

University Primary Academy Weaverham

Northwich Road, Weaverham, Northwich, Cheshire CW8 3BD

Inspection dates

8–9 November 2016

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils do not make consistently good progress across Years 1 to 6 in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- Expectations of what pupils can do are not high enough. Teachers do not set work that is challenging to ensure good progress for disadvantaged and the most able pupils.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematics or to write at length in a range of subjects.
- Some pupils do not consistently apply themselves to their learning in all classes and can sometimes distract others.
- Senior leaders and subject leaders have not ensured that teaching and pupils' outcomes are good. Subject leaders are not checking pupils' work thoroughly to ensure good progress is made across the school.
- The governing body understands and has an overview of the school's performance data. It is not ensuring that resources are effectively used to overcome any barriers to learning that pupils may have.

The school has the following strengths

- The acting executive principal has recently brought about improvements and his vision is shared by other leaders. Pupils' progress and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are improving.
- Early years provision is good. Attainment at the end of the Reception Year has risen in the last two years. Children are well prepared for Year 1.
- There is a consistent approach in the teaching of phonics and pupils reach standards above those expected nationally in the national phonics check by the end of Year 1.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare are good. Pupils say they feel safe and enjoy taking on roles and responsibilities such as playground and hall monitors.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the achievement of all pupils, including disadvantaged, by ensuring:
 - an increased proportion of pupils, particularly disadvantaged, achieve at the expected and above-expected standard in writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2
 - more pupils achieve at the above-expected standard in reading by the end of key stage 1
 - assessment information is consistently accurate and used effectively to plan activities that enable pupils to accelerate their progress
 - pupils are provided with experiences to practise and reinforce their writing and mathematical understanding in different subjects.
- Improve teaching and learning so that it is consistently good or better, by making sure that:
 - teachers understand and put into practice agreed strategies to enhance pupil progress in lessons
 - pupils, particularly the most able, are consistently provided with learning tasks that interest and challenge them to achieve at a higher level
 - teachers check progress in lessons and adapt what they are asking pupils to do if they are finding the work too easy
 - teachers develop pupils' capacity to respond confidently and sustain concentration throughout each lesson.
- Improve leadership and management and increase the pace of improvement by:
 - building the skills of the new leaders in driving improvement, especially in ensuring that new approaches and improved standards are being maintained and having the desired effect.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since becoming an academy, leaders and managers have not ensured that groups of pupils make good progress and that the quality of teaching is consistently good across the school.
- The newly appointed acting executive principal, along with the head of the academy, have challenged weaker teaching, which has resulted in significant changes in staffing. They are aware of the need to strengthen teaching further and raise the achievement of certain groups of learners, particularly the disadvantaged pupils.
- The executive principal has implemented clear systems to manage the performance of teachers. Judgements on teachers' performance are now linked to nationally accepted standards. As a result, staff are set challenging targets which are regularly reviewed by senior leaders. This ensures that staff are held to account and any underperformance is quickly identified. However, the impact of this work is variable, with underperformance still evident at leadership level and within teaching and learning.
- Senior leaders and governors are working hard to improve teaching and learning. There are regular checks on the quality of teaching and learning. Training and professional development are arranged to strengthen teaching and this is appreciated by staff. However, the impact of training, much of which is provided by staff from University Primary Academy Kidsgrove, is variable.
- Leaders understand the strengths and areas that need to improve. School plans identify appropriate areas for improvement but there are too many actions that do not have an impact on the quality of teaching and pupils' learning.
- The middle leaders are enthusiastic and are keen to support senior leaders. They respond well to challenge but have had limited training opportunities to develop their understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They do not make regular checks on the quality of teaching or the progress pupils make. As a result, teaching is too variable and not enough pupils make better than expected progress.
- The curriculum interests pupils and is designed to meet their needs. Pupils enjoy the 'learning challenge curriculum' and across the curriculum there are some good-quality learning experiences. However, the pupils do not always apply their writing and mathematical skills within all subjects. Pupils appreciate the wide variety of additional activities at the end of the school day, including: board games, street dance, netball, arts and craft and a multi sports club. The curriculum is further supplemented with a range of visits and visitors. Year 6 pupils are looking forward to the end of year trip to Conway.
- The curriculum is developing pupils' understanding of what is required to be a good citizen and promotes tolerance and respect. This means that the school promotes equality and British values effectively. Pupils demonstrate and convey well-balanced and thoughtful views on a range of issues, so that they are, in this respect, well prepared for life in modern Britain.

- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is catered for very well. Pupils gain an appreciation of, and respect for, the differences between people through the school's work. This was apparent through discussions with pupils. They learn also to deal with disagreements in socially acceptable ways.
- The school uses the physical education (PE) and sport premium appropriately. For example, pupils have a number of after-school clubs they can now attend. Specialist provision ensures PE is a popular subject with the pupils.
- The school's additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils has not been used effectively to boost the performance of these pupils. Since the arrival of the executive principal the school has started to provide carefully targeted tasks which are starting to affect and increase the progress of this group of pupils. The school's assessment information indicates that pupils eligible for this funding are now making better progress.
- Parents spoken to during the inspection are supportive of the school but expressed some frustration in respect of the lack of stability and changes in staffing. Almost all the responses on Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, are positive.
- The Academy Trust has created a significant link with University Primary Academy Kidsgrove. The senior staff from Kidsgrove have provided regular support and challenge to the school. Although the school is improving, the support has not led to an improvement in the overall effectiveness of the school.

Governance of the school

- Governance of the school requires improvement.
- The governing body is led by a national leader of governors. Governors know about the quality of teaching in the school because they meet with leaders and visit the school regularly. They understand that, while they are challenging leaders, they have not had sufficient impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning.
- Governors are clear about how pupils' outcomes compare with those nationally. While they link with leaders to hold them to account for the work that is being done, they have not secured the necessary improvement in the progress of all the pupils.
- They link teacher performance to pay and support the headteacher when performance is not as required. Governors check the finances of the school. They know how the pupil premium and sports grant are used and are committed to ensuring that the extra funding is used more effectively to secure better outcomes for pupils. Governors have explained their role to all of the staff and are engaged with the school in developing its strategic direction.
- Along with the executive principal and head of school, governors are committed to making a significant contribution to the community and raising aspirations for pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Thorough procedures for checking the suitability of staff and visitors to work with

children are in place, and all training is up to date.

- Staff know how to help keep pupils safe from the dangers of radicalisation and extremism.
- The school works closely with parents and external agencies to ensure that pupils are safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- There have been significant changes to teaching staff since becoming an academy. Although there are signs of improvement in pupils' progress, the quality of teaching is not consistently good across Years 1 to 6.
- Since becoming an academy there has been a continued focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning. However, there is still some inconsistency and expectations are not consistently high across Years 1 to 6. Pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, and some of the most able pupils, do not make sufficient progress because they are not always sure what is expected of them.
- Some pupils are not always challenged well enough to strengthen their skills and knowledge. Work set isn't sufficiently motivating to ensure all groups of pupils, especially the most able, progress at all stages of lessons. For example, in mathematics work can be too repetitive and pupils' skills do not develop at a sufficient pace to be applied to more challenging tasks.
- Where teaching is less effective, teachers do not make all pupils aware of what is expected of them and, on a small number of occasions, pupils can lose concentration and distract their friends from completing their work.
- In recent times, school leaders have targeted reading for improvement and there is evidence of accelerated progress. From an early stage the children are supported in their early reading skills. The teaching of phonics is good. Pupils respond well to their teachers who are very skilled in helping pupils to progress. In 2016 pupils performed extremely well in the national phonics check, achieving better than other schools nationally. However, the teaching of reading is not consistently good in key stage 2. Opportunities for pupils to develop reading skills are not systematic and teachers do not assess pupils' progress frequently enough so that they can adapt work to match pupils' needs, particularly for the most able pupils.
- Pupils say that they enjoy writing and the school has developed some effective strategies to support pupils. For example, Year 6 pupils worked effectively to re-edit and redraft poems based on their study of the second world war. They cooperated well and helped each other improve the quality of their spelling and sentence construction. However, such quality is not evident in all classes and when the pupils are asked to write in other subjects.
- Those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified early and receive good support to help them achieve as well as their classmates. Their progress is closely checked by the special educational needs coordinator. Carefully planned activities ensure that these pupils are now making progress that is at least as good as other pupils in the school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils have a wide range of good opportunities to participate in activities that will keep them fit and healthy. Inspectors saw pupils enjoying a range of sporting activities. These were taught by a specialist teacher and during these sessions pupils responded well to questions about the importance of healthy living.
- Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy school and they are safe. They said that 'we have the kindest teachers'. Pupils are clear about how to adopt safe practices when working with technology and using the internet.
- Pupils are clear about what constitutes bullying. They report that bullying is rare at the school and they would have confidence in their teachers to tackle bullying if they reported it. Equally, pupils reported that they would be confident to report a personal problem to teachers in the knowledge that the school would act quickly to help them.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to accept posts of responsibility. Pupils say they enjoy being playground leaders and managing the games equipment at lunchtime. Pupils vote for their school council and make choices to take on roles, such as Eco Officers. These, along with other activities, provide a good introduction to democracy.
- The school prepares pupils well for living in modern Britain. Pupils are highly respectful of human rights, people who are different to them and those who hold different views or beliefs, including religious beliefs. They oppose all forms of racism, respect other cultures and are proud of their own heritage.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- The school is a calm and welcoming place. Pupils are fully aware of the school's code for behaviour. Pupils move calmly around the school site, and are polite and courteous to adults and each other. Pupils play well together at break and lunchtimes, using the extensive fields and facilities very well.
- Pupils enjoy their lessons and are keen to learn and present their work to the best of their ability. Generally, they cooperate well in lessons and support each other in their learning. However, when teacher expectations are not high enough some pupils lose concentration and do not focus well on their learning. Occasionally, this results in some pupils distracting their friends from doing their work.
- The school environment is well cared for and is litter-free. All pupils wear their uniform with pride. Displays of pupils' work and other educational displays interest pupils and are well looked after.
- The majority of parents feel that the behaviour of pupils is good, and that if they had concerns they would be dealt with promptly by the senior leaders in the school.
- Attendance rates for most groups are improving to broadly the national average. The

school has identified which groups and individuals have below-average attendance and are working well and effectively to improve it.

- Pupils who attend the breakfast club say they enjoy it. They appreciate the opportunity to meet with their friends and start the school day ready to learn.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupil achievement is still not consistently good in all classes and across all subjects, and therefore outcomes for pupils require improvement. Recent improvements in addressing the quality of teaching have ensured that progress in some classes has improved. However, these actions have been variable in their impact in the other classes.
- At key stage 1 attainment has been well below average but is now improving. Good leadership and teaching in the early years has quickly improved the skills of children entering key stage 1. Pupils continue to make some good progress in key stage 1 and, as a consequence, pupils are set to attain standards that are much closer to average than in the past.
- Across key stage 2, progress and attainment are variable in reading, writing and mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are not making the necessary progress. In mathematics progress shows some variance, particularly at lower key stage 2.
- The school has worked hard to improve writing and inspectors gathered evidence of improved attainment across the school. In 2016 tests at key stage 1, 62%, and at key stage 2, 52%, achieved the expected standard. The school leadership understands that this needs to improve further and ensures that more pupils attain above the expected standard.
- Reading has been prioritised and there is evidence of improving achievement. Most pupils have a good knowledge of the sounds that letters make (phonics), know how to 'break words down' and are confident to predict text. In the 2016 key stage 1 phonics check the percentage of pupils who achieved the national standard was 91%. From Year 2–6, pupils' achievement in reading still lacks consistency. In 2016 national tests at key stage 1, 62% achieved the expected standard. However, there were no pupils who achieved above the expected standard. Pupils were keen to tell inspectors of how they appreciate the focused support they now get to improve their reading and how they enjoy opportunities to read widely.
- The most able pupils do not make enough progress because learning activities often do not offer sufficient challenge. This hinders the rapid progress needed to reach the higher levels.
- The school works hard to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The work of the school team helps a number of these pupils in their social and emotional development which allows them to access their learning in their classes. In addition, there are some good-quality additional sessions which ensure that these pupils are now making good progress from their starting points.
- School leaders have targeted the improvement of disadvantaged pupils and are

determined to diminish the difference in achievement between these pupils and others. At the moment, too many of these pupils are not achieving their potential and making the progress they are capable of. In 2016, at both key stage 1 and 2, these pupils in all subjects performed less well than other pupils.

- Pupils enjoy the 'learning challenge curriculum'. However, tasks given in subjects such as geography, history and science do not always give pupils opportunities to deepen their understanding and learning, and to practise their writing and mathematical skills. This limits the progress they make.

Early years provision

Good

- The leadership of early years is good. Good leadership and management mean that the provision for the children is effective in ensuring that, from their different starting points, they make good progress in early years.
- Children enter reception with skills and knowledge that are below those typical for their age. They make good progress because of good teaching and, as a result, children are well prepared for Year 1. In 2016, 71% achieved a good level of development.
- The classroom is a very happy place. There is a calm, purposeful environment in the early years. Good relationships help children develop positive attitudes to their learning, preparing them well for future progress through the school. Children behave well, work and play together happily, and develop good social skills. They understand how to take turns and play safely.
- Teaching is good in the early years and the children enjoy their learning. The interesting work covers all of the areas of learning. Children develop good attitudes to learning as they listen well and concentrate well on what they are asked to do. They are confident in discussing their work with adults.
- The teaching staff carefully check and ensure that planned activities enable all children to progress. Individual records which are very detailed track the progress the children are making and are well used by staff to inform how they will plan for the next stage in the children's learning.
- Activities are carefully planned and teachers make full use of the well-organised learning environment. During the inspection, the children thoroughly enjoyed learning about the significance of Remembrance Sunday. They developed effective language as they engaged in a variety of activities in talking about and making poppies.
- During the inspection, children were fully engaged in the outside area, making patterns and shapes using a wide range of materials. Leaders are keen to develop this area further to ensure children can achieve at a high level in skills across all areas of learning.
- Those safeguarding procedures and policies relevant to the early years setting are in place and ensure that children are well cared for and kept safe.
- Staff work hard to ensure that parents are securely involved in their children's achievements. Parents are always welcome and those who inspectors spoke to at the

start of the school day expressed delight as to the care and provision for their children.

- Additional funding is used well so that disadvantaged children make the same progress as other groups. Support for children with specific needs, including links with external agencies, is helping them to feel confident, enjoy learning and secure progress.

School details

Unique reference number	140410
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10019780

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	143
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Hazel Gloster
Principal	J Farrington
Telephone number	01606 852148
Website	www.UPAWeaverham.org
Email address	admin@UPAWeaverham.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- University Primary Academy Weaverham converted to an academy school on 4 January 2014. When its predecessor school, Wallerscote Community School, was last inspected it was judged to require special measures.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- University Primary Academy Weaverham is an average-sized primary school and most of its pupils are White British.
- There have been a number of changes to the teaching staff since becoming an academy.

- Pupil premium is funding provided by the government to support pupils who are looked after by the local authority or those who are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium grant is almost half of the pupils in the school, which is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who receive special educational needs support (this used to be called School Action and School Action Plus) is around 10%, which is above the national average.
- The breakfast club is managed by a private provider.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning and made a number of short visits to classrooms and watched sessions where pupils were taught in small groups.
- Meetings were held with staff and a representative from the Trust Board.
- A meeting was held with the chair of governors.
- The inspectors talked to pupils informally in class and at breaks, and listened to pupils read.
- A number of documents were scrutinised, including the school's own information about pupils' learning and progress, planning and monitoring documents, minutes of governor meetings, the development plan, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and safeguarding information.
- The inspectors took account of the school's questionnaires for parents, as well as consulting informally with parents at the start of the school day. The inspectors also took account of the views of staff and pupils gained from formal and informal discussions. Inspectors took account of the 10 responses to Parent View and six responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

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Ofsted Inspector

Gary Bevin

Ofsted Inspector

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