

Waterside Combined School

Inspection dates

14–15 June 2016

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Early years provision	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- A period of instability both in governance and leadership at all levels has led to a deterioration in the quality of education the school provides.
- Leaders and governors have not improved areas identified in the previous inspection report.
- There is insufficient capacity in leadership to sustain very recent improvements.
- Outcomes in key stage 1 and 2 tests and examinations were too low in 2015 and are set to be even lower in some subjects in 2016.
- The achievement of disadvantaged pupils is too low and gaps are wide between disadvantaged pupils' attainment in school and nationally.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities do not make enough progress. Leaders have not sufficiently catered for their needs.
- Teaching over time has failed to ensure the strong outcomes that pupils, especially the most able, are capable of achieving.
- Teachers have not fully implemented the changes necessary to enable pupils to succeed in the new curriculum. Leaders did not identify this soon enough.
- Safeguarding is not effective. Weaknesses in leadership have led to some areas of safeguarding receiving insufficient attention.
- Leaders do not manage pupils' behaviour well enough. Their understanding of how well pupils behave is not accurate. Exclusions have been too high, although they have reduced recently. Gaps between the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and others have not narrowed sufficiently.
- The early years provision has not been monitored rigorously enough. Play activities do not make a big enough contribution to children's learning and development.
- The governing body, until recently, failed to provide the direction, support and challenge required because governors did not work collegially.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders with temporary additional responsibilities have stabilised the school. They have worked well with the authority's consultants, and with governors to develop effective improvement plans. The new chair of the governing body has made changes to improve its efficacy.
- Some parents are very appreciative of the way the school nurtures its youngsters. The family links worker has improved relationships with parents.
- Some pupils, including in early years, are engaged by their learning and this has led to improved outcomes in Year 1 in phonics (the sounds letters make) and in Reception.

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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve safeguarding by ensuring all requirements are fully met, particularly those relating to staff training and the safety of the school site.
- Establish capacity in leadership at all levels in the school, including the leadership of provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Urgently improve leadership and governance by ensuring:
 - that safeguarding arrangements are focused on keeping pupils and children safe
 - new leaders, existing leaders and temporary leaders raise their expectations of how well pupils behave, how much progress they make and how effectively they are taught
 - the well-focused improvement plans already in place are fully implemented, rigorously monitored and evaluated and changes are made promptly if actions are not having their anticipated impact
 - funding for disadvantaged pupils improves their outcomes and attendance.
- Improve teaching so a greater proportion of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with lower starting points, meet age-related expectations as a minimum by:
 - setting tasks that enable the majority of pupils to gain the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding, especially in mathematics and writing
 - delivering the content specified in the 2014 national curriculum, so pupils are prepared for the increased challenge of key stage 1 and 2 tests and assessments
 - providing teachers with the training, support and challenge they need to develop and then convey their subject knowledge to pupils, to enable them to make greater strides in their learning in core and non-core subjects
 - ensuring that pupils are consistently set targets to promote accelerated progress.
- Make sure all pupils and children, including most-able pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, fulfil their potential by:
 - providing pupils with tasks, including homework tasks, that are sufficiently demanding
 - asking questions which require pupils and children to think hard.
- Improve pupils' behaviour by:
 - providing effective support for the small number of pupils who have additional behavioural needs so they do not disrupt other pupils and are able to engage more fully with learning in class
 - recording incidents of bullying in greater detail, including pupils' use of discriminatory language
 - further developing recent, more effective approaches to managing pupils' poor behaviour.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

The school should not appoint newly qualified teachers.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is inadequate

- Unstable and weak leadership and governance has had a negative impact on all areas of the school. The school has had a number of interim headteachers and, in addition, over the past two years there has been turbulence in the governing body, including some poor relationships. As a result, the school has floundered. Concerns, including some regarding safeguarding, have not been attended to, teaching has not kept up with the requirements of the new curriculum, and outcomes have declined.
- There is insufficient leadership capacity to sustain the improvements that leaders with temporary additional responsibilities have recently implemented. Plans to secure effective, permanent leadership have not been finalised and some leadership posts remain unfilled.
- Instability and gaps in subject leadership have impacted on teaching and pupils' learning. Consequently, the areas for development identified in the previous inspection have not improved. In particular, teaching has not been monitored effectively enough and therefore weaknesses have not been identified. For instance, checks were not made as to whether teachers fully understood the standards required for pupils to meet age-related expectations in the end of key stage tests and examinations.
- When the school introduced its new approach to assessment, it did not work closely enough with other schools to check that their standards dovetailed with those outlined in the new curriculum. As a result, there is an unhelpful disparity between the proportion of pupils reaching age-related expectations in key stage 1 tests and assessments and the proportion doing so according to the school's own assessments. However, assessment practices have recently developed. For example, the school has introduced a new system for tracking pupils' progress, which is used to identify pupils who need additional help. It is too early to evaluate the impact of these changes.
- Leaders have not interpreted assessment information effectively to ascertain the progress required for pupils with lower starting points, including disadvantaged pupils, to catch up. Consequently, pupils that need to catch up have failed to do so because they are not set targets to promote accelerated progress. Acting senior leaders have recently introduced a new approach to tracking pupils' progress and have started to interpret the information provided by the new system in a more forensic manner. This is still in its infancy.
- The leadership of the curriculum has not been effective enough because teaching content and approaches have not been updated to incorporate curriculum changes. In particular, in English, the breadth of texts studied is too narrow. Pupils have not had sufficient opportunities to study texts from our literary heritage as well as those from different cultures. In mathematics, the tasks teachers set in some classes do not enable the majority of pupils to master key concepts and become fluent in applying them.
- Behaviour is not managed well enough. Not enough has been done to develop effective approaches to manage the behaviour of the small number of pupils who have additional behavioural needs. Leaders have not got a clear enough picture of behaviour issues within school, including bullying. As a result, some actions taken to improve behaviour have not been comprehensive enough.
- Teachers' performance is not managed effectively. This academic year, targets for performance were finalised too late. As a by-product, opportunities have been lost to hold teachers to account for pupils' progress through meetings to review whether teachers are on track to meet their targets.
- The leadership of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is not effective enough. Like other areas of the school, it has been adversely affected by changes in leadership, and capacity to make the improvements necessary is limited.
- The local authority's actions to stabilise the school were not initially successful because timely support plans did not include extensive enough contingency arrangements. This was an oversight and led to additional turbulence when, on two occasions, support planned did not pan out as anticipated. However, the local authority's support has recently been more effective.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is ineffectively coordinated and insufficient attention is given to ensuring all the elements, including fundamental British values, are properly delivered. Although British values are displayed, opportunities are missed to remind pupils that they should adopt them as their guiding principles. It is noteworthy that some pupils told inspectors that they are called discriminatory names. The school has not done enough to ensure pupils treat each other with respect and tolerance.
- The school's relationship with parents is polarised and over half of the parents who responded to Parent View indicated they would not recommend the school. However, some went out of their way to let inspectors know how pleased they are with the school. A number of parents commented that they were

concerned about the impact of instability in leadership and one parent described the disparity in teaching between year groups as a 'lottery' for pupils.

- The sports premium has recently been used effectively to fund sports coaches who teach in tandem with teachers. This has developed teachers' expertise in teaching cricket and football and enhanced pupils' skill levels. Funding has also been used to purchase sports equipment that has been used in the training of newly established sports teams.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Until recently, governance has been ineffective due to instability within the governing body, including poor relationships and a high turnover of chairs in a short time. Consequently, the governing body missed crucial opportunities to provide appropriately robust challenge to senior leaders in the early stages of the school's decline.
 - The governing body is now functioning better under the new chair, who has worked successfully with Buckinghamshire Learning Trust to secure much-needed support for the school. Governors are fully aware that there is a significant amount still to do, including improving communication between governors and staff and clarifying complaints procedures.
 - Despite some improvements, governance does not yet function well enough to hold the school to account for the quality of teaching and pupils' progress, including the progress of those eligible for additional funding. Governors do not sufficiently scrutinise the way this funding is spent. As a result, some activities funded by the grant have not been focused on making a difference to outcomes for this group.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective. Leaders and governors did not respond promptly enough to concerns raised about the security of the school site. During the inspection, action was taken to make the site more secure, but more work is needed to make the school site safe for pupils and children.
- Staff safeguarding training is not effective. The school does not keep detailed records of which staff have not attended statutory safeguarding training. Therefore, some staff who missed the last training may have remained untrained. In addition, some new staff, including staff who have joined the school from overseas, have not received safeguarding training as part of their induction. In addition, safeguarding updates provided by the school's leaders are regular but not comprehensive enough.
- The current designated safeguarding leader, working effectively with the authority's safeguarding services, has improved record-keeping and sharpened practices. Of note is the way the designated leader vigilantly tracks support from external services to ensure it is sufficient and timely.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inadequate

- Teaching over time has not secured the outcomes of which pupils are capable. Expectations of pupils' academic capabilities are too low. Some teachers set tasks that do not enable pupils to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding required to meet age-related expectations. Consequently, too few pupils are on track to meet expectations in tests and assessments in key stage 2 and far too few in key stage 1.
- There is too much inconsistency in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment between classes. Teaching in some year groups is notably weaker than in other years. Although pupils are engaged by the different learning opportunities in some key stage 1 classes, pupils' outcomes in recent key stage 1 assessments were well below average in writing and mathematics. This is because planned teaching has not provided pupils with the chance to develop the higher levels of skill and knowledge they need to meet age-related expectations.
- The teaching of subjects other than reading, writing and mathematics is also variable, and on occasion is weak. In these subjects, opportunities are missed to develop pupils' abilities to explain and exemplify their ideas. One reason for this is that a preponderance of questions on worksheets in pupils' books require no more than one-word answers.
- Teachers do not deepen pupils' learning by posing probing and penetrating questions. For instance, in a science lesson, a pupil suggested an alternative experiment to establish the effects of friction. The teacher missed the opportunity to pose questions that would require the pupil to explain and justify his ideas to the teacher and his classmates. This slowed the pupil's learning and that of the class.
- In some classes, mathematics teaching is weak but in others it is stronger, for example in the combined Year 5/6 class. However, across the school, tasks provided for the most able pupils do not enable them to

deepen their mathematical understanding. Some teachers overestimate how demanding the work they set is; their miscalculations mean pupils' mathematical reasoning skills are not enhanced enough through the work they set.

- Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are not given the level of challenge they require and desire. This is holding them back. Homework tasks are not demanding enough, so much so that pupils in one class initiated their own more challenging homework. This included extended research about palaeontology. Teachers and assistants failed to build upon the huge potential for learning these unprompted pieces of work indicated.
- The teaching of writing is not effective, despite this being an area for improvement in the previous inspection report. Pupils do not use their knowledge from phonics to spell words with regular patterns correctly and they do not have a clear enough understanding of what makes writing effective. Pupils are not required to apply their knowledge of grammar to analyse the strengths and weaknesses in their own and others' writing.
- Reading is not taught effectively, especially in key stage 2. Small group reading sessions do not develop pupils' abilities to read between the lines or evaluate how well the writer engages them as readers. Consequently, some pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable in reading. Phonics teaching is more effective, especially in the early years setting.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

are inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate because safeguarding arrangements are ineffective.
- Although in some classes pupils are motivated and enjoy learning, this is not consistent across all classes.
- In some classes, especially, but not solely, where there has been a number of temporary teachers, pupils do not display positive attitudes to learning. Pupils also show negative attitudes to learning, including chatting and whistling while the teacher is talking, in some non-core subjects.
- Overall attendance has improved, however. The gaps in attendance between disadvantaged pupils and others have only narrowed by a very small margin and therefore remain too wide.
- The family links worker has been successful in improving targeted pupils' punctuality, through developing effective relationships with parents.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate. Poor behaviour is not managed well enough and some pupils who have additional behaviour needs do not have them well enough met through the extra support they receive. Approximately half of pupils surveyed by the school said that pupils' behaviour was not good.
- School leaders are not aware that bullying is more prevalent than records suggest. This is because the school does not record incidents of bullying well enough. Some pupils commented to inspectors that they felt bullied by other pupils. One pupil said, 'I get bullied a lot in the playground'.
- The school's records show that since the start of the academic year, there have been 21 fixed-term exclusions given to a small number of pupils. This approach has not been effective as it has not sufficiently improved the behaviour of those who have been excluded. However, more recently, acting senior leaders' actions have led to a reduction in incidents of poor behaviour and in exclusions.

Outcomes for pupils

are inadequate

- Weak teaching over time and low expectations have meant that there is a declining trend in pupils' achievement in key stage 1 and 2 tests and assessments. In addition, disadvantaged pupils' progress has not been strong enough to ensure they catch up with their others in school and nationally. Gaps between their achievement and others were wide in 2015 and are set to widen in 2016.
- Leaders and teachers have failed to stem the declining trend in pupils' outcomes in key stage 1. Last year, pupils' attainment in key stage 1 assessments was slightly below average in reading and writing and significantly below in mathematics. This year, less than half of Year 2 is on track to reach age-related

expectations in writing and in mathematics. Even taking into account the increased challenge of assessments, this represents a significant decline.

- Pupils make weak progress from their starting points. The proportion of current Year 6 pupils predicted to achieve age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics combined in key stage 2 tests and assessments is only 1% above the 2016 floor target. This is the government's minimum expectations of attainment. This is despite the fact that their starting points were in line with the national average.
- Most-able pupils are not well catered for. They do not achieve as well as they could because they are not stretched enough in lessons and through the homework tasks they are set. In 2015, most-able pupils' progress was significantly lower than that of others with similar starting points in writing. Most-able pupils' progress in reading and writing is too low. Just above one third of Year 6 pupils have higher than average prior attainment, yet only approximately one sixth of the year group are on track to exceed age-related expectations in reading and in writing.
- Weak teaching and poor progress has meant that, over the last three years, gaps have generally widened between the proportion of disadvantaged pupils reaching level 4 compared with others nationally in end of key stage 2 tests and assessments. Similarly, gaps have widened between the proportion of disadvantaged pupils reaching level 5 in all the subjects formally assessed in end-of-key stage tests and assessments.
- The school's own tracking shows that disadvantaged pupils currently make approximately the same progress that others make. However, overall, including in Years 2 and 6, a lower percentage are currently on track to meet age-related expectations than other pupils. This is because not enough focus has been placed on making sure disadvantaged pupils make the rapid progress they need to catch up. For example, they have not been set targets to promote accelerated progress.
- The progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities in 2015 key stage 2 tests and assessments was weaker than other pupils with similar starting points. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities currently make slower progress than others in school. This is partly because the work teachers provide for them is often too easy and some assistants do not extend the learning of the pupils they support by effective questioning.
- In 2014 and 2015, the proportion of pupils reaching expected standards in the phonics reading check was below average and in 2015 gaps were wide between the proportion of disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard and others within the school and nationally.
- In Year 1, the percentage of pupils currently on track to achieve the expected standard in the phonics check has improved compared to 2015 and is predicted to be above last year's national average. Although predictions indicate that gaps will narrow this year between the proportion of disadvantaged pupils achieving the expected standard and others, a sizeable gap remains. Not enough is done to ensure that pupils who fail to meet the expectations in the phonics screening tests by the end of key stage 1 catch up in reading.

Early years provision

is inadequate

- Leaders and governors have not ensured safeguarding is effective and, despite other aspects of the setting having some strengths, this means provision in early years is inadequate. The absence of accurate staff safeguarding training records, the lack of safeguarding training as part of induction, and the poor security of the site affect the children in the early years setting. In addition, although children are generally well cared for, there is a lack of attention to detail when evaluating some potential hazards in the setting.
- Outcomes have improved and a higher percentage of children compared to last year are currently on track to reach a good level of development. However, children's progress from their starting points is not as strong as teachers think, especially for disadvantaged pupils. This is because information from assessments of pupils' starting points, although accurate, has not been precisely enough interpreted. This has led to some underestimation of what children can be expected to achieve.
- Formal teaching sessions are more effective than sessions when children learn through play. These sessions are not structured well enough and some pupils are left without adult intervention for too long. Inspectors observed children using inappropriate language and displaying poor social relationships while playing an extended role play game, during which adult intervention was minimal.
- When adults in the setting interact with children while they play, some question the children they are supporting well and this helps them to learn and develop. However, others do not ask questions that make children think and, therefore, opportunities are missed to help children make strides in their

learning and development.

- Children learn well during phonics and formal teaching sessions. They are stimulated and interested by their learning and try hard. Some can apply their understanding of phonics patterns in words in their own writing.
- The inside of the setting supports literacy and numeracy well. Although the outside area supports children's physical development effectively, more could be done to ensure it helps children develop literacy and numeracy skills.
- Some adults miss opportunities to teach children how to interact with each other in a positive and collaborative way. As a result, a small number do not settle well to tasks that require cooperation. However, most children are prepared well for the harder work in Year 1 because of the teaching they receive in small groups. A number need more support to cope with the social aspects of moving up.
- The setting has effectively supported parents' efforts to help children with their learning at home. Of particular note are the opportunities for parents to spend time with their children while at the setting, gaining valuable insight into the best way they can support their learning.

School details

Unique reference number	110337
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10017895

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	174
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jo Pearce
Headteacher	Mrs Patricia Bridges
Telephone number	01494 786608
Website	www.waterside.bucks.sch.uk
Email address	office@waterside.bucks.uk
Date of previous inspection	15–16 November 2012

Information about this school

- There is currently an acting headteacher and deputy headteacher as the substantive headteacher is on long-term sick leave. Both the acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher will be leaving at the end of this summer term. A permanent member of staff from Buckinghamshire Learning Trust is currently working as a consultant leader at the school on a part-time basis.
- The school is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been significant staffing changes, including a new headteacher who took up post in September 2014 and three different chairs of the governing body. The current incumbent took up her post in November 2015.
- Children in the early years attend on a part-time basis in the Nursery, in the morning. Children in the Reception class attend full time.
- Almost three quarters of the pupils are White British, with the rest coming from a wide range of other ethnic heritages. About one in 10 pupils do not speak English as their first language, which is below average.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. However, the proportion of pupils with a statement or with an education, health and care plan is slightly above average.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of governors' business and financial interests and their roles in other schools, and in addition on details of the school's access facilities for pupils who have educational needs and/or disabilities (including an accessibility plan in compliance with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010) on its website.
- The school met floor standards in 2015, which are the government's minimum standards for progress and attainment.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are supported by pupil premium funding is above average, with just over one third of pupils being eligible. The pupil premium is extra government funding to support the education of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, and children who are looked after by the local authority.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in every class, approximately 27 in total. Short visits were made to observe the teaching of phonics, pupils' behaviour and to see children learning in the early years setting.
- Pupils were also observed in assembly, at breaktimes and around the school. The team met formally with a group of pupils, and spoke to many others informally. Pupils from Years 3 to 6 were heard to read.
- Inspectors examined a variety of documentation, particularly that related to the school's improvement plans, pupils' progress and how the school keeps pupils safe, including the safety checks made on staff.
- The team held meetings with a group consisting of most class teachers and on another occasion with a group of staff, which also included teaching assistants. Inspectors also met with the acting headteacher together with the deputy headteacher, and the consultant leader accompanied by the school improvement adviser, both of whom work for Buckinghamshire Learning Trust (BLT). In addition, inspectors spoke on the telephone with the head of schools at BLT.
- Inspectors also met with a safeguarding representative from Buckinghamshire County Council, the part-time temporary special educational needs coordinator, and informally with parents at the start of the day. Inspectors took account of four emails parents sent in support of the school as well as speaking with two parents on the telephone.
- The team took note of 36 replies to the online survey, Parent View, and studied the 28 written comments that parents made online. Eighteen results of the survey of staff opinion were considered as well as 108 responses to the pupil questionnaire, both of which were completed using paper versions rather than online.

Inspection team

Sarah Hubbard, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Eileen Northey	Ofsted Inspector
Kusum Trikha	Ofsted Inspector

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