

Westwood Primary School

Westwood Avenue, Westwood Primary School, Lowestoft, NR33 9RR

Inspection dates 17–18 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy
	This inspection:	Requires improvement 3
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Requires improvement	3
Early years provision	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Pupils do not achieve well in all subjects across all year groups. Although most pupils are now making good progress, many still have gaps in their learning due to previous ineffective teaching.
- The most-able pupils do not achieve well enough. Too few of these pupils reached high enough standards at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 in 2014.
- Pupils' rates of attendance are not high enough.
- The achievement of disadvantaged pupils is significantly lower than that of their classmates. In 2014, disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 were around five terms behind other pupils at the school.
- The quality of pupils' handwriting and presentation is not good enough.
- In mathematics lessons pupils do not have enough opportunity to develop their problem-solving skills.
- The quality of written work in subjects other than mathematics and English requires further improvement.

The school has the following strengths

- The quality of leadership and governance are good. The determined and effective leadership of the headteacher has led to significant improvements in all areas of the school's work, especially teaching.
- Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding. Children are taught exceptionally well and make excellent progress.
- The quality of teaching is good. The gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and their classmates are closing fast.
- Leaders have worked effectively, with all members of staff, to ensure that the school is a safe place in which pupils can learn.
- The school's work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Pupils are very happy at school. They enjoy learning and the good attitudes that they now have to learning, coupled with their good behaviour, contribute well to the progress they make.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching in 12 lessons, five jointly with the headteacher. In addition, inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons.
- The inspectors held discussions with pupils, staff, a representative from the Active Learning Trust and members of the governing body.
- One of the inspectors talked to parents at the beginning of the school day. Inspectors also took account of the views of 31 parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, looked at pupils' work in books, listened to pupils read and looked at a number of documents, including the school's development plan and assessment information.
- The inspectors scrutinised documentation relating to safeguarding and behaviour and attendance.
- The inspectors considered the 19 responses that were made to the staff questionnaire.
- One of the inspectors met with nine pupils from Key Stage 2, who completed a questionnaire on bullying. She also spoke to these pupils about their reading.

Inspection team

Paul Tomkow, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jacqueline Keelan

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Westwood primary school converted to become an academy school on 1 September 2013. When its predecessor school, Whitton Green Community Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be inadequate. There has been a substantial turnover of staff since this inspection and none of the former school's teachers, other than the headteacher, remain.
- Westwood primary school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2012.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- A very small minority of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- Children in the Nursery class attend in the mornings only. Children in the Reception class attend full-time.
- The proportion of disabled pupils, and those who have special educational needs, is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and supported by the pupil premium is well above the national average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school does not meet the current floor standard, which sets the government's minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement in all subjects by ensuring that all teachers:
 - close gaps in pupils' learning, particularly disadvantaged pupils, by making regular and accurate checks on their work, and providing clear advice on how to improve
 - improve presentation and handwriting
 - provide more opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical knowledge to investigate and solve problems
 - provide more opportunities for pupils to apply and develop their writing and mathematical skills in other subjects
 - provide greater levels of challenge for the most able.
- Improve rates of attendance so that all pupils have a better opportunity to achieve well.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Under the inspirational leadership of the headteacher, the school has been transformed over the past two years. The quality of teaching, which was previously inadequate, is now typically good and sometimes outstanding. Pupils' behaviour has also improved significantly and the school is now a happy and harmonious place in which pupils love to learn. Pupils, staff and parents are appreciative of the changes that have been made and are working hard to secure further improvements.
- School leaders have set high expectations about what can be achieved at the school. Support has been provided to help teachers to improve and, where necessary, action has been taken to address inadequacies. The staff survey, which was taken as part of this inspection, shows that all members of staff are supportive of the headteacher and leadership team. Staff believe that the school is well led and managed and they are committed to making further improvements.
- Subject leaders have a good understanding of their role. They have supported senior leaders in the introduction of broader range of subjects over the past twelve months. They have led staff training sessions and produced resources to support teaching and learning. They have developed detailed plans for further improvements.
- The curriculum now covers a broad range of subjects, and meets the needs and interest of pupils. A range of visits and additional activities are also undertaken, which broaden pupils' experiences and give relevance to their learning. School leaders have ensured that the additional sports funding has been used effectively. Teachers have benefited from working alongside coaches and pupils from being taught a wider range of sports and games. The funding has also been used to support competitive sport with other schools, and more pupils are now participating in physical activity on a regular basis.
- The school works extremely well with parents. They are encouraged to play an active role in their children's education, not just in the early years but across the school. 'Learning Packs' and reading books are regularly sent home and parents are invited into school on a regular basis, to work alongside their children. The overwhelmingly positive response to Parent View (Ofsted's on-line questionnaire) demonstrates the confidence that parents have in the school. Parents trust school leaders, and other staff members, to do the best they can for their children.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well. From the time they enter the early years, pupils are taught to respect others and accept those who come from backgrounds that are different to their own. The school's curriculum teaches pupils about different cultures and belief systems and, through involvement in elections for the school council, pupils gain an understanding of how democracy works. These factors help to ensure that pupils are well prepared for their lives in Modern Britain.
- Arrangements for safeguarding are comprehensive and fully in place.
- The Active Learning Trust has been successful in supporting developments at the school. It has supported and challenged school leaders effectively, and has also provided teachers with many training opportunities. Teachers have also had opportunities to work with other schools in the academy chain, collaborating with other teachers and sharing resources and expertise.
- Pupil premium funding has been used effectively to support a wide range of activities aimed at encouraging better attendance and higher achievement. The impact of this work can be seen in the rapid improvement that many of these pupils are now making. In the current Year 6 class there is little difference between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and their peers.

■ The governance of the school:

- The Governing Body has an extremely good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and is committed to ensuring that the school builds quickly on the recent improvements that have been made.
- Governors have a well-informed view of the quality of teaching at the school, not only from the reports they receive, but also from regular visits to observe the school in action.
- Governors know about the link between performance and pay and how underperforming staff are challenged and supported.
- Governors understand performance data and know how the school's performance compares with that of other schools nationally. They are also aware of the reasons for the school's recent under-performance and have supported the school's senior leaders well in addressing the issues involved.
- Governors check carefully that additional funding, such as that received for pupil premium and sports, is used effectively.
- Governors ensure that the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements, and that these arrangements are highly effective.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The work that school leaders have undertaken to improve the school has been built around the development of good teaching and good learning behaviours. As a result, pupils now enjoy learning and work hard. They behave well in class, even when they find work difficult. On the rare occasions that they do lose concentration they respond well to adults who encourage them to concentrate on their work.
- Parents are extremely positive about the school's work to improve behaviour. All of those spoken to during this inspection, and those who responded to the online Parent View survey, believe that pupils behave well at the school. Pupils and staff also say that behaviour is good.
- The school is a happy and harmonious place. Pupils are respectful of each other's views and are kind and considerate towards one another. The relationships between pupils and adults are based on mutual respect. During discussions with the school council, one pupil said, 'The teachers care about us and want us to do well'.
- Pupils enjoy the opportunities that the school provides to take on additional responsibilities. For example pupils see it as a privilege to be part of the school council. Some older pupils also take great pride in their role promoting and supporting the use of computers across the school.
- Pupils do not always show enough pride in the work that they complete in books. The way that pupils present their work, and the quality of handwriting, require improvement.
- Pupils' attendance is below the national average but it is improving. The leadership team has implemented rigorous procedures to improve attendance. All cases of absence are monitored closely and any repeated absence is followed up immediately by the parent support worker.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Parents have confidence in the school and rightly believe that it is a safe and secure place for their children.
- Pupils have a good understanding of bullying and the different forms that it can take. They say that there was bullying at the school in the past but that things have changed. They say that staff sort out and disagreements between pupils quickly and are confident that if an incident of bullying were to occur it would be dealt with and the bullying would not continue.

- The school helps pupils to understand how to stay safe when using the internet. Pupils are taught that personal information should not be shared on-line, and older pupils can explain how to use privacy settings when using social media.
- School leaders have ensured that safeguarding arrangements fully meet requirements. Regular training in child protection takes place and appropriate checks are made on all adults who work regularly in the school.
- School leaders ensure that good quality support is provided for pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. The school works well with external agencies to ensure that support is targeted appropriately.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved considerably and is now typically good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers ensure that lessons are interesting and pupils across the school now enjoy their learning. As a result, pupils across the school are making good progress and gaps in their knowledge and understanding are closing fast.
- The teaching of reading is a particular strength of the school. At the start of most days pupils read with teachers, or one of the many other adults who support pupils' learning at the school. Adults track progress carefully and ask questions which encourage pupils to think hard about what they are reading. This helps pupils to develop their understanding and deepen their learning. The teaching of writing has also improved. The work in pupils' books shows that pupils in all classes are making good progress. However, many pupils are still working below the standard that is typical for their age, and too few are attaining higher levels, due to ineffective teaching in the past.
- The teaching of writing is effective. Pupils now write regularly and with increasing confidence. However, in some classes teachers do not mark pupils' written work well in subjects other than English. Mistakes in grammar, punctuation and spelling go unchecked and not enough advice is provided to pupils about how to improve their work. The quality of writing in these subjects is not as good as that seen in pupil's English books.
- The teaching of mathematics is increasingly effective. Teachers assess pupils' progress regularly. They ensure that pupils know how well they have done and what they need to do to improve further. Teachers have focused on closing gaps in pupils' learning. This has been effective in helping many pupils to make good progress in this key subject, although many pupils are working at a lower level than they should be. Sometimes pupils spend too much time repeating similar types of questions rather than using the skills and knowledge that they are developing to investigate and solve problems. This slows progress, particularly for the most-able.
- Teaching in the Foundation Stage and in Year 6 is particularly strong. In a Year 6 mathematics lesson pupils were presented with calculations which contained errors and pupils had to identify exactly what was wrong. The teacher's effective questioning required pupils to justify their thinking and demonstrate the reasoning skills that had informed their conclusions. This led to all pupils making rapid progress in their learning.
- Pupils enjoy learning in subjects such as art, geography and history and some good work was seen in these areas. However, some teachers do not have high expectations of what pupils can achieve in these subjects and opportunities to develop pupils' writing and mathematics, in subjects such as science, are often missed.
- The work of teaching assistants is highly effective. They work closely with teachers and provide well-targeted support that is matched closely to the needs of the pupils they support. These pupils learn well as a result and make good progress from their different starting points.

The achievement of pupils **requires improvement**

- The work seen in books, during this inspection, indicates that pupils are making good progress from what were generally low starting points at the beginning of this school year. Although an increasing number are now working at the levels expected for their age, many are still behind where they should be and too few of the most-able pupils are attaining higher levels.
- Gaps in attainment, between disadvantaged pupils and their classmates, were extremely wide in 2014. In reading, disadvantaged pupils were more than two years behind their classmates and five terms behind similar pupils nationally. In writing they were five terms behind their classmates and over two terms behind similar pupils nationally. In mathematics disadvantaged pupils were five terms behind their classmates and over two terms behind similar pupils. The school has taken effective action to address this weakness. Across the school disadvantaged pupils are now making rapid progress due to improved teaching and the effective additional support they are receiving. In the Year 6 class there is now no significant difference between the progress of disadvantaged pupils and their peers.
- Although attainment in reading across Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is low overall, it is improving rapidly. The teaching of phonics (the sound that letters make) is now more effective and younger pupils are quickly developing good early reading skills. Older pupils are also making better progress. Many pupils demonstrated positive attitudes to reading during this inspection. In a meeting with one of the inspectors pupils spoke knowledgeably and enthusiastically about their favourite books and authors. Many older pupils now read widely and often.
- Rates of progress in writing are improving, although few pupils are attaining the higher levels. Children in the early years are encouraged to write on a regular basis and are increasingly adept at forming letters and words. Older pupils are becoming better writers due to better teaching and the improvements they have made in their reading. In some classes the quality of writing in subjects other than English is not as good. In these classes errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling are not checked and pupils continue to make the same mistakes.
- In mathematics, rates of progress are also improving, though levels of attainment across the school are generally below those expected. Teaching has been effective in closing many of the gaps in pupils' learning, particularly for those who struggle. However, across the school the most-able pupils are generally not achieving the levels of which they are capable.
- The work in pupils' books in Year 6, across a range of subjects, shows that most of the pupils are working at or above the levels expected for their age. This means that these pupils will be well-prepared for the next stage in their education when they move on to high school this summer.
- The learning and progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, is increasingly good due to the excellent support provided by teachers and other adults.

The early years provision **is outstanding**

- Children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities which are, on average, well below those typical for their age in communication and numeracy skills. They make excellent progress and the percentage of pupils who achieved a good level of development in 2014 was around the national average. This represents outstanding progress and meant that most of the children were well prepared for the next stage of their education when they moved into Year 1 in September 2014.
- The quality of teaching over time in the early years is outstanding. Teachers, and other adults, make good use of assessment to ensure that the activities that are planned for the children build on what they already know, or can do. This helps to ensure that every child regularly undertakes highly challenging activities.
- Children are highly motivated, very eager to join in and consistently demonstrate good attitudes to learning. They have regular access to a well-organised and highly stimulating learning environment, both

inside and in the outdoor areas. The imaginative experiences that are provided help them to learn exceptionally well and develop high levels of curiosity. They enjoy each other's company and are highly responsive to the adults who teach them.

- The school is highly successful at working with parents to promote children's learning. This work begins before children start at the school, when staff meet with parents to gain an understanding of each child's abilities and interests. The positive relationship continues once the child starts school, with parents invited in to work with their children on a regular basis.
- During this inspection one of the regular Café Days was held, during which parents and children work together on an aspect of learning. The focus for this day was shape. Following an introduction to the activity by the teacher, in which the mathematical language associated with two dimensional shapes was discussed, adults and children took part in a 'shape hunt'; looking for shapes that had been placed around the outdoor area, and recording their findings. By the end of the session many children were able to identify shapes such as hexagons and pentagons. Activities such as this are used effectively to help parents to gain an understanding of how to support children's learning and are enjoyed and much appreciated by the parent who participate.
- Parents are kept well-informed about their child's progress and are also encouraged to contribute to the regular assessments that are made by taking the assessment records home and commenting on any important activities children have taken part in or developments in their learning. Parents also have regular access to learning resources, including books and educational activities, which can be borrowed from the school.
- Children's health, safety and well-being are given high priority. Children are well looked after but also taught how to keep themselves safe and develop a level of independence. They demonstrated positive behaviour throughout this inspection. They show respect for each other and showed great enthusiasm for learning.

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	139804
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	449872

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	196
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jackie Cutchey
Headteacher	Rae Aldous
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy
Telephone number	01502 565673
Email address	admin@westwoodprimary.org

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