

Woodlands Academy

Whittock Road, Stockwood, Bristol BS14 8DQ

Inspection dates

18–19 September 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is not consistently good. The multi-academy trust has not been consistent in developing teaching and leadership in the school. Over the past year, the new executive headteacher has built the capacity of leaders to rapidly improve teaching. However, teaching remains too variable.
- Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, do not make consistently good progress.
- Not all teachers plan and set tasks that interest pupils or are well matched to their needs. Some teachers do not adapt learning activities quickly enough when pupils are not able to tackle the work.
- Teachers are not yet sufficiently deepening pupils' knowledge of mathematics. This limits the most able pupils from attaining the higher standards which they are capable of reaching.
- Pupils are not developing the scientific enquiry skills expected for their age.
- The planned curriculum for reading is not effective in helping pupils to gain the expected skills for their age.
- Over time, leaders, including subject leaders, have not checked teaching sharply enough to bring about secure improvement.
- Children in early years, particularly the most able, are not challenged sufficiently. They do not make consistently good progress.

The school has the following strengths

- Current leaders, including governors, now know where the school needs to improve. Their plans to tackle weaknesses are sharp and the pace of improvement is accelerating.
- Standards in the Year 1 phonics screening check have improved and are in line with the national average.
- The teaching of writing is effective. Pupils make good progress in developing their writing skills.
- Pupils behave well. They are eager learners and take pride in their work.
- Leaders have established a culture whereby all staff are vigilant in securing pupils' safety.
- Parents and carers hold the school and the head of school in high regard for the improvements she has made.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities make good progress.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - swiftly implementing the current strategic plan so that improvements in the quality of teaching can be brought about quickly
 - establishing the roles and skills of the new senior leadership team so that recent improvements in teaching and pupils' progress can be securely built upon
 - developing the skills of middle leaders in improving the quality of teaching
 - reviewing and developing the curriculum for reading so that teaching is more effective and pupils make greater progress.
- Improve the effectiveness of the quality of teaching and learning so that it has a consistently good impact on pupils' achievement by ensuring that:
 - all teachers, including those in early years, use assessment information sharply to plan tasks which engage pupils' interest, match their ability and improve progress
 - teachers respond to the emerging needs of pupils in lessons by reshaping the learning so that time for pupils is well used
 - teachers securely develop pupils' reasoning skills in mathematics and enquiry skills in science so that pupils deepen their learning and those with potential reach the higher standards
 - all staff in early years challenge the children, including the most able, in all aspects of their learning so that they make good progress.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- There has been disruption to the leadership of the multi-academy trust over time. Consequently, the strategic guidance and oversight that the school has received as a sponsored academy have not been consistent. As a result, school and academy leaders have not fully brought about required improvements to the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- The new executive headteacher has over the past year skilfully supported and empowered the head of school. The partnership between the trust and school leaders is now strong and the pace of change is accelerating improvement. A senior leader has been appointed to work alongside the head of school from the beginning of this academic year in order to support the sustainability of improvements.
- Leaders have not over time been fully effective in developing consistently good teaching. They make frequent checks on teaching and pupils' work but have not followed up with clear advice to teachers and further checks to ensure that improvements have been made. Leaders have until recently not had a full plan of how professional development would support improvements to teaching.
- The impact of subject leaders in developing the quality of teaching is not yet fully effective. Some leaders are relatively new to the role or the school. They are knowledgeable about their subjects and have begun worthwhile initiatives to improve teaching, but these are not yet fully embedded.
- The curriculum for reading is not clear in how teachers are expected to build the full range of pupils' skills and this has limited pupils' achievement in reading. Most of the curriculum, however, is broad and has been planned to be relevant to pupils' interests. The quality of curriculum planning has been central to recent improvements. The curriculum for writing, for example, is now well planned. Teachers know what to teach, how and when to teach it. As a result, standards in writing are improving. Leaders are widening opportunities for developing pupils' interest and enjoyment of reading through the now extensive and attractive library.
- A recent review has taken place of the use of the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils. Detailed plans are in place to use the additional funding to overcome possible barriers to their learning. The funding is now sharply targeted. The current achievement of disadvantaged pupils in most year groups has improved but there is still variability.
- The headteacher and school leaders work closely with other schools within and beyond the trust. These strong partnerships are supporting curriculum development and assessment. High-quality professional development is in place for all staff. Staff have welcomed these changes and new opportunities and morale among staff is high.
- The new school improvement plan is well constructed with measurable targets for all aspects of the school's work. The priorities are based on effective self-evaluation of the impact of teaching on pupils' progress and attainment.

- The school is highly inclusive and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are well supported and make good progress. Leaders have a strong commitment to equality of opportunity.
- The head of school has secured the confidence of the community. Parents are very positive about the school. All those who responded to the online survey, Parent View, or were spoken to during the inspection would recommend the school to others. Parents especially highlight their children's enjoyment of school and their own confidence in approaching staff and leaders to discuss their children.
- Leaders promote the school values and those of British society through giving pupils opportunities to practise concepts such as democracy. For example, elections of a head boy and girl and the heads of houses are undertaken conscientiously, and the young leaders take their responsibilities seriously. The school builds pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively through the curriculum, which includes new and exciting projects such as the sensory garden. Leaders ensure that additional funding for sport and physical education is well used and the school has recently won an award for the quality of its work.

Governance of the school

- The board of trustees who govern the work of the school recognise that the recent impetus to bring about improvement has been necessary. They have recently instigated a review of their work and have a continuing programme of development planned so that they can fully support and challenge school leaders. Recent minutes of meetings indicate that governors now question the impact of initiatives on raising standards more effectively and recognise that more needs to be done.
- Governors now meet with school leaders regularly, visit classrooms and talk to pupils. In this way, governors are more closely tracking how the areas in the school improvement plan are being implemented, for example to improve the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.
- Governors have supported the recent review of the leadership's capacity to improve the school so that the head of school can more fully focus on developing teaching.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school's policies reflect current guidance on protecting children from harm and all staff training is updated promptly and effectively. The school's procedures for recording and responding to concerns that a pupil may be at risk are robust. Leaders are confident in involving a range of appropriate agencies to support families and ensure that pupils are properly protected.
- Staff are vigilant for pupils' welfare. The good relationships across the school community, including with parents, mean that staff have a good knowledge of individual pupils. They use this to quickly identify when changes in a pupil's circumstances or behaviour should be reported to senior leaders. All parents who responded to Parent View and those who were spoken to at the start of the school day agreed that their children were safe in school.

- There has been a recent review of leaders' ability to fulfil their school safeguarding duties. As a result, extensive and effective checks are made to ensure that all adults who work with children are safe to do so. Records are kept in an exemplary manner. Governors regularly monitor the work of the school to ensure that it is complying with its safeguarding duties. They review and undertake risk assessments to support the health and safety needs of the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment are not consistently good over the school. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment also varies across the full range of the curriculum. There is good teaching in the school, but pupils do not benefit from this in all year groups or all subjects. Pupils therefore do not make consistently good progress. As a result, where improvements to pupils' achievement have been made they have not always been sustained. Teachers are now having effective professional development and receiving more consistent advice from leaders. For example, the impact of this can be seen in improvements in the teaching of writing.
- Some teachers do not yet use the good-quality assessment information they now hold to plan lessons which help all pupils to make progress. When this is the case, tasks do not engage pupils sufficiently and enable them to make progress. For example, some pupils did not have the reading skills required to read instructions for their task.
- Not all teachers explain the learning sufficiently clearly. Consequently, when they begin work some pupils are not sure what to do. Teachers do not always spot that this is the case and learning time is wasted by pupils waiting for help. Where teaching is stronger, teachers question pupils deeply and are sharp to notice when more help is needed. Pupils then quickly and confidently make gains in their learning.
- Pupils have developed good skills of calculation and now have opportunities to consolidate their learning. However, the teaching of the deeper skills of mathematics has not yet been firmly established. The opportunities for pupils to apply their calculation skills to problem solving and reasoning are not consistent yet across the school. Leaders have made changes to ensure that all pupils now have opportunities for problem solving and reasoning about mathematics. The changes are too new to have a consistently good impact on improving pupils' progress.
- In reading, the lack of a consistent curriculum for developing pupils' comprehension skills means that pupils' skills are not built consistently well across both key stages 1 and 2. In recent years, however, the teaching of phonics has been good. This has led to pupils being able to tackle the reading of new words more confidently.
- Pupils' workbooks in writing show that teachers give pupils good guidance on how to be successful. Teachers build pupils' skills through clear sequences of learning and ensure that pupils write for a range of purposes to test their learning in new ways. They use opportunities across the whole curriculum to develop and embed pupils' writing skills. This was illustrated when Year 6 pupils wrote persuasively to express their views in letters to a world leader. Year 5 pupils' writing showed empathy with the feelings of a child evacuated in the Second World War. Teachers have increasingly high expectations of pupils' spelling and punctuation across the school.

- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are supported well in their learning by skilled teaching assistants. As a result, they make good progress.
- Pupils are given access to a full curriculum. However, pupils in key stage 2 are not taught scientific skills at the level expected for their age. There is no evidence that they have sufficient opportunities to carry out experiments at the expected depth, such as taking measurements and presenting their findings in graphs and charts.
- When teaching is good, pupils engage well in their learning. They are eager to begin work and are diligent in completing their tasks.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are interested in their learning and keen to do well. Pupils show a pride in their work. Their workbooks are kept in impeccable condition and older pupils in particular set their work out neatly.
- Teachers have built pupils' skills in working together and pupils discuss their learning meaningfully. Pupils are developing confidence to voice their opinions. This is because of the warm relationships across the school. Pupils say that staff listen to them. Pupils respond well to the opportunities they are given to consider the questions posed by staff.
- The school's approach to developing pupils' understanding of their rights and responsibilities is having a positive impact on how pupils tackle difficulties. A pupil expressed this as, 'We use what we have been taught about respect to sort out our own problems.'
- Pupils are taught about how to keep themselves safe, including how to stay safe on the internet. Consequently, pupils know how to keep themselves and each other safe.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The school is calm and orderly and there are no disruptions to learning. Pupils are cheerful and courteous as they move around school.
- Pupils play well together at lunchtime. Lunchtime supervisors are vigilant, caring and confident in the way they manage play on the large field and the range of challenging play equipment. Through their simple rules and guidance, they ensure that playtime is a positive experience for all pupils.
- Pupils recognise that behaviour has improved and now say that it is '100% better'. The clear rewards and sanctions, which the school has implemented to guide pupils, are understood and respected. Leaders track pupils' behaviour meaningfully and can show that the number of pupils who may 'receive a number' for misbehaviour has significantly declined.
- Parents are confident that the school manages behaviour well. They consider that any possible incidents of bullying would be dealt with swiftly and effectively by school leaders. Pupils say that there are sometimes arguments over games, but that bullying

is rare.

- While overall levels of attendance are below the national average, the impact of a few families has a disproportionate influence in reducing the overall rate of attendance. The school's challenge and support for families who have not previously ensured that their children attend regularly continue to improve attendance. The school is rigorous in checking that pupils are safe.
- The breakfast club is also supporting improvements in attendance. Pupils behave well in the breakfast club and derive benefit from this enjoyable start to the day.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The progress pupils are currently making in school is variable. Over time, standards have been low and there is still not a consistent picture of standards and progress improving.
- At the end of Year 2, the standards pupils reached in recent national assessments were low, particularly for boys and disadvantaged pupils in writing and mathematics. This did not represent good progress across key stage 1. The outcomes for boys and disadvantaged pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2017 were similarly low. The school's own assessment information reflects this picture.
- There has been a similar picture of weak achievement over time for pupils at the end of key stage 2; however, the 2018 assessments showed improvements in progress and standards, particularly in reading and writing. Standards in mathematics remained low.
- In 2017 and 2018 national assessments only a very small number of pupils reached the higher standards. The most able pupils did not achieve well. Currently, school assessments and pupils' work indicate that more pupils are benefiting from greater challenge in, for example, writing, but this is not the case in all year groups.
- School assessments indicate that standards in mathematics are now improving. However, the progress that pupils make is still being limited by their confidence in tackling problems and explaining the reasoning behind their answers.
- Pupils have made good progress in gaining skills in phonics and standards have remained in line with national levels for several years. Pupils can consequently tackle unknown words in their reading. Pupils across the school enjoy reading and the school's promotion of reading for pleasure has been effective. However, pupils' skills of understanding and responding to their reading are not well developed and this has limited achievement overall in reading in recent assessments.
- Pupils now make good progress in writing. From work seen in pupils' workbooks, this progress is now consistent across the school, including for disadvantaged pupils.
- Pupils are making good progress in history. Their work shows they gain knowledge and skills at least appropriate for their age. Equally, pupils gain knowledge in science. They are not, however, gaining skills of scientific enquiry at a similar rate.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Children's overall progress in early years requires improvement. The early years leader

has assessed that children enter Nursery with language, literacy and mathematical skills lower than those typically found. Children go on to make good progress over their Nursery Year. However, although teachers have developed the use of assessment to plan teaching in the Reception class, this is not used sufficiently sharply to build on the potential of particularly the most able children. This is apparent in the below average proportion of children exceeding the expected level at the end of Reception.

- Teaching in the early years is variable. Teachers do not have consistently high expectations of what children can do. This becomes apparent when routines to develop children's social skills are not emphasised or followed through. Children are not consistently challenged to tidy away resources before moving on. New ways of planning teaching have been brought in this year but currently the opportunities for pupils to extend their learning are too limited. This reduces opportunities for the achievement of the most able children in particular.
- The space children have for their learning is extensive both indoors and outdoors and children explore freely. However, the planning of the space available and the tasks children can explore do not sufficiently encourage children to deepen their learning. Staff observe and encourage children at their tasks, but do not promote learning sufficiently by sharp questioning.
- Recent outcomes show that while standards overall are low, the achievement of disadvantaged children has improved. As a result, a higher proportion of children than previously have reached the expected level at the end of their Reception Year.
- The teaching of phonics is effective, and children were seen recognising letters by their sound and being guided to trace them in glitter and salt to practise their letter formation. Children's workbooks from last year show that writing was also well taught, and children's interest sparked by retelling traditional tales. These skills are supporting children in their move to the next stage of their education in Year 1.
- Children in both classes work well together. They share resources well and talk about their learning. All staff are mindful of children's welfare and those who have SEN and/or disabilities are very well supported. All staff place a high priority on children's safety.

School details

Unique reference number	142032
Local authority	Bristol City
Inspection number	10053423

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	188
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Andrew Bowden
Head of school	Heather Morris
Executive headteacher	Tracy French
Telephone number	01173 533 506
Website	woodlandsacademybristol.com
Email address	info@woodlandsacademybristol.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Woodlands Academy was converted to a sponsor-led academy in the Waycroft Academy Trust in October 2015. In 2017, a new chief executive officer, who is also the executive headteacher, took up her role. The current executive headteacher is the third chief executive officer since the school joined the academy trust. The head of school has been in post throughout the life of the academy.
- The school is a little smaller than an average-sized school. Most pupils are from a White British background. The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and are supported through the pupil premium is much higher than average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is similar to the national average. The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is lower than the national average.
- Most children begin school in the Nursery class and others join in the Reception class. The Nursery offers children either half-day sessions or whole days over half the week.

Over time, pupil numbers fell. Pupil numbers have now increased, and the majority of classes are currently full. However, numbers in current Years 5 and 6 are low. All pupils are taught in single-age classes.

- The school operates a breakfast club.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning across a range of subjects and age groups and scrutinised pupils' written work. A number of the observations were conducted jointly with members of the leadership team, including the executive headteacher.
- Meetings were held with members of the senior leadership team, middle leaders and representatives from the board of directors. A meeting was held with the executive headteacher in her role as chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust. A separate meeting took place with the chair of directors. Inspectors reviewed minutes of meetings of the board of directors.
- Inspectors met with two groups of pupils formally. They spoke to other pupils in their lessons and at lunchtime to gain their views of the school. Inspectors listened to a sample of pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 read.
- School policies and procedures for safeguarding were scrutinised and records of training reviewed. Members of staff were spoken to in order to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding training. Records of attendance and behaviour were reviewed.
- Inspectors reviewed leaders' self-evaluation and their current and previous plans for improvement of the school. They examined records of staff development and the checks made on teaching. The inspectors scrutinised information about pupils' progress, including that of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities. They also looked at plans for the curriculum.
- Inspectors took account of the 44 responses to Parent View and the 41 written comments provided by parents. Inspectors spoke to parents at the start of the school day and took the views of staff into consideration through the 22 completed staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

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Ofsted Inspector

Steve Wigley

Ofsted Inspector

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