoors, and children's progress in the outdoor classroom, are improving. In 2014, although there was progress, many remained weaker at reading and writing than in other areas. Currently data show they do not make sufficient progress in the creative, art and design aspects of their learning.
- The leadership requires improvement but is becoming stronger. Other schools are being visited to see examples of excellent practice so that good new ideas can be shared and spread. Planning is detailed and a strength is the way children's ideas are used in creating the focus for a topic. For example, children's questions about space travel have fed into activities around the theme of 'journeys'.
- Assessments of children's learning are recorded regularly using an electronic system. This enables parents

to access the records and see how well their children are learning. This is particularly useful for those parents who work off-shore. Early assessments made at the start of the year build on information from a range of pre-school settings and enable staff to provide appropriate activities to meet children's needs.

- Children behave well and enjoy working and playing with their friends. They tidy up rapidly at the end of sessions and talk very enthusiastically about various activities such as the mud kitchen. The sports day, attended by a good number of parents, provided a good example of how active and physically adept the children have become and they took part very enthusiastically.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	139580
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	449896

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	410
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Beverley Houghton
Headteacher	Sheila Mercer
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01493 665314
Fax number	Not applicable
Email address	office@woodlands.norfolk.sch.uk

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