

Wallscourt Farm Academy

Longdown Avenue, Stoke Gifford, Bristol BS16 1GE

Inspection dates

27–28 April 2016

Overall effectiveness

Good

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The principal demonstrates a relentless drive and ambition to ensure that all pupils receive a high-quality education. This has led to ongoing and sustained improvement in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment since the school opened.
- The Cabot Learning Federation board and the academy council members know the school well. They provide strong challenge to leaders, which is supporting the school to improve effectively.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. The school's approach to developing independent learners is resulting in pupils who are inquisitive and want to learn.
- The progress pupils make continues to improve because teaching is typically good. This improvement is particularly strong in reading as a result of the high-quality teaching and support pupils receive to enable them to read well.
- Staff build effective relationships with parents to enable them to support their children to become successful learners. Parents greatly appreciate the high-quality communication between home and school and the opportunity to be involved in their children's education.
- Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are outstanding and underpinned by strong relationships between staff and pupils. This inclusive school is at the heart of the community. Pupils are thriving in this school.
- Pupils are very well cared for and kept safe. As a result, they say they love coming to school and are very positive about their daily learning experiences. Behaviour is exemplary.
- The early years provision is outstanding. Children make rapid progress during the year and are very well prepared for Year 1.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Middle leaders, who are new to their roles, are not yet precisely checking the learning and progress of pupils in their subjects.
- On occasion, teachers do not challenge pupils to extend their learning. Pupils do not then receive the feedback they need to improve their work.
- Action plans do not include sufficiently precise and measurable objectives to enable leaders and academy councillors to frequently and precisely check the impact of the actions taken to improve the school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen leadership and management further by ensuring that:
 - middle leaders, who are new to their role, support senior leaders in precisely checking the learning and progress of pupils in their subjects
 - plans for improvement include short-term targets, so that leaders and members of the academy council can precisely check the impact of the school's actions.
- Further improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - all pupils are sufficiently challenged in their learning to make the best possible progress
 - pupils receive the feedback they need to improve their work.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The principal, with strong support from the executive principal and the Cabot Learning Federation, is driving the continual improvement and expansion of this school. Her determination, ambition and continual reflection are resulting in sustained and continuing improvement. All staff have 'bought into' the Wallscourt Farm approach to teaching, learning and assessment. They strongly believe that every child has the potential to achieve and become an active, independent learner. This approach, which has been developed over time following the opening of the school in September 2013, is resulting in inquisitive and motivated learners. Great consideration and care have gone into making this school a safe and exciting place to learn. As a result, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and pupils' outcomes are good and continue to improve.
- Senior leaders have established a positive climate for learning for the pupils and staff. They offer a wide range of professional development to teaching staff to support their understanding of how children learn and to continually develop their teaching skills. Teachers share their good practice with each other. They discuss pupils' achievement on a daily basis with colleagues to assess pupils' learning and progress. This is having a positive impact on improving teachers' skills and the quality of their teaching, learning and assessment.
- The principal rigorously holds all teachers and teaching staff to account. Staff are set challenging targets which directly link to the impact of their teaching on pupils' outcomes. The academy councillors are adamant that they only recruit teachers who meet their exacting standards and who are prepared to adopt the school's philosophy for learning. This is resulting in a shared and cohesive understanding among all staff of the Wallscourt Farm approach to teaching, learning and assessment. Pupils quickly become immersed in this approach, which is effective in supporting their academic development.
- The school's unique 'enquiry-led curriculum' provides a wealth of learning opportunities for pupils to explore and discover. Nonetheless, leaders ensure a rigorous focus on the teaching and learning of key mathematical and literacy skills. Teachers make good use of the local environment and visits to places of interest that motivate and inspire pupils to learn. Links with local artists and authors further enrich the curriculum provision. Leaders ensure that the curriculum supports all learners. For example, staff support pupils who need to catch up with their literacy or mathematical skills and understanding. The most-able pupils receive support to stretch and challenge their thinking. This approach is helping all pupils make good progress.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Pupils draw up their class charter to support good behaviour. Pupils told the inspector, 'our teachers tell us, it's not about saying no, it's about the choices we make. Our charter is about our place, our values'. Pupils learn about special places and raise money for charities. Within the school, pupils from different cultures and backgrounds show respect for each other. Pupils are being well prepared for life in modern Britain and gaining an understanding that any form of discrimination is not tolerated.
- The principal has ensured that pupils with additional needs receive high-quality support to enable them to make good progress from their starting points. Leaders identify pupils at risk of falling behind and provide individual and personalised support. The school's records confirm that these pupils make good progress, particularly with their reading and writing skills.
- Leaders have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. In particular, they have focused on improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Historically, the gaps between the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils and those of non-disadvantaged pupils have been too wide. As a result of carefully planned support, these gaps are closing and pupils' progress is quickening.
- Leaders and teachers make excellent use of the expertise and training opportunities on offer within the Cabot Learning Federation. For example, teachers across the federation schools check the accuracy of their assessments together. In addition, leaders offer their expertise to other colleagues in the federation. All training is carefully planned to support the school's key development priorities. This is having a positive impact on the continuing improvement in the quality of teaching and learning.
- The school uses the sports premium funding effectively to increase the range of clubs on offer to pupils. For example, pupils benefit from expert coaching from Bristol Rugby Club. As a result, more pupils now participate in sports clubs, which is supporting them to lead a healthy lifestyle.
- Middle leaders, who are new in post, are playing an increasingly significant role as the school continues to expand. However, they are not yet fully involved in precisely checking pupils' learning and progress in

their subjects. Objectives in action plans lack short-term targets to enable all leaders to check rigorously the impact of the school's actions on its performance. Senior leaders recognise that this is the next step in the school's development of its leaders during the coming years of expansion.

■ The governance of the school

- The academy council and the trust board govern the school effectively. They visit regularly and rigorously analyse the school's performance. They ask searching and challenging questions of leaders to ensure that the school continues to improve. They have an in-depth understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and hold the principal to account for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. For example, minutes of board meetings and those of the education scrutiny committee evidence the meticulous approach to analysing pupils' outcomes, particularly those who are eligible for additional government funding. Their work is highly effective in ensuring the school's continued and sustained improvement.
- The trust board oversees the school's work in aspects such as finance, staffing and premises well. They bring a wide range of professional skills to their work and are highly committed to ensuring the success of this rapidly expanding school.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are extremely effective. Leaders have established a strong culture of keeping children safe. They are uncompromising in their drive to ensure that the school is a safe and secure place where pupils can learn effectively. Checks made on teachers before taking up their appointments are extremely thorough. Leaders are assiduous in carrying out the appropriate training to ensure staff are recruited safely. All staff are trained to recognise and act on signs of harm or risk. They act immediately and appropriately if they are concerned. The principal has ensured that all staff are up to date with current legislation. This includes training for staff to protect pupils from extreme opinions and views. As a result, parents agree that their child feels safe at this school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Since the school opened, leaders have focused relentlessly on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Pupils say that learning is fun because teachers plan interesting lessons that they enjoy. As a result, pupils are keen and motivated to learn and achieve well from their starting points.
- Pupils start the day with an 'enquiry-based question'. For example, pupils were asked on the day of the inspection to discuss 'what are materials?'. This planned, whole-school approach is supporting pupils to think deeply and learn about the world around them.
- Teachers continually seek to develop their already good subject knowledge. They use this to plan learning that interests and engages the pupils. For example, pupils wrote information texts about dangerous animals using full sentences and correct punctuation. Opportunities to work with other schools in the federation and links with the University of the West of England enable teachers to challenge their thinking and develop and refine their practice. For example, work in mathematics books shows an increasing focus on the teaching of reasoning and problem solving. Consequently, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment continues to improve.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are very strong. Staff go 'the extra mile' to provide high-quality care and support, which parents greatly appreciate. Pupils respond to instructions positively and settle to their learning quickly. In the school's open-plan learning environment, there is a calm and purposeful atmosphere that encourages pupils to learn effectively.
- Teachers check pupils' learning frequently. 'Learning conversations' between pupils and teachers on a daily basis identify good learning and any gaps in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. Teachers then adapt their planning to ensure that they address these gaps. Work in pupils' books and the school's records confirm that pupils make good progress in their learning over time.
- Experienced and well-trained teaching partners make a significant contribution to pupils' learning and their personal development and welfare. For example, they lead small-group phonics sessions to build pupils' knowledge of the sounds that letters represent. In addition, they provide good support for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs to ensure that individual needs are met. Their work is having a positive impact on building pupils' confidence and their early literacy and numeracy skills.
- Pupils learn to read well as a result of good teaching. The teaching of letters and the sounds they represent (phonics) begins in earnest in Reception. Children make rapid progress and build on this work

in Years 1 and 2. During the inspection, children in Reception were able to read and write increasingly complex words. Pupils in Year 2 read with fluency and a good understanding of the text.

- The most-able pupils are challenged to 'deepen their learning' and investigate the topics being taught for themselves. As a result, these pupils are able to work independently at a young age, demonstrating perseverance and resilience in their approach to tackling the harder work.
- On occasion, teachers do not challenge pupils to extend their learning to enable them to make the best possible progress. Although teachers provide feedback to pupils in line with the school's policy, pupils do not always know how to improve their work. As a result, work in books is sometimes left uncorrected and, at these times, pupils do not learn from their misconceptions or mistakes.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Leaders and all staff are uncompromising in their absolute belief that every child can and will succeed at this school as a result of the high-quality care and support each receives. Alongside the focus on learning, staff prioritise the personal development and welfare of the pupils. This approach is highly effective in ensuring that children settle quickly when they start school and learn effectively.
- The school's work to promote respect and tolerance is well established. No derogatory language was heard during the inspection and pupils know that it would not be tolerated. Pupils are clearly proud of their school and say they can always speak to a teacher if they need help. All parents who completed the online questionnaire agree their child is well looked after and makes good progress at this school.
- Pupils thrive because they feel valued and extremely well supported. They understand the teachers' high expectations for good work and behaviour. The high-quality support given to pupils and their families is making a positive contribution to developing pupils' self-esteem and well-being.
- Staff record all concerns assiduously and continually seek ways to support individual pupils. This results in pupils being ready to learn and achieve well.
- Pupils say that there is no bullying. In addition, pupils who spoke with inspectors have an increasing understanding of how to keep safe when using computers. Nevertheless, they place absolute trust in their teachers to support them with worries they may have. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school's work. Typically they say, 'my child is extremely happy at this school and is well supported with their learning every day'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. A parent stated, 'children bounce into school ready for another day'. All parents who responded to the online questionnaire would recommend this school to others. Pupils treat visitors with respect and are especially keen to talk about their school and personal achievements.
- Lunchtimes are happy and sociable occasions. The whole school comes together for lunch. Pupils sit and chat amicably. The arrival of the 'play pod' outside in the playground is greatly enjoyed and appreciated by all pupils. They use this resource to learn to cooperate and play together, developing their personal and social skills very effectively.
- Pupils are highly motivated to learn as a result of the opportunities they receive every day to 'enquire, explore and plan' their own learning. Consequently, they develop very positive attitudes to learning and take pride in their work. Pupils work together very well. They demonstrate great respect for the views of others and for pupils from different cultures and religions.
- Staff manage pupils' behaviour exceptionally well. They set clear expectations and model the behaviour they expect. As a result, behaviour in all year groups is exemplary.
- The principal and her team insist on good attendance. They work with families where necessary to ensure that they understand the importance of attending each day. Consequently, attendance has risen over time and is continuing to improve.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils' progress and achievement over time have improved as the school develops its approach to its 'enquiry-led curriculum' and drives improvement in teaching, learning and assessment. Progress is now good in writing and mathematics and rapid in reading as a result of good and improving teaching. In addition, leaders are now sharply focused on planning learning to ensure that all pupils and groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who speak English as an additional language, achieve well.
- Pupils' attainment on entry has varied considerably in the three years since the school opened. The first group of pupils entered school with skills typically well below those expected. However, the current cohort arrived with much stronger skills, particularly in personal, social and emotional development and speaking and listening skills. As a result of high-quality provision in the Reception class, children make outstanding progress. Outcomes since the school opened have been above the national average and are set to replicate this in 2016.
- Achievement and progress in reading are strong in all year groups because teaching is good and given a high priority. Pupils in Year 1 achieved standards just above the national average in 2015 in the Year 1 statutory phonics check. However, leaders' careful analysis of these outcomes revealed that boys and disadvantaged pupils achieved less well than their peers. As a result of intensive, targeted support, these groups of pupils are on track to at least meet the standards set nationally in 2016. This represents good progress from their starting points on entry to the school.
- Pupils are highly motivated to learn as a result of the opportunities they receive every day to 'enquire, explore and plan' their own learning. Consequently, they develop very positive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils' progress in writing and mathematics in Years 1 and 2, although good, is less strong than in reading. However, as a result of the improvement in the quality of teaching, standards are rising. The school's detailed records and work in books confirm that pupils in Years 1 and 2 are making at least expected progress. An increasing proportion make better than expected progress from their starting points in Reception.
- Leaders are supporting teachers to develop pupils' problem-solving skills in mathematics. Work in books shows that pupils are increasingly able to apply their understanding of number and are developing fluency and reasoning skills in this subject.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability make outstanding progress in their personal development and good progress in their academic achievement as a result of the effective additional support they receive. Continual, ongoing checks on all pupils' learning highlight gaps in what pupils know, can do and understand. Additional support is arranged swiftly for those who need it. The school is adamant that all pupils are treated equally and receive the support they need.
- Although gaps remain between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and that of non-disadvantaged pupils in Years 1 and 2, a detailed analysis of their achievement and progress confirms that this group is now making good progress from the starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders have swiftly responded to the gaps highlighted in 2015. Carefully planned, targeted intervention is having a positive impact in quickening the progress for this group of pupils.
- The most-able pupils make good progress because they are challenged appropriately to extend their learning. Regular pupil progress meetings identify the learning needs of these pupils. Teachers then plan extension activities, which supports these pupils to make good progress.

Early years provision

is outstanding

- The school provides outstanding early years provision. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development in 2014 and 2015 was above the national average. This represents outstanding progress from children's starting points which, in 2014 and 2015, were well below what is typical, particularly in speaking and listening and communication skills. Nearly all children are on track to reach a good level of development in 2016.
- The leadership of early years is outstanding. Teachers carefully assess children's skills, knowledge and understanding when they join the school. Teachers and teaching partners work together to carefully observe children's learning and precisely plan their next steps in learning. As a result, children quickly begin to make rapid progress, particularly with their reading, speaking and listening skills and their personal and social development.

- The teaching of phonics is outstanding, enabling children to make rapid progress. The most-able children can now read and write simple sentences. They form letters correctly using a correct pencil grip, and apply these skills in their independent learning activities. Teaching staff provide strong support for children who need it. As a result, children are exceptionally well prepared for Year 1.
- Leaders have focused relentlessly on improving the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs. A 'no-excuses' culture is evident in the Reception classes. Teachers have tackled the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged children with absolute rigour and a determination that this gap must be closed. As a result of highly targeted individual support, this gap is closing quickly. Progress information analysed during the inspection confirms that all children, including those with special educational needs, make outstanding progress and are very well prepared for Year 1.
- Teachers plan exciting and engaging learning opportunities in the well-resourced indoor and outdoor learning environments. Children quickly develop their imagination, independence and love for learning. This is supporting the rapid progress they make.
- Children take responsibility for their own learning. They are encouraged to plan their own activities during child-led learning time. During the inspection, inspectors observed children setting up their own café, learning to cooperate, handle money and write the menus. In discussions, children demonstrated their understanding of number. They confidently used their knowledge of addition and subtraction to solve problems, and to count on and back in fives and tens.
- Parents are fully involved in their child's education. Teachers visit the children before starting school and build on these links throughout the year. Parents typically commented, 'I am so happy with Wallscourt Farm and couldn't have chosen a better school'. As a result, children thrive and flourish in this high-quality learning environment.
- Children's behaviour is exemplary. They learn to be independent and inquisitive and to ask questions. Adults support children's social and personal development very well, encouraging the children to cooperate and be respectful to each other at all times. Inspectors observed children cooperating together to find out about the properties of ice, developing language through constructing tall towers of bricks, and writing their own stories on the writing table.
- Children play and learn safely. Adults are vigilant in ensuring that children are safe and well cared for.

School details

Unique reference number	139694
Local authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10011718

This inspection 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	170
Appropriate authority	Cabot Learning Federation
Chair of board	Professor Ron Ritchie
Chief executive	Steve Taylor
Principal	Susie Weaver
Telephone number	0117 370 9860
Website	www.wallscourtfarmacademy.org.uk
Email address	info@wallscourtfarmacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- In September 2013, Wallscourt Farm Academy opened in purpose-built premises as a sponsor-led academy. This school is part of the Cabot Learning Federation.
- Currently, the school has pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2. The school is currently smaller than the average-sized primary school but expanding each year by two classes.
- The principal took up post in April 2013.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after) is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average.
- Early years children attend the Reception class full time.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited lessons and episodes of learning throughout the inspection, most of which were jointly observed with the principal or curriculum leader.
- The inspectors spoke to pupils throughout the inspection.
- The inspectors looked at the quality of work in pupils' books in English, mathematics and a range of subjects to establish the current quality of their work and progress over time.
- Discussions were held with the principal, subject leaders, the school's business manager and teachers. In addition, the inspectors met with members of the academy council and the chief executive and vice-chair of the Cabot Learning Federation.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including the school's improvement plans, the management of staff performance, information on pupils' performance, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- The inspectors took account of 78 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and responses received by text.
- Questionnaires were returned from 19 members of staff.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

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Her Majesty's Inspector

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