

Waterwells Primary Academy

Boulmer Avenue, Kingsway, Gloucester, GL2 2FX

Inspection dates 23–24 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Good 2
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Early years provision	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Leadership and management are good. The expertise and strong partnership of the executive headteacher with the academy trust have effectively and quickly improved teaching.
- As a result of better teaching, pupils are making good progress and standards are rising rapidly in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders check the quality of teaching rigorously. They use good systems that monitor and track pupils' progress.
- Children in the early years do well. Effective leadership and teaching ensure that they make good progress.
- Good teaching and attention to pupils' personal skills, as well as their academic development, result in good behaviour and pupils' eagerness to learn.
- Pupils new to the school are quickly assessed on arrival and included in all that the school has to offer.
- Well-planned guidance ensures that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and disadvantaged pupils, make good progress.
- Pupils enjoy school, and attendance is rising. They feel safe at school and adults pay good attention to their welfare and safety.
- The atmosphere throughout the school reflects a strong sense of community and mutual respect. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well, and pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Governors, in partnership with the academy trust, have clear responsibilities and ways of working. As a result, they are now thorough in holding the school's leaders to account for its performance.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Attainment in writing, although improving, is not as high as in reading or mathematics. Pupils do not use their writing and mathematical skills in other subjects.
- Teachers do not always adjust tasks in lessons quickly enough to maximise progress.
- Pupils do not always have time to respond to teachers' comments in marking in order to improve their work.
- Some subject leaders' roles have yet to be developed at the school.
- Some parents would like more effective communication with the school and more information about the school's leadership roles, ethos and policies.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 16 lessons, of which two were observed jointly with school leaders. In addition, the inspectors made a number of shorter visits to lessons.
- The inspection covered Nursery and Reception classes and provision for pupils attending the school from Years 1 to 6.
- The inspectors held discussions with school leaders, including the executive headteacher of the academy trust, staff and governors representing the multi-academy trust and local advisory board.
- The inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at documentation, including improvement plans, the systems for tracking pupils’ progress, the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and samples of pupils’ work. They heard groups of pupils reading and spoke with pupils about behaviour and the safety arrangements at the school.
- The views of 39 parents were analysed through the online questionnaire, Parent View. In addition, inspectors spoke with some parents and considered views of parents who wrote letters.
- The views expressed by the 23 staff who responded to the staff questionnaire were also considered.

Inspection team

Michael Bartleman, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Joe Skivington

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Waterwells Primary Academy is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The academy is located on a large and developing housing estate on the edge of Gloucester.
- The academy is managed by the Robinswood Academy Trust and opened in September 2013. A local advisory board was formed in June 2014.
- A pre-school is part of the academy and has its own building on the school site. There are two classes, one of which is for nursery-aged children. The other class is for two-year-old children; this provision did not form part of this inspection.
- A new academy, Hunts Grove, shares the academy's building. At present there are four children on roll. The academy will move to its own buildings in September 2016.
- Pupils join the school at irregular times during the year as new homes reach completion, and many older pupils have been at the school for less than a year.
- Since the formation of the multi-academy trust, there have been some staffing and leadership changes. In September 2014, a new executive headteacher was appointed. Subject leadership roles, including the special educational needs coordinator, are carried out by staff from Robinswood Academy.
- Pupils are taught in a Nursery class located in the pre-school, two Reception classes and five other classes, three of which comprise pupils of mixed age.
- Children attend the Nursery class, located in the pre-school, part time in morning or afternoon sessions, while children in Reception classes attend full time.
- One pupil in four is from a wide range of minority ethnic groups, the largest being East European.
- One pupil in three is supported by the pupil premium, which is in line with the national average. The additional funding is for disadvantaged pupils, including those known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after.
- One pupil in 10 is disabled or has special educational needs. This is broadly in line with the national average.
- The school 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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement to become outstanding so that attainment, particularly in writing, rises further by:
 - ensuring that teachers adjust tasks more quickly in lessons when work is either too easy or too hard so that all pupils make rapid progress
 - giving pupils time to respond to teachers' comments in marking, and improve their work as a result
 - giving pupils opportunities to use their writing and mathematical skills in other subjects.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - developing the roles of subject leaders at the school
 - developing strategies to inform and communicate effectively with parents.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The executive headteacher, supported by the academy trust board and senior leaders, has taken prompt action to improve teaching and standards at the academy this year. Her high ambitions for the school are supported ably by her deputy.
- Leaders' self-evaluation is well founded on robust monitoring. Leaders analyse pupils' achievement carefully and have been clear where improvements have needed to be made. This information is shared with governors so that they can also rigorously check for improvements.
- The leadership team monitors the quality of teaching rigorously through checks on the pupils' work in their books, checks on their attainment and progress and through regular lesson observations. The academy gives staff good support and guidance to address any areas in need of further improvement. Senior leaders use regular meetings to challenge teachers to make improvements for specific individuals or groups of pupils in their classes. Newly qualified teachers are supported well.
- The leaders of English, mathematics, the early years and special educational needs show a clear grasp of their areas of responsibility. They take an active part in whole-school development and in managing teachers' performance. These activities are helping the school to make more rapid and secure improvements, confirming that the school has a good capacity to improve further. They have roles across the academy trust. However, subject leaders' roles specific to the school are yet to be developed.
- The academy uses the pupil premium funding very effectively to increase staffing to provide one-to-one and small-group support for eligible pupils. As a result, disadvantaged pupils have made at least the progress expected, or better, in reading, writing and mathematics since joining the school.
- The academy has used primary sport funding well to increase opportunities for pupils to participate in a wide range of activities, including opportunities for swimming, inter-school competitions and after-school clubs. Staff have attended training to improve their skills and develop confidence in teaching this subject. Pupils have a good understanding of how to live healthy lives.
- Senior leaders have been rigorous in improving attendance. Their actions include the appointment of a learning support and a family support worker to follow up any concerns. As a result, attendance has improved and is now at the national average.
- Effective arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils are in place and meet statutory requirements. Appointments of staff comply with government safer recruitment requirements and all staff are checked thoroughly. The academy always undertakes thorough risk assessments for visits and off-site activities. Staff give pupils good advice on how to stay safe in the wider community.
- The academy has reviewed its curriculum in the light of the new National Curriculum. The work planned by the teachers motivates the pupils and they say that they really enjoy their learning. The recent focus has successfully been on improving English and mathematics. However, the pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to apply their much improved writing and mathematical skills in other subject areas. The curriculum is enriched through a wide range of educational visits, visitors to the school, use of the outdoor areas, the Forest School, learning Spanish, specialist music teaching and themed weeks.
- The development of spiritual, moral, and social skills is a strength of the academy and equips pupils well for their future life in modern Britain. Staff actively promote British values. As a result, pupils show respect and tolerance for other pupils and adults within school and have a good understanding of democratic processes through class discussions and the elections to the school council. Staff do not tolerate discrimination and they promote equality well.
- The academy trust has provided very effective support for teacher training and for checking assessments, which has resulted in the successful tracking of pupils' achievements and raising the quality of teaching. The flexible support from experienced staff within the academy trust has helped the academy to develop quickly.
- Most parents are positive about the school. However, a small number feel that communication is not always effective, particularly when changes occur at this growing academy, and that policies and procedures are not fully explained.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Under a very experienced and knowledgeable Chair of the Trust Board, the governing bodies, including the multi-academy trust board and the more recently formed local advisory board, carry out their duties effectively and support the senior leaders robustly. As a result of effective training and a clear understanding of test results and school information, they are able to challenge leaders at the school and at the same time support their drive for improvement. Governors can explain the process of spending the pupil premium funding and relate it to its success. At the same time they know and

understand that the school's expenditure on sports-related activities is effective and successful. They know about the quality of teaching and the purpose of performance targets and the importance of these being met for any possible salary increases for teachers and other staff. They know that staff receive support to improve their practice if necessary. They carry out their statutory duties effectively and so all safeguarding aspects meet current requirements well.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils and the large majority of parents who commented during the inspection agreed that behaviour is good.
- Behaviour in lessons is consistently good because the pupils are engaged in their work and find it enjoyable. Pupils have very positive attitudes to their learning and are keen to do well.
- Behaviour is good around the academy. Pupils have good manners, helped by the high expectations. They are polite and courteous with each other and with the adults. Pupils like the new behaviour policy and the guidance it provides. They are clear about the behaviour management procedures and staff apply these consistently across the academy.
- Well-targeted support has resulted in notable improvements in the behaviour of some individuals whose behaviour gave rise to concerns when they first arrived at the academy. However, a few pupils still require adult support to maximise their progress, which is why behaviour and safety are not outstanding.
- Pupils are very supportive of each other, particularly of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and those who have recently arrived at the academy, demonstrating the school's effectiveness in fostering good relationships and tackling discrimination.
- Pupils make a strong contribution to the decisions made in school about their learning and their well-being. They say that good account is taken of their views. For example, pupils were able to contribute their ideas when the new behaviour policy was developed. The older pupils are keen to take responsibility. They talk enthusiastically about their roles in the school council and as house captains and monitors. Pupils take a great pride in their new academy and are welcoming to visitors.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain through a strong focus on the development of the skills and understanding they need to become good citizens.
- Attendance is average.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- All safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and, from the pre-school nursery upwards, good welfare and health routines ensure that pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe and well.
- Visitors to the academy are all checked on arrival and issued with badges. Access to the buildings is secure and the site is also secure and well maintained.
- Most parents agree that their children are safe in school and that the school cares for them well. This is confirmed by pupils themselves. All staff are well trained in keeping pupils safe. Pupils know that staff will always be there for them.
- Pupils have a good knowledge of internet safety and understand the different types of bullying which can be perpetrated on the internet. These topics are part of the curriculum as well as being regularly highlighted in assemblies.

The quality of teaching is good

- Since the academy opened, teaching has improved and is now typically good.
- Teachers plan work which motivates pupils. As a result, they are productive and there is clear evidence in their books of good progress in lessons and over time in reading, writing and mathematics. Previous underachievement is being dealt with because staff now quickly check pupils' standards and needs when pupils start at the academy.
- The scrutiny of work in pupils' books, data about progress and lesson observations confirm the school's own view that teaching is good for all age groups. Records show teaching has improved rapidly during the last year.

- Relationships between adults and the pupils are good. Pupils learn well because teachers know them well as individuals. Staff establish a good focus on learning. They have built good relationships and pupils appreciate praise and rewards for hard work.
- Teachers make clear what is expected in learning. Teachers' planning is carefully devised to be effective, particularly for mixed-age classes, and they use teaching assistants well to support pupils' learning. In some year groups, pupils are making outstanding progress in their reading, writing and mathematics as a result of outstanding teaching. This is not yet consistent across the whole school.
- Teaching of writing has improved rapidly and is particularly strong because teachers develop pupils' vocabulary and skills before commencing the task. For example, in a Year 1 and 2 class, pupils were rehearsing action rhymes of the traditional tale *Billy Goats Gruff* before writing. This gave pupils the story structure and vocabulary before writing. In reading, pupils develop a good knowledge of phonics (letters and their sounds) and have many opportunities to read to adults and to develop their comprehension skills.
- The teaching of basic calculation skills is strong. In mathematics, pupils are often asked to explain their thinking to each other which gives good opportunities for them to use mathematical language.
- Every six weeks, teachers evaluate the progress pupils make with school leaders. They quickly identify any pupils who are not progressing in their learning. All adults take responsibility for pupils' learning and progress. As a result, all pupils including the most able, those supported by the pupil premium, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good or better progress from their starting points on entry to the academy.
- The marking of pupils' work has improved, particularly in writing, although pupils do not always have the time to respond to teachers' comments and improve their work.
- Teachers benefit from sharing good practice with colleagues from within the academy trust. They work well together to develop assessments, to introduce new ideas from training events and to check the standards of pupils' work.
- Where teachers use questioning well it encourages pupils to reflect on their learning. However, teachers do not always check how well pupils are learning during a lesson, in order to adjust their approach. This sometimes slows progress. Occasionally, it means that pupils, including the most able pupils, have nothing more challenging to do when they have finished a task, or when they have shown that they understand the work.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the Nursery and Reception classes with basic skills and knowledge that are below those typical for their age, particularly in personal and communication skills. Well-planned experiences and careful monitoring of children's progress help children to learn and develop successfully. The proportion of pupils reaching a good level of development, at the end of the Reception Year, is similar to that found nationally and is continuing to improve. Children are well prepared for Year 1.
- The result of the phonic screening check for pupils in Year 1 in 2014 was at the national average. Pupils are encouraged to love reading from the start of school. Regular teaching of phonics is supporting children well in rapidly developing their reading and writing skills.
- The school's performance data show that, in 2014, a significant number of pupils did not make the progress they should have in Key Stage 2. Standards were below those expected for their age. However, this reflects these pupils' performance in their previous schools and masks their good achievement at Waterwells. None of the pupils who left at the end of Year 6 in 2014 had been at the school for more than a year.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 in 2014 was below average. The school's internal data show that pupils currently in Year 2 are attaining much higher National Curriculum levels than in the past.
- Taking into account their individual starting points when joining the school, which are often below those expected for their age, pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. However, their attainment in writing remains lower than in mathematics and reading. Overall, all groups of pupils, including those from minority ethnic groups and the most-able pupils achieve well. This reflects the school's determination that all pupils should have an equal opportunity to succeed.
- Well-targeted support for disabled pupils, those with special educational needs, and those learning English as an additional language, enable them to overcome many of their difficulties and make the same good progress as their classmates.
- In 2014, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 was two terms behind other pupils in the school in mathematics and three terms behind in reading. They were one term ahead in writing. Compared with

other pupils nationally, disadvantaged pupils were five terms behind in mathematics and writing, and four terms behind in writing.

- Pupils eligible for pupil premium funding benefit from well-judged extra support. The school has provided individual help and guidance, additional tuition and financial support to enable them to participate in out-of-school activities and courses. Key to this is the highly effective support from the learning mentor and family support worker. This group of pupils is currently making similar progress in reading, writing and mathematics as all other pupils in the school.
- The school has significantly increased the demands made on the most-able pupils in all subjects. This results in the most-able pupils making good progress throughout the school. However, few Year 6 pupils reach the higher National Curriculum levels in reading, writing and mathematics because there has not been enough time to remedy previous underachievement. A significant number of pupils in Key Stage 2 are not confident at writing or in applying their basic mathematical skills.
- Pupils achieve well in reading and writing because teaching is effective in developing key skills. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to read widely. Daily reading workshop activities help pupils to read fluently and write imaginatively.
- Pupils' improving basic skills, developing confidence and positive attitudes prepare them well for transition to secondary education.

The early years provision is good

- Children achieve well in the Nursery and Reception classes and make good progress. From a range of different starting points, two thirds of the children reached a good level of development in 2014, which is average.
- Staff guide the children very effectively and give them good support through constant discussions and talking with individuals in order to improve their vocabulary and ability to respond to questions. Teaching is consistently good, and at times outstanding.
- Leadership and management of both the Nursery and Reception provision are strong. Staff get on well together and their modelling of good relationships encourages children to share, play well with other children and freely take part in all activities.
- The good transition between home and school helps children to join the Nursery calmly and free from upset. Most children transfer from the Nursery class in pre-school to Reception and find the move seamless.
- Good relationships help children develop positive attitudes to their learning, preparing them well for future progress through the school. Children behave well, work and play together happily and develop good social skills.
- Children make good progress in their learning and achieve well over time, so that most are well prepared to start their learning in Year 1. The work often starts from children's interests or the class topic. During the inspection, children were seen writing in the 'pirate's captain log', labelling their pirate ship, making a list in the Forest School and telling a picture story in the Nursery class.
- Children make better progress working indoors rather than outdoors. The outdoor spaces are not yet of the same high quality as those indoors. The leaders of both settings are aware of the need to reorganise the layout of the space and equipment in order to maximise its use. They have good ideas about what can be done to improve it.
- Staff carefully monitor children's learning and make good use of this information to plan what children need to learn in the future. Parents are involved early on and contribute to their child's development through the learning journals, which log children's progress. Their written and pictorial contributions when children have the early years bears, Otis and Walter, at home make a marked contribution to children's social and cultural development.
- Children are well cared for and procedures to keep them safe are good.

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	139693
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	450227

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	185
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Barnard and Terry Brooker
Headteacher	Kim Hoodless
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01452 881962
Fax number	01452 881962
Email address	reception@waterwellspa.co.uk

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