

Welland Academy

Scalford Drive, Peterborough, PE1 4TR

Inspection dates 14–15 July 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.

- The highly experienced senior leaders and trust personnel have created a good and improving academy in which effective teaching flourishes and pupils achieve well.
- The trust provides expert governance that supports and challenges the academy very well. This ensures that it is well placed to improve further.
- Leaders' checks on teaching are regular and rigorous, and lead to prompt improvements.
- Leaders manage behaviour effectively. Most pupils are motivated and have good attitudes to learning. Their behaviour around the academy is typically good and they are friendly, polite and caring.
- Pupils feel safe in the academy and arrangements for keeping them safe are robust.
- Since the academy opened, all groups of pupils have made good progress from their different starting points. They achieve well. Many have made excellent progress in reading this year.
- Teaching is consistently good and improving. Teachers engage pupils well in their lessons. There are very positive and trusting relationships between teachers and pupils, so pupils work hard and want to do well.
- Support staff are a huge strength of the academy. They are very well trained and support pupils' well-being, personal development and academic achievements exceptionally well.
- The early years provision is good. Children settle quickly. Their happy faces and the busy buzz of activity that typifies their learning in lessons, show how much they enjoy their learning.
- The academy promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. Pupils learn about British values and are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Parents who stated a view would recommend the academy to others.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Tasks are sometimes too easy for pupils and this means not all are challenged to reach the highest levels they are capable of.
- The academy's marking policy is not strong enough to lead to prompt improvements in pupils' work across all subjects.
- Progress is not as strong in writing and mathematics as it is in reading. Teachers do not give sufficient emphasis to developing pupils' writing and mathematics skills outside formal literacy or numeracy lessons.
- Subject leaders are mostly recently appointed and do not yet lead development in teaching and learning as effectively as they should.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils’ learning in 19 lessons, six of them together with senior leaders. Inspectors undertook a scrutiny of work for all year groups, some of it jointly with the Principal Designate and the Principal. In addition, the inspectors talked to pupils about their work, looked at pupils’ work in their books, talked to some pupils about reading and listened to them read, and observed pupils at playtimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors held three meetings with different groups of pupils, including the academy council, to talk about their work and their behaviour, and also their understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects, including British values.
- Inspectors held several meetings with the Executive Principal, who is a representative of the Trust and the academy’s governance. They held meetings with the academy Principal and the Principal Designate, with staff holding responsibilities for leading specific areas of the academy’s work and with a group of support staff (learning assistants).
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documents including: the academy’s own check on its performance and the quality of teaching; documents relating to governance and the academy improvement plan; information on pupils’ progress; and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- There were too few responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, for analysis. Inspectors considered two academy surveys of parents and spoke to some parents at the end of the academy day. Inspectors also took account of 34 questionnaires returned by staff.

Inspection team

Ruth McFarlane, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Patrick Amieli

Additional Inspector

Vivien Corrie-Wing

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This larger-than-average primary academy opened in October 2013. It is sponsored by the Greenwood Dale Foundation Trust, a trust that sponsors 30 midlands academies.
- The trust is responsible for the governance of all the academies they sponsor.
- The Principal took up his post in November 2013. He is supported by the Executive Principal, an officer of the trust. Alongside him there is a Principal Designate, who will lead the academy when the current Principal moves on to another of the trust's academies at the end of this term.
- The proportion of White British pupils is below average. Eastern European pupils form the largest minority ethnic group.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those who are eligible for the pupil premium, is well above average. This is additional funding for children in local authority care and pupils known to be eligible for free meals.
- The proportion of pupils who enter or leave the academy mid-year, in each year group, is high.
- The early years comprises two Reception classes, whose children attend full time.
- The academy makes part-time, occasional use of alternative provision at the St George's Pupil Referral Unit, Peterborough. It also makes brief, one-off use of several other local schools as part of a coordinated approach to the management of pupils whose behaviour is challenging.
- The academy meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave Year 6.
- The academy operates a breakfast club which is the responsibility of the trust and was visited during this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and its impact on pupils' achievement, by ensuring that:
 - all pupils are challenged sufficiently in their learning so that more reach the higher levels in all subjects
 - teachers are provided with an effective academy marking policy
 - teachers' marking leads to prompt improvements in pupils' work
 - subject leaders play a full part in developing the quality of teaching in their subjects.
- Raise pupils' achievement in writing and mathematics, by:
 - improving planning to enable pupils to develop and deepen their literacy and numeracy skills by practising them in other subjects.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders, governors and members of the trust board share a commitment and determination to provide the best possible learning and experiences for pupils. They have successfully established a culture of high aspiration, where pupils are able to thrive. The impact is evident in pupils' good progress since the academy opened.
- Leaders' rigorous checks on teaching have ensured that all pupils benefit from good teaching so that they achieve well, develop highly positive attitudes to learning and are well prepared for the future.
- Leaders have established effective arrangements for managing teachers' performance and have linked these closely to decisions about teachers' salary progression. Staff are highly positive about the trust's support for their development. Training is frequent and thorough.
- All leaders and governors are fully committed to providing equality of opportunity and raising pupils' aspirations so that all groups of pupils have an equal chance to achieve success. They have correctly identified the need to ensure that more pupils achieve the higher levels.
- Leaders keep a careful record of the way they have spent the additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils and its impact on their achievement is strong. The academy provides a range of additional support for groups and individuals that has supported the personal and emotional needs of disadvantaged pupils well, which has accelerated their academic progress.
- Staff foster good relations throughout the academy. Discrimination is not tolerated. Pupils respect and celebrate each other's differences.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a real strength in the academy. Pupils learn respect for differences in faiths, cultures and backgrounds. Teachers help pupils understand the importance of tolerance and respect. One excellent example was a Year 5 session, in which pupils discussed the benefits of the Olympics in leading to respect for others' achievements. Leaders ensure pupils understand British values such as individual liberty and democracy, and understand the need for rules in the academy and the wider community. This helps pupils to be well prepared for life in modern Britain and the next stage of their education.
- The spending of the additional funding to promote physical education and sports has a positive impact on pupils' health and well-being. The academy has employed specialist coaches to increase the skills of teachers and pupils. There are increased opportunities for pupils to participate in inter-academy competitions.
- The academy's work to engage parents is increasingly effective. Academy surveys and parents spoken to during the inspection indicate that parents are strongly supportive of the academy and would recommend it to others.
- The systems and policies for safeguarding pupils are effective and implemented by all staff. All statutory requirements are met. The trust supports the academy very effectively and ensures that the academy benefits from the additional expertise and capacity afforded by the trust academies, its Board and directors. The partnerships developed informally with other schools, for example for the management of behaviour, and the use of alternative provision, are all meticulously and regularly checked by the academy for safety, and to closely monitor the attendance, behaviour and achievement of pupils placed there.
- Staff with responsibilities for subjects or areas of the academy are mostly new to post. Where this is the case, their work is at an early stage of development. They help to ensure that the academy provides a broad and balanced range of subjects that effectively meet pupils' interests as well as their needs. There is an appropriate emphasis on developing pupils' knowledge and skills in reading, writing, mathematics and

communication. However, subject leaders' work to ensure pupils' writing and mathematics skills are deepened in other subjects is not fully developed, limiting the most rapid progress that pupils could make in writing and mathematics.

■ The governance of the school:

– Trust members who are responsible for the governance of the academy challenge its leaders very well to strive for excellence. The collaborative approach between the trust Board and academy leaders makes for highly effective governance. Trust members understand the academy's performance information and know how well the academy compares to others nationally. They have a high level of expertise and offer skills in a range of areas. As a result, they are able to provide good levels of challenge and support, and hold the academy effectively to account for its performance. They are well informed about all aspects of the academy's work by senior leaders, and their own visits to academy and analysis of data. They know that the academy's strong arrangements for managing the performance of staff and its robust training programme are helping to improve the quality of teaching and standards, and that pay progression is linked to pupils' good progress. They fully support the academy's policy of only accepting good or better teaching and know how they tackle any underperformance. Trust members have a very clear understanding of how additional funding is spent and the impact it has on pupils' achievement. They ensure that all statutory requirements are met, including those for safeguarding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Their interest and enthusiasm to learn is sometimes exemplary. They behave well in lessons, around the academy and at playtimes.
- Pupils are polite and friendly, and get on well together. They work hard, which helps them make good progress. Pupils have a great sense of belonging to the academy, and wear their uniform proudly. A group agreed with one pupil who said that, 'Everyone is included and you have friends of all ages; we are like a big family.'
- The academy's regular surveys of parents confirm that parents feel behaviour is well managed and that pupils behave well.
- Pupils take their responsibilities, such as academy councillors, very seriously
- Behaviour is not outstanding. Records show that, where there have been difficulties, these are managed well, occasionally by the use of alternative provision and mutually supportive arrangements with other local academies. The academy makes regular and thorough checks of the behaviour and attendance of pupils attending this off-site provision to ensure that their behaviour improves and that they make progress that is at least in line with that of their peers.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Parents who responded to the academy's surveys think their children feel safe in the academy and are well looked after. The academy places a high priority on ensuring the safety of all pupils. Leaders systematically check that pupils placed in alternative provision and as part of the informal arrangements with other local academies are safe and secure.
- Pupils say they feel safe both in the academy and outside because the academy makes them fully aware of potential dangers, including when using the internet or near traffic. The breakfast club provides a safe and social start to the academy day.
- Pupils say they are not aware of any bullying in the academy and think that pupils are kind and caring. They know, however, that bullying can take different forms, such as name-calling, physical and cyber-bullying. Pupils are confident to turn to staff should any issues arise and know they will be listened to and taken seriously.

- Procedures and policies for safeguarding and child protection are robust and effective. All staff are vigilant and understand the procedures to be taken in case of any health and safety or safeguarding concern.
- Leaders are determined in their work to encourage pupils to attend regularly. Attendance has improved and is broadly average. The number of pupils who have extended absences has reduced and punctuality has improved.

The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils learn well and make good progress because senior leaders' checks have ensured that teaching is good. Staff are well trained and ensure pupils who speak English as an additional language receive good care and make good progress.
- Teachers show that they value the views, opinions and efforts of pupils and this develops pupils' confidence and readiness to learn. From the moment they arrive in the academy, whether it is in the early years, or at the mid point of another year group, pupils say they enjoy learning because teachers make their lessons fun. In response to the good teaching, pupils work hard and want to do well.
- Teachers are good role models for pupils. They ensure there is a strong work ethic and a purposeful learning atmosphere in all classrooms. Teachers make the classrooms vibrant and interesting. They make very good use of displays and displays of work in progress, to support teaching and learning.
- Teachers question pupils skilfully to check their understanding and to help them extend their thoughts and ideas. Questioning is so good that pupils often also ask excellent questions that deepen their learning. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to talk about their learning, which successfully helps pupils develop their language and their ability to express their ideas. A Year 6 group thoroughly enjoyed their work in science detecting which suspect had stolen a pop star's guitar. Pupils animatedly discussed how best to follow clues and to decide how to test powder samples recovered from the crime scene, to see if they would dissolve, combust, or fizz.
- Teachers manage the work of learning assistants very well and ensure they contribute fully to pupils' learning. Strong teamwork between teachers and assistants ensures that additional help given to disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs supports their learning well and promotes their good progress.
- Reading is taught effectively and this has led to improved progress this year in all subjects, but particularly in reading itself. Teachers teach phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) well and this enables pupils to learn effectively from their various starting points. All staff successfully encourage pupils to read for enjoyment and research.
- While teaching is good overall in writing and mathematics, there is some inconsistency in the level of challenge teachers set pupils, which is evident from the study of pupils' books over the year. This leads to slower progress in these subjects than in reading, and fewer pupils achieve the highest standards. In writing, leaders have correctly identified that teachers do not provide the opportunities pupils need to strengthen their writing skills by applying them in other subjects, and that challenging tasks are relatively rare. Much of the teaching in mathematics is based on classroom activities and exercises. The most rapid progress noted is when the activities have been linked with other subjects, but this work is underdeveloped. Progress in mathematics is also held back sometimes by work that is too easy, and little guidance towards more challenging activity.
- Teachers' marking and feedback often give pupils good guidance on how to improve their work. However, the quality of marking is not consistently good in all classes. This can be traced back to the marking policy, which, the academy is aware, is unclear. It is vague about what is required in marking mathematics work, and does not promote sufficient rigour to ensure prompt improvements in pupils' work.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Academy data and work in pupils' books show that all groups of pupils achieve well and make good progress from their different starting points. In particular, pupils who speak English as an additional language, often the same pupils as those that enter mid-year, have significantly improved their progress this year. Records and their books show that progress for these groups is never less than good in all subjects.
- From their start in the early years, where most children enter with skills that are below what is typical for their age, the children make good progress because of good provision and clear leadership. They build on this good start in the rest of the academy.
- In 2014, standards overall were below average by the end of Year 2 and by the end of Year 6. Few pupils reached the higher levels in either key stage. Pupils across the academy are now reaching higher standards because they are making good progress. The most recent, unvalidated information has been moderated for accuracy by experts on the school staff as well as undergoing a trust-wide moderation. It was also thoroughly checked against pupils' books by inspectors. It shows that progress this year in all year groups is at least good, from pupils' low starting points, although standards overall are still below average except in reading.
- A difference noted last year between the lower performance of boys and the higher performance of girls has been dealt with this year through devising planning that has 'boy-appeal', such as an online book reading system. There is no evidence of a gap in performance now.
- The needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are met well, enabling them to make similar good progress to others. Their needs are identified early so that appropriate support can be given to help them make good progress from their various starting points.
- In reading, pupils have made accelerated progress, in response to the academy's focus on improving reading. In 2014, the proportion of pupils reaching the required level in the Year 1 phonics check was below the national figure. Leaders looked carefully at this and have made sure that the teaching of phonics is now well matched to the ability of pupils across Key Stage 1. As a result, the proportion of pupils reaching the most recent national figure is broadly average.
- Pupils' reading in older year groups has improved significantly over the year and some is outstanding. This is because reading for enjoyment and information is promoted well across the academy and pupils are introduced to a wide range of good quality texts and authors. As a consequence, they can express their preferences for different authors and styles of writing, and give thoughtful reasons for their opinions.
- Disadvantaged pupils receive strong support across the academy, often from well-directed learning assistants, so that the gap in their attainment is narrowing and they are making faster progress than other pupils. In 2014, there was no gap between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and others in Year 6 in mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils were about a term ahead of others in reading, and less than a term behind in writing. Compared with other pupils nationally, disadvantaged pupils were about a year behind others in mathematics and reading, and about 15 months behind in writing.
- Leaders meticulously track the progress and achievement of pupils who are educated off-site by alternative providers or who are placed temporarily in other local academies. They achieve as well as others and often make excellent progress in developing their personal skills.
- Currently, the most-able pupils make good progress. There are too few pupils in this category in each individual year group to comment on their attainment in Year 2 and Year 6 National Curriculum tests without potentially identifying them. In Year 6 in 2014, no pupil was in this category. The best progress has been in reading, where far more pupils are working at higher levels this year.
- Progress is not outstanding in mathematics because there are not enough opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills in a range of real-life situations, and to articulate their thinking.

- In writing, progress has improved because teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to talk about and rehearse their thoughts before writing their ideas down. However, progress in writing is not outstanding because pupils have too few opportunities to write, to deepen and develop skills to the full.

The early years provision

is good

- Children in the early years are given a good start. There are well-organised links with parents, which enable children to settle quickly into academy life.
- Most of the children start with skills and abilities that are below those typical for their age in personal development and in communication, language and literacy. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of the Reception year has risen this year, but is still below the national average. However, from their starting points, this represents good achievement, especially in developing the personal skills necessary to be ready to continue their education in Year 1.
- Teaching is good. Children are given rich, stimulating experiences so they are motivated, and develop a love of learning. Children engage happily and busily in activities, which are planned well. For example, the teacher used Martin Waddell's *The Pig in the Pond* to devise numerous farmyard activities, inside and outside, developing children's understanding of animals that many of them had never seen or heard of, and incorporating writing and number work effectively.
- Children behave well and are eager to learn. They are given many opportunities to be creative, work things out for themselves and develop independence and resilience when things do not initially work as planned. Children are encouraged to develop a love of books and stories, and use their increasing phonic skills to help them read and write.
- Good leadership of the early years ensures that welfare requirements are met well. Teachers use their assessments of children's learning well to plan their next steps. Children are kept safe and secure by vigilant staff both indoors and outdoors, at all times. Staff work very well as a team that has a good understanding of the needs of young children.

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	140043
Local authority	Peterborough
Inspection number	450195

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	330
Appropriate authority	Greenwood Dale Foundation Trust
Chair	David Shelton
Principal	Geoff Wilson
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01733 563180
Fax number	01733 563180
Email address	admin@wellandacademy.org

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