

West Wycombe Combined School

Church Lane, West Wycombe, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire HP14 3AH

Inspection dates

24–25 April 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Although much improved since the previous inspection, teaching is not yet consistently good or better. Teachers' planning does not always take sufficient account of what pupils already know, understand and can do.
- In some areas, teachers' expectations for groups of pupils are too low. This can restrict the pace of learning.
- Senior leaders have improved teachers' use of assessment information to monitor pupils' progress. However, this work is not yet fully embedded. There is more to do to ensure that progress information over time is accurate.
- Building on recent improvements, refinements are needed to the teaching of writing and mathematics to ensure consistently good outcomes across the school.
- New leaders have made improvements to the provision for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. There is more to do to ensure that these groups make as strong progress from their starting points as other pupils do nationally.
- The progress that pupils make from their starting points is not yet consistently good across the wider curriculum.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher, leaders and members of the interim executive board (IEB) are passionate about improving their school. Their evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses is accurate. Their detailed plans and decisive action to develop the school have improved pupils' outcomes.
- Standards in reading continue to be a strength of the school. Standards in writing and mathematics have improved for current pupils.
- Pupils feel safe and well looked after at West Wycombe Combined School.
- Provision in the early years is good, so children make strong progress. Outcomes at the end of Reception are in line with the national averages.
- Behaviour is good and pupils are keen to learn. They particularly appreciate the improved sporting clubs and activities the school now offers.
- Leaders have developed strong links with parents and carers. These effectively support pupils' emotional and physical welfare and are improving attendance.

Full report

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve teaching and learning so that it is consistently good across the school by:
 - ensuring that leaders have more accurate progress-tracking information with which to hold teachers to account
 - ensuring that all teaching pitches work at the right level, particularly for pupils of lower attainment and for those who are most able, so that no time is wasted
 - improving adults' questioning skills
 - strengthening the leadership of subjects other than English and mathematics so that teachers have consistently high expectations across the curriculum.
- Further improve outcomes for pupils by:
 - continuing to focus on pupils' writing skills to develop the stamina, vocabulary, and knowledge of sentence structure to write extended pieces
 - providing pupils with increased opportunities to develop their mathematical reasoning and solve problems, in line with the best teaching in the school
 - promoting deeper thinking and higher standards across the wider curriculum
 - ensuring that pupils are given regular opportunities to apply their English and mathematics skills and knowledge in other subjects
 - accelerating the progress made by disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities so that differences in attainment between these groups and other pupils nationally continue to diminish.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Building on some improvements made last year, the new headteacher has worked with her deputy to rapidly improve the quality of teaching, strengthen leadership and improve behaviour. Senior leaders and members of the IEB have a clear vision for the school. They know the school's strengths and weaknesses well and are taking decisive action to improve outcomes for all groups of pupils.
- Parents, staff and pupils have confidence in the improved leadership provided by the headteacher and her deputy. Parents and pupils recognise and value the improved behaviour and work ethic in the school. The majority of parents would recommend this school to other families and believe that their children are well looked after.
- Leaders responded with urgency to the dip in pupils' outcomes in writing and mathematics in the 2017 national tests at the end of Year 6. Improving outcomes in these areas was given top priority. Leaders introduced a range of new strategies, supported by staff training and development, which has resulted in accelerated progress in these subjects for current pupils.
- Leaders have successfully improved the quality of teaching recently. This has boosted the progress made by many of the most able pupils. Pupils' work in all year groups demonstrates higher levels of challenge in mathematics and writing this year. However, the quality of teaching is still variable and more needs to be done to ensure that pupils with low prior attainment receive more appropriate support. In addition, further refinements to teaching are needed to ensure that the most able pupils make consistently strong progress across the wider curriculum.
- Senior leaders and IEB members have developed action plans that detail what needs to be done to help secure further improvement at the school. These are coupled with improved tracking and thorough monitoring systems. These plans provide a clear sense of direction, with most actions containing appropriately quantified targets against which the school's progress can be measured.
- Leaders and consultants from the local authority have worked together to provide effective professional development and training opportunities for staff, and to foster links with other local schools. As a result, teaching has improved and continues to do so. A programme of training is in place to tackle the remaining weaknesses in teaching and assessment.
- Leaders' work to improve communication with parents and engage them in their children's learning has been very successful. Attendance at parents' evenings and the school's events has improved, and parents speak positively about their welcome in school and the willingness of staff to discuss and resolve any concerns they may have.
- The headteacher quickly improved systems to support disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities. Training for staff, and the implementation of a raft of interventions delivered through afternoon 'spotlighting' sessions, have improved provision. However, much of this is new and leaders' tracking systems are still embedding. To enable a greater proportion of these pupils to reach age-related

expectations, further time is required to refine assessment and evaluate the most effective of these interventions.

- Leaders have revised curriculum planning and use visitors and theme days to enrich pupils' learning experiences. This focus has helped to promote British values and build on pupils' enthusiasm for learning. In addition, there are more opportunities for pupils to become actively involved in a range of sporting clubs and other activities this year. Assemblies are used well to promote teamwork and reflection and to celebrate success. Consequently, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is now being promoted well.
- Subject leaders have quickly turned around falling outcomes for pupils in writing and mathematics. The school's own assessment information and pupils' work show that current cohorts are making much stronger progress in these areas than in the past.
- Leadership in subject areas other than English and mathematics is less well developed. Consequently, teachers' planning is less detailed and pupils' progress across the wider curriculum is variable.

Governance of the school

- The chair and members of the IEB are highly dedicated to the school and passionately committed to driving further improvements. They bring a wealth of experience and expertise from their educational, business and financial backgrounds. Members were initially frustrated by delays caused by three separate rounds of negotiations with different multi-academy trusts. Despite their best efforts, unfortunately, none of these negotiations were successful. Undeterred, they have focused on challenging and supporting leaders to rapidly improve the standard of teaching and learning.
- The IEB has forged professional partnerships with the local authority and external consultants to strengthen leadership, monitor standards in the school and improve effectiveness. Regular visits and reports keep members well informed about standards at the school. Records of the IEB's meetings evidence the level of support and challenge that they offer leaders at all levels, and the focus on assessing and enhancing safeguarding arrangements.
- Recognising the need to increase attendance, the IEB has supported leaders to improve communication with parents, which has reduced absence.
- As a result of the school's improved assessment and tracking systems, IEB members now have access to more reliable information about pupils' progress, which they use to challenge leaders. The IEB and the local authority are rightly focused on the need to review the effectiveness of leaders' actions to support disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Well led by an experienced chair of governors, the IEB has produced detailed plans for the future governance of the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders work well with parents and other stakeholders to ensure an effective culture of safeguarding.

- All staff and IEB members receive regular high-quality and up-to-date training and are well informed about safeguarding matters. This means they are able to carry out the school's procedures well, ensuring a culture of vigilance.
- There are effective systems in place to secure the well-being and safety of pupils. Leaders work diligently to engage external specialist expertise to offer timely support for vulnerable pupils. Meticulous records are kept of the regular communications with outside agencies.
- Staff, parents and pupils agree that the school offers a safe, secure and inclusive environment.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Recent improvements to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment have not yet had sufficient impact in every classroom. Consequently, pupils, including the disadvantaged and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, do not make consistent, strong enough progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Too often, the learning tasks that are set for the most able pupils do not require them to think deeply enough or apply their literacy and mathematics skills across the wider curriculum. Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what these pupils can achieve, and this is slowing their progress.
- The impact of teachers' questioning is variable. Some teachers use their strong subject knowledge and assessment skills to design engaging learning tasks, and then use probing questions to challenge pupils' understanding. As a result, pupils make strong progress in lessons and over time. However, some teachers' subject knowledge is less secure and their questioning is less effective. Where this is the case, too few pupils are stretched sufficiently.
- In a minority of lessons, teachers' use of small-group work is not always effective and, as a result, not all pupils fully understand the tasks they have been given. When the work is not matched well enough to the needs of pupils, some struggle to concentrate and stay engaged in the tasks that have been set. This slows the pace of learning.
- The teaching of phonics is well planned and generally effective. In the best examples, positive relationships and high expectations ensure that pupils develop the skills of segmenting and blending. This ensures that most pupils in key stage 1 are able to read unknown words and become fluent readers.
- This year, leaders have carefully planned more opportunities for pupils to produce pieces of extended writing. Pupils proudly explained how they had designed their own mind maps to support their planning of detailed descriptive and persuasive writing. Although there was some variation between classes, the most successful learning occurred where teachers gave pupils time to draft, refine and improve their work. Pupils were encouraged to learn from their own mistakes to improve their spelling and punctuation.
- As a result of recent training, there has been a clear focus on improving the quality of teaching in mathematics this year. Teachers have improved their subject knowledge and the quality of feedback that they give to pupils. More frequent opportunities for

pupils to develop their mathematical reasoning and problem-solving skills are being embedded into the curriculum for each year group.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils say that they feel safe and secure in school. They can confidently recall how to keep themselves safe, including when accessing the internet.
- Pupils show tolerance and respect for one another and for adults in the school. Pupils are aware of the need for rules and consequences. Leaders have revised the curriculum to ensure that pupils have richer opportunities to learn about different faiths and cultures, and to reflect on British values.
- Improved use of the physical education and sport premium funding means that pupils have increased access to a range of sporting activities and events, both during and after the school day. This is valued by parents and pupils and supports pupils well in learning how to keep themselves fit and healthy.
- Pupils say that there is very little bullying of any kind, and they are confident that adults will always listen and intervene to put a stop to any unkind behaviour.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They conduct themselves well around school and are friendly, polite and courteous.
- The headteacher's new behaviour code, introduced earlier this year, has significantly improved behaviour. Pupils are proud to explain what is expected of them and the associated rewards and sanctions. They report that disruptions to lessons are rare and consequences of any poor behaviour are well known and fairly applied.
- There is a strong sense of community in the school. Older pupils take pride in supporting younger ones by undertaking various responsibilities, such as being play leaders, assisting adults with first aid, or helping to organise reading and art competitions.
- Overall attendance is in line with the national average, but the attendance of some groups of pupils dipped earlier in the year. Leaders took positive steps to tackle absence and promote the value of good attendance. By reorganising systems and working closely with parents and external agencies, leaders have recently secured improvement.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- At the end of key stage 2, in 2017, a lower proportion of pupils than in most schools made the expected progress in writing, and none achieved the higher standard in mathematics. Training for teachers and better planning have improved standards in writing and mathematics this year. Attainment and rates of progress are improving in most year groups. Lesson observations, pupils' work and assessment information

provide strong evidence that the best teaching is helping pupils to make at least good progress. In some classes, pupils are making up lost ground. This is not consistent across the school. Work in pupils' books clearly reflects the inconsistency in the rate of progress across classes.

- In English, while many pupils are confident in their use of punctuation and grammar and can produce well-structured sentences for their age, other pupils still struggle with these basic skills.
- Leaders' focus on promoting reasoning and problem-solving skills in mathematics has improved pupils' achievement across the school this year. In some classes, pupils are now making rapid progress and larger proportions are on track to make or exceed age-related expectations. Leaders are aware that more can be done to ensure that pupils make similarly strong progress in every year group.
- By the end of key stage 1, in 2017, the proportions of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and writing were in line with national averages. However, too few pupils achieved greater depth in reading, writing or mathematics and progress in mathematics was comparatively weak. Staff training, coupled with improved moderation of assessments, has ensured that this has changed. Inspectors' scrutiny of pupils' work agrees with leaders' evaluation that current pupils are making stronger progress in English and mathematics in key stage 1.
- The proportion of pupils who met the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check last year was in line with the national average. Although, currently, there is some variation in the quality of teaching of phonics, there are pockets of very strong practice and leaders are supporting staff with training where necessary. Over time, pupils continue to make strong progress in their reading skills.
- Historically, the small number of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities in each cohort have made statistical comparison with the national figure difficult. However, the progress made over time by these small groups was poor. This is changing. This year, leaders have made much better use of the additional funding to provide bespoke teaching and additional resources to support these pupils. Consequently, differences in the amount of progress made by these pupils and their peers are starting to diminish.
- There is coverage of the full range of national curriculum subjects. However, not all teachers are effective at planning lessons that systematically build on pupils' knowledge, subject-specific vocabulary and understanding across the curriculum. As a result, pupils' progress in subjects such as science, history and geography is variable.

Early years provision

Good

- Leadership in the early years is strong and staff work well together to share ideas and planning. Leaders have high aspirations and are determined that all children should make good or better progress. Over the last two years, staff have worked very hard to improve the learning environment and create a rich range of learning experiences for children.

- Leaders' risk assessments ensure that all aspects of the provision are managed well to keep children safe. Staff are vigilant about the safety of children, both indoors and out, and have received appropriate safeguarding training.
- Children make good progress from their starting points when they enter Reception class and are well prepared for key stage 1. The proportion reaching a good level of development by the end of Reception Year has improved to be consistently in line with, or slightly above, the national average.
- Staff work well as a team to monitor children's progress and then identify and plan suitable next steps. They ensure that easily accessible, suitably engaging activities to promote child-initiated learning are made available. Inspectors observed how confidently children moved between the indoor and outdoor areas to engage in a variety of well-planned activities supporting all areas of their learning.
- Nearly all children make a good start in learning to read because the teaching of phonics in Reception is very effective. Similarly, through careful planning and resourcing, staff ensure that children's numeracy skills have a strong foundation in the early years.
- The needs of disadvantaged children and those who have SEN and/or disabilities are carefully considered and catered for. Staff know individual children very well and regularly liaise with parents to better meet the children's needs. This very individualised focus ensures that children make strong progress from their starting points.
- Communication with parents and other providers is effective. Parents contribute well to the assessment of their child's progress through the individual learning journals. Parents are rightly proud of the school's early years provision.

School details

Unique reference number	110236
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10041359

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	157
Appropriate authority	Interim executive board
Chair	Tony Eccleston
Headteacher	Abi Preston
Telephone number	01494 523318
Website	www.westwycombe.bucks.sch.uk
Email address	office@westwycombe.bucks.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	14–15 January 2016

Information about this school

- West Wycombe Combined School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Following the previous inspection, the governing body was replaced by an interim executive board. The previous headteacher left and there was a period of staffing turbulence. An interim headteacher was appointed last academic year and the new substantive headteacher took up post in September 2017.
- The responsibilities of the senior leadership team and subject leaders have been restructured following the headteacher's appointment this year.
- Following the previous inspection, the school received formal support from the Buckinghamshire Learning Trust on behalf of the local authority.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for support through pupil premium funding is below average.

- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons in every classroom and an assembly in order to gather evidence to contribute to their evaluation of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Many of these observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, middle leaders, two members of the IEB and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about their learning and looked at the work in their books across a range of subjects. They spoke to pupils on the playground, during lessons and met with two groups of pupils to gather their views.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about reading and heard some of the pupils read.
- Conversations were held with a number of parents, both informally at the beginning of the school day and during a scheduled meeting. Inspectors also considered the views expressed in 61 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View.
- A wide range of school documentation was scrutinised, including that relating to policies, strategic planning, safety, self-evaluation, pupil achievement, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors reviewed the record of leaders' vetting and checks on the suitability of adults to work with pupils.

Inspection team

Matthew Newberry, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Christopher Crouch

Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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