

Abbey Woods Academy

Wimblestraw Road, Berinsfield, Wallingford, OX10 7LZ

Inspection dates 13–14 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy
	This inspection:	Inadequate 4
Leadership and management	Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils	Inadequate	4
Early years provision	Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Pupils' achievement is inadequate. Their progress is not sufficiently rapid to close the many gaps in their learning. Standards in English, mathematics and a wide range of subjects are too low at the end of Year 6.
- Academy leaders have been too slow to address pupils' slow progress. This has prevented many pupils from being ready for their secondary education.
- Governors and the Trust have not held teachers to account for the progress of their pupils through effective management of their performance.
- Funding for disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs has not been used effectively because governors do not use information about their achievement to plan their support.
- Teaching is inadequate because many teachers do not have an accurate understanding of what their pupils already know, and so are unable to plan work which stretches pupils of all abilities.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' work and behaviour are often too low and they show little aspiration for pupils to achieve high standards.
- The arrangements to keep pupils safe and secure are inadequate. Leaders have not ensured that the academy site is safe or that the records of suitability of staff to work with children are up to date. Some pupils say that they do not feel safe.
- In some lessons a few pupils lose concentration and their behaviour gets in the way of their learning and that of others.
- Leaders have been too slow to address staffing difficulties and there have been many changes in staff since the academy opened. This has led to confusion among parents and pupils.
- Provision in the early years is inadequate, as some groups of children, including pupils with special educational needs, do not make the progress they are capable of.

The school has the following strengths

- The current interim headteacher has shown drive, determination and ambition through her rigorous, urgent and uncompromising focus on improvement. This is beginning to raise the quality of teaching.
- The interim headteacher's rigorous checking of the academy's work has given her a very clear understanding of its weaknesses.
- Since January 2015, the Trust has become an active and determined partner with the interim headteacher in addressing the underperformance of staff and pupils.
- The teaching of phonics is effective so that pupils in 2014 attained levels in line with those nationally in the Year 1 phonics screening check.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 18 lessons, two of which were jointly seen with the interim headteacher. They also examined the quality of work in pupils' books.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, around the academy, and at breaks and lunchtimes. They had informal discussions with pupils and met with the academy council.
- There were too few responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, to generate a meaningful picture of parents' views but inspectors took account of the academy's own recent survey of their views.
- Inspectors met with some parents, the interim headteacher, other academy leaders, a group of governors, and representatives of the Trust.
- Inspectors looked at academy documents, including information about pupils' achievement, records of behaviour and attendance, records of monitoring, academy self-evaluation, plans for improvement, and information relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Lynne Bradbury, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Dawn Breeze

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Information about this school

- The academy is of similar size to the average primary school.
- Children attend full time in the Reception class and part time in the Nursery.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is in line with the national average. The pupil premium is extra government funding to support the education of those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority. There are currently no children in the academy who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- The academy opened as part of the CfBT Trust on 1 September 2013. The predecessor school was Berinsfield Primary School.
- There has been considerable turbulence in staffing, particularly at the most senior level, over an extended period. There will be many changes of staff for the next academic year.
- From the opening of the academy until December 2014 there had been two interim headteachers. The current interim headteacher took up her post in January 2015.
- The Trust Primary Lead and Learning Coach have worked very closely with the academy since January 2015.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Urgently ensure that safeguarding policies and procedures meet statutory requirements for keeping pupils safe by:
 - collating and maintaining clearance details for all members of staff on a single central record
 - addressing the difficulties around the safety of the site
 - maintaining vigilance to make sure that those areas which are not safe for pupils are not accessible to them.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good in order to accelerate pupils' progress by ensuring that:
 - teachers' assessment of pupils' current achievement is accurate from the point of entry to the academy so that they provide work which will stretch all groups of pupils, including the most able
 - teachers develop more skilful use of questioning during lessons so that they can move pupils on or support them further
 - all staff develop high expectations and aspirations for all pupils and increase the opportunities for deepening their understanding across all the subjects studied
 - disadvantaged pupils and those who are disabled or who have special educational needs are identified by all teachers, and supported and stretched with work at appropriate levels of challenge, including in the early years
 - work set to develop the technical understanding of English spelling, punctuation and grammar enables pupils to attain higher standards in writing, in all year groups
 - all pupils are motivated to work hard and to take pride in the presentation in their workbooks
 - the behaviour of pupils is managed effectively and consistently so that it does not disrupt their learning and that of others.

- Improve the impact of leaders at all levels, the Trust and governors by ensuring that:
 - the Trust board and governors develop systems to provide them with an accurate view of the academy's strengths and weaknesses and hold leaders to account for bringing about improvement
 - finances and resources to support disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are allocated and monitored effectively
 - the recently forged partnership between the interim headteacher, Trust primary lead, and trust learning and teaching coach is further strengthened to accelerate pupils' progress
 - subject leaders have appropriate training to improve the quality of teaching in their areas and are held accountable for pupil progress in their subject.
- Improve outcomes for children in the early years by:
 - ensuring the accuracy of teachers' assessments so that appropriate activities are planned for all children
 - ensuring that activities in all lessons stretch pupils of all abilities including the most able and children who are disabled or who have special educational needs.

An external review of governance should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of the work of the academy can be improved.

An external review of the pupil premium should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of the work of the academy can be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are inadequate

- Leadership and management are inadequate. The Trust, governors and leaders at all levels, in place since the academy opened, have not recognised its failings on many levels because they have not had systems in place which would enable them to uncover difficulties in key areas of its work. This has prevented good teaching and behaviour from thriving.
- In the past, systems for checking pupils' progress have been inadequate. Leaders had no means of identifying the academy's strengths or areas for improvement, and this prevented them from making judgements which would hold teachers to account through the management of their performance. Targets for improvement were not linked closely to pupils' achievement and so teachers had no consistent goals for improving pupils' progress.
- The interim headteacher has acted urgently and with great determination and expertise to address the failings of the academy and to set appropriate targets in place for teachers and other staff. The Trust Board has engaged with her during this time and together they have implemented rigorous systems to check the strengths and areas for improvement in the academy. The Trust primary lead and learning and teaching coach, particularly, are providing effective support.
- Governors have responded to this development by undertaking their own improvement programme to help them to understand the academy's performance better.
- The failure of leaders to recognise the profound difficulties of the academy quickly enough has led to some pupils leaving poorly prepared for their next stage of education, and to a trail of low expectations and poor quality teaching..
- Safeguarding arrangements do not meet statutory requirements and, as a result, pupils are not sufficiently safe in the academy. Clearance information for all staff is not collected on a single central record, and the site is not secure.
- Middle leaders and subject leaders have not been effectively developed and have been ineffective in gathering information about pupils' achievement in their subjects, and in improving teaching and learning.
- Staff have remained unchallenged about poor quality teaching and low achievement levels until the spring of this academic year. This has exacerbated the deep-rooted nature of shortcomings across the academy.
- Leaders are committed to tackling discrimination, but pupils have not had equal opportunities to succeed. For example, the most able pupils have not been sufficiently stretched and disabled pupils and those with special educational needs have not been supported well enough to make good progress.
- The pupil premium funding for disadvantaged pupils has not been used effectively to close gaps between these and their peers in the academy or others nationally.
- A significant number of staff are leaving the academy in the summer and, while this gives the potential to introduce new and appropriate skills, it has also led to another time of staffing changes and uncertainty. The many staff changes have been unsettling for pupils and parents.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced but does not develop basic skills in literacy and numeracy well enough. It provides some opportunities for pupils to develop their reading, writing and mathematical skills in wider contexts. Through topics, for example the rainforest, or the Vikings, or the general election, pupils read about the topic, write accounts of their learning and produce charts to show mathematical patterns. These opportunities are not giving enough opportunities to develop their skills to develop deeper understanding.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is addressed through the academy's focus on their 'respect' values and it is evident that there is generally a high level of tolerance, care and support among pupils. They have undertaken interesting work around the theme of the general election to prepare them for life in modern Britain and they are developing their understanding in this area.
- Leaders have used the primary sports funding to train teachers to offer enhanced sporting opportunities that are helping pupils to develop healthy attitudes, and pupils clearly enjoy these.
- Inspectors strongly recommend that the academy should not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are not yet able to challenge the work of the academy through first-hand knowledge of its work, in spite of undertaking some valuable training. They have increased their checking of the academy's work, but are not yet sufficiently skilled in holding leaders and staff to account for the poor performance of pupils. Performance management systems have only recently been implemented in a manner which gives governors the opportunity to make appropriate decisions about salary progression.

- Governors do not yet have enough knowledge of the quality of teaching or understanding of information about pupils' progress to be able to tackle pupils' underperformance and to allocate funding and resources effectively. This includes the use of the pupil premium funding which has not yet been effective in closing gaps in pupils' attainment.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are inadequate

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- While most pupils behave well and are attentive and interested during lessons, a few lose concentration and this affects their progress and that of others. This is sometimes because staff lack the skills to deal with minor disruption or do not present work at an appropriate level for all pupils. In addition, systems in the academy are not effective enough to support these pupils.
- Records of pupils' behaviour do not record or analyse incidents during lessons sufficiently. They record difficulties on the playground but there is little to indicate what has been tried or what was successful in dealing with these issues. This prevents staff understanding how to manage such incidents positively.
- Work in pupils' books shows that most pupils work hard, but that a few do not. Standards of presentation do not always reflect high expectations from staff or commitment from pupils.
- Most pupils show high levels of respect and tolerance for each other, and they are very polite and well mannered as they move about the academy.
- Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities for helping others or for the smooth running of the academy. They enjoy sharing their views through the academy council and mirroring British democracy as they vote for their representatives.
- Attendance was below average last year but has improved this year because the interim headteacher has instigated systems to challenge and support those who have been persistently absent.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is inadequate.
- Some areas of the academy that are off limits to pupils because they not adequately secured. The site presents extremely difficult challenges for keeping pupils safe. While leaders have begun to devise plans to address these, the dangers have been clear for a very long period of time. There are measures in place to limit the dangers, but these are not yet sufficiently robust.
- While some pupils are very happy in school, others say that they do not feel safe. They understand the forms that bullying can take and are aware of the dangers from modern technology including the internet and mobile phones. They say that some bullying happens. While some parents who met inspectors felt that this was not dealt with effectively by staff, pupils felt that it was. During the inspection, any disputes or arguments were dealt with quickly and effectively.
- Pupils show a good understanding of how to stay safe outside the academy.
- All members of staff have had recent and appropriate training in child protection and safeguarding, and there are effective measures in place to check on visitors. However, appropriate checks on temporary members of staff are not recorded in line with statutory expectations.
- Work in the academy to identify and protect vulnerable pupils is effective so that they are well cared for by staff and, particularly, the nurture support assistant.
- Pupils show respect and tolerance for each other and recognise that name-calling is unacceptable. They say that any such incidents are dealt with well.
- Leaders assess the risks of activities and visits, and do everything possible to make these safe.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- The quality of teaching has been inadequate since the academy opened and this has resulted in pupils of all abilities making slow progress.
- Teachers' poor understanding of what levels their pupils are working at has held pupils back since the academy opened. Teachers have recently had training in understanding what pupils have already learned and in using this information to plan learning for their pupils. While some staff have responded to this well, there is a great deal of ground to make up.
- Lessons observed during the inspection and work in books showed that, while this is improving, in many lessons, work set is not giving an appropriate level of challenge for all pupils in English, mathematics and

the wider subjects of the curriculum, particularly for the most able. Many teachers do not use questioning to probe what pupils know sufficiently to, move them on or support them further.

- Some teachers do not demonstrate sufficiently high expectations of pupils' work or behaviour, particularly of those who are disabled or who have special educational needs. Consequently, some pupils in all groups do not make enough progress in the key areas of reading, writing and mathematics. This often relates to teachers' lack of understanding of how to plan work that stretches pupils effectively.
- Key technical details of English spelling, punctuation and grammar are not taught systematically to ensure that these aspects raise the standard of pupils' written work, and teachers do not demand sufficiently high standards of presentation from all pupils.
- There is not enough attention to the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. Teachers do not take sufficient account of these pupils in planning work to accelerate their progress.
- Teaching assistants have not all had sufficient training to be able to support pupils' progress in their work or behaviour.
- Phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is taught well and gives most pupils a sound basis to develop their reading skills, however this is not always built upon appropriately. Where reading is taught well, pupils make better progress because their activities are well focused on developing understanding. For example, in a Year 4 guided reading lesson, while the teacher asked very probing questions of pupils in her group, other pupils worked very hard to analyse text and to write accounts using their understanding of their reading.
- Marking of pupils' work is beginning to improve as teachers start to follow the marking policy. Where this is better developed it is helping pupils to understand how to improve their work.
- Teachers ensure that pupils have many opportunities to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness within the topics studied.
- Homework gives pupils opportunities to develop their basic spelling, reading and mathematical skills.

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- The achievement of all groups of pupils is inadequate because they have not made enough progress since the academy opened and their attainment is too low in reading, writing and mathematics.
- At the end of Year 2 in 2014 pupils' attainment was broadly average, but teachers have failed to build on those levels in the current year in spite of improved teaching since January 2015.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 in 2014 was significantly below average in reading, mathematics and spelling, punctuation and grammar. They did better in writing.
- The progress of many of the disadvantaged pupils is inadequate because insufficient attention is given to tracking their achievement and using this information to plan work that stretches them.
- In 2014, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils at the end of Year 6 was just over half a term below their peers in the academy and five and a half terms below other pupils nationally in mathematics. They were one and a half terms below their peers in the academy and seven and a half terms below other pupils nationally in reading. In writing, they were two terms below their peers in the academy and three terms below other pupils nationally.
- Work seen in lessons and in books during the inspection confirms that many pupils across all groups do not make sufficient progress because activities are not sufficiently matched to their ability levels. While this has improved in some classes since January 2015, the slow development of this area over the year has limited many pupils' progress.
- The progress of many of the pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs is too slow and this limits the standards they attain. Teachers do not have an accurate understanding of their needs or their skills. This is also the case for disadvantaged pupils.
- The progress of the most able pupils is too slow because these pupils are not given work which will sufficiently challenges them to deepen their learning or to apply their skills in some classes. In 2014, too few of these pupils attained the higher levels at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Pupils' written work has improved this term, but mistakes in the technical aspects of English spelling, punctuation and grammar are limiting the standards achieved. Writing across other subjects is too limited in some classes in order to contribute to raising standards.
- Where pupils are encouraged to read for meaning, their progress is improving. In a Year 1 class, pupils were reading books on mini beasts and using their understanding to write about these creatures.
- In some classes, pupils have opportunities to develop their basic mathematical skills in real contexts. In a Year 3 mathematics lesson, for example, pupils could use their knowledge of fractions successfully to work

out whether they would prefer three sixths of a cake, or four sevenths. Generally, this application of skills is not developed sufficiently across the academy and so many pupils do not make sufficient progress.

- Pupils' achievement in phonics has improved and, in 2014, Year 1 pupils attained levels in line with the national average in the phonics screening check.

The early years provision

is inadequate

- Many children join the academy with skills which are below those typical for their age, particularly in speech, language, reading and writing. While some children make good progress in the early years, this is not the case for all, especially the more able and those who are disabled or who have special educational needs. These children do not make the progress they are capable of.
- Children enjoy the exciting and fun activities, but staff do not use accurate assessment of what children already know in order to plan work which will stretch them in all activities. This is particularly so for the more able and for those who are disabled or who have special educational needs.
- Children make good progress in phonics in early years and some are able to transfer this well into their early reading and writing.
- Staff engage parents in children's learning and development, and they welcome them warmly so that children see the strength of relationships between their parents and the staff. This enables them to come to the academy happily and confidently.
- Children in early years are well behaved and excited by their learning. They develop respect and good manners.
- Although the early years department is secure, safeguarding procedures across the whole school are inadequate.
- The early years leader is developing a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the department in order to ensure that staff have appropriate training.

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	139709
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	450038

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	239
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Suzanne Denham
Headteacher	Rachel Kluczynski
Date of previous school inspection	not inspected as an academy
Telephone number	01865340420
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