

Wyvern School

Aylesbury Street, Wolverton, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire MK12 5HU

Inspection dates

6–7 December 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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Progress in reading, writing and mathematics is not consistently good. Pupils, in particular boys, are not able to reach the standards expected of them by the end of Year 2.
- There is too much inconsistency in the quality of teaching, particularly in phonics and mathematics. Not all staff have sufficiently high expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Some teachers do not set work at the right level for pupils, particularly the most able, in mathematics, science and the wider curriculum.
- In some classes, pupils do not display good attitudes to learning. Consequently, their progress is not as rapid as it should be.
- Systems to hold teachers to account for the outcomes of pupils are not robust enough.
- Many leaders are new to their roles. Although keen to make improvements, they do not make use of sufficiently accurate attendance data or performance information. Consequently, they are unable to evaluate the impact of their actions to raise standards.
- Leaders have not ensured that all school policies are up to date, and their analysis of attendance data and progress information is not always accurate.
- Attendance rates are too low and too many pupils are persistently absent from school. This has a negative impact on their achievement.

The school has the following strengths

- Wyvern offers a very caring, inclusive community. As a result, pupils feel safe, well cared for and valued.
- Work to support vulnerable pupils and those with behaviour difficulties is very effective.
- Differences between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and their peers are diminishing.
- Provision in the early years is good. Children make strong progress from their starting points and are increasingly well prepared for Year 1.
- The curriculum caters well for pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. As a result, pupils have a clear understanding of respect and tolerance.
- There is very effective support for pupils who speak English as an additional language.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in order to secure good outcomes for all pupils by ensuring that:
 - there is greater consistency in the teaching of phonics
 - teachers set work that is well matched to pupils' needs, particularly the most able
 - pupils develop improved mathematical knowledge and skills through reasoning and problem solving.
- Improve the impact and effectiveness of leaders at all levels by ensuring that:
 - action plans are based on an accurate analysis and evaluation of attendance data and performance information
 - more rigorous systems for evaluating the quality of teaching are based on the progress different groups of pupils make in reading, writing and mathematics
 - there are regular opportunities for pupils to apply their English and mathematical skills across the wider curriculum.
- Improve the behaviour and outcomes for all pupils by:
 - consistently applying school policies to reduce low-level disruption in classes
 - working with parents and carers to improve attendance, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Pupils' progress over time has been too slow. As a result, standards by the end of Year 2 are not high enough. Leaders' actions to maintain consistently good teaching and to diminish the differences in attainment between boys and girls have not been sufficiently effective.
- The headteacher has worked tirelessly to restructure leadership and ensure that the school has sufficient teachers, following a period of staffing turbulence. The two acting deputy headteachers and some middle leaders have only recently been appointed to their posts. They are beginning to influence the quality of teaching through staff training and implementing new approaches. However, leaders are not yet making use of sufficiently accurate progress information or attendance data to ensure that these improvements are rapid enough.
- School improvement planning and subject improvement plans lack precision. Leaders' plans do not focus sharply enough on how teaching needs to be refined in order to bring about the necessary improvements in outcomes. Planning lacks sufficiently precise success criteria and tightly defined timescales for when necessary actions will have to be implemented. This limits leaders' capacity to respond with sufficient urgency to improve standards in reading, writing and particularly in mathematics.
- The headteacher has tackled some of the previous underperformance in teaching. Leaders set targets for teachers and teaching assistants to improve their practice. Some teaching of writing and mathematics has improved this year. However, more work needs to be done to ensure that consistently good teaching, learning and assessment across the school challenge all pupils.
- The systems that leaders use to hold teachers to account for the quality of teaching do not focus sharply enough on pupils' outcomes. Leaders acknowledge that, as well as lesson observations, more routine scrutiny of pupils' work is needed to evaluate the rates of progress made across the curriculum.
- The local authority appreciates the staffing challenges that the school has faced and has recently identified that outcomes for pupils in the school have declined. They recognise that there is a need to support leaders to bring about improvement. However, specific action has not yet occurred and, as a result, there has not been any impact on teaching or outcomes.
- The school works well in partnership with the local junior school. However, more could be done to work collaboratively and network with a wider range of primary schools. This would support teachers to develop their subject knowledge in mathematics and phonics, and assist with validating and checking their assessment of pupils' work.
- The recently appointed leader of special educational needs has acted quickly to audit provision and ensure effective use of funding for this group of pupils. Learning support assistants provide focused small group interventions and some bespoke one-to-one support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, supporting improved progress. In addition, pupils benefit from the opportunity to engage in either small group or personalised individual nurture music group sessions. However, in some

classes, the quality of teaching and learning is not meeting the needs of these pupils effectively. More needs to be done to ensure that all teachers and teaching assistants plan and work well together to meet the needs of these pupils in every class.

- The headteacher has ensured that the curriculum provides pupils with a range of opportunities for learning across different subjects. Pupils spoke to inspectors enthusiastically about their writing, mathematics and science, and said they are proud of their artwork. A variety of after-school clubs, including gardening, computing and singing, offer opportunities for pupils to develop their skills and confidence beyond the academic curriculum.
- School leaders make effective use of the pupil premium funding. Additional staffing provides small group and one-to-one tuition for disadvantaged pupils, supporting improvements to reading and mathematics skills. In addition, specialist speech and language assistants support pupils who start school with limited language and communication skills. As a result, disadvantaged pupils gain confidence and can more easily access all aspects of learning.
- Sports funding is used appropriately and has impacted on pupils' engagement and participation. The school is part of the Milton Keynes school sports partnership which provides support, guidance and training for staff. Through the curriculum and clubs, Wyvern provides opportunities for pupils to engage in a range of sports including dance, gymnastics, swimming and football.
- The school offers a welcoming and friendly place for parents and visitors. However, a minority of parents commented, either directly to inspectors or through Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, that communication is not as good as it could be. Some parents expressed concerns related to behaviour. Responding to these concerns, inspectors scrutinised records, observed behaviour and conduct around the school and held discussions with pupils. Inspectors judge that bullying is rare and pupils told inspectors that when it does occur they trust the teachers to act decisively and quickly to resolve any issues. Leaders are improving communication with families through regular text messages and newsletters as well as through social media and via the newly formed 'Friends of Wyvern'.
- Assemblies are used well to celebrate achievements and promote opportunities for reflection. Leaders promote an awareness of the wider world beyond school and encourage pupils to engage in a range of community activities, such as the Wolverton Lantern Festival and charity fund-raising. This, combined with a well-planned religious education programme, promotes good spiritual, moral and social and cultural development. As a result, pupils can confidently discuss different faiths and cultures and they appreciate both diversity and equality.
- Despite difficulties caused by recent flood damage, leaders have ensured that provision and teaching in the early years are good.

Governance

- The chair of the governing body took up post towards the end of the last academic year and has wasted no time in auditing the skills of the governing body and restructuring how the governing body is organised, based on his experience of successful models. The governing body offers a good range of expertise including educational, business and financial backgrounds.

- Regular visits and reports keep governors informed about standards at the school and they have access to appropriate training and resources. Records of governors' meetings evidence the extent of support and challenge that they offer leaders at all levels. In the past, governors' level of challenge has been limited due to some leaders' reports containing inaccurate or incomplete interpretations of attendance data or progress information. Governors are well aware of the need to sharpen strategic planning to ensure that clear targets are set for improvements.
- Recognising the need to improve attendance, the chair of the governing body has recently been proactive to improve communication with parents and this has brought about improvements.
- Governors are aware of how pupil premium funding and funding for special educational needs are being used, and challenge leaders to ensure that these are prioritised to meet the needs of the pupils.
- Governors are aware that the school's website is not compliant with regulations. More needs to be done to ensure that all policies and required information published on the school's website are fully up to date.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Although the school's safeguarding policy was out of date and under review, leaders work well with parents and other stakeholders to ensure an effective culture of safeguarding. All staff and governors receive regular high-quality and up-to-date training and are well informed about safeguarding matters. This means that they are able to carry out the school's procedures well, ensuring a culture of vigilance.
- There are good systems in place to secure the well-being and safety of pupils. The headteacher works diligently to engage wider expertise to offer timely support for vulnerable pupils. Leaders ensure that meticulous records are kept of the regular communications with outside agencies.
- Staff, parents and pupils agree that the school offers a safe, secure and inclusive environment.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is not consistently good enough across the school, or within some subjects such as mathematics, to secure good progress for all pupils. Not all teachers and teaching assistants in key stage 1 have high enough expectations of standards of behaviour and what pupils can achieve.
- Recent improvements to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment have not yet had a sufficient impact in every classroom. Consequently, pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, do not make strong enough progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Too often, the learning tasks that are set for the most able pupils are too easy and do not require them to think deeply enough or to apply their literacy and mathematics skills in new contexts. Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what

these pupils can achieve, and this is slowing their progress.

- The impact of teachers' questioning is variable. Some teachers use their good subject knowledge and assessment skills to design engaging learning tasks, and then use probing questions to challenge pupils' understanding. As a result, pupils make strong progress in lessons and over time. However, some teachers' subject knowledge is less secure and their questioning is less effective. Consequently, too few pupils are stretched sufficiently.
- Teachers' use of small group work is not always effective. As a result, not all pupils fully understand the tasks they have been set. When the work set is not matched well enough to the needs of the pupils, then some struggle to concentrate and stay engaged in the tasks that have been set. This slows the pace of learning.
- The teaching of mathematics requires improvement. Assessment in this subject is not yet used well enough to refine and improve learning. Many pupils do not have a clear understanding of subject-specific vocabulary. As a result, although they are taught skills such as addition, subtraction and measurement, pupils are not confident to discuss and solve problems using reasoning. This limits their capacity to comprehend the purpose of what they are learning and their ability to acquire, then apply, mathematical skills to practical situations.
- As a result of recent training, there is a clear focus on improving the quality of teaching in mathematics this year. Teachers have improved their mathematical subject knowledge and many now plan more suitable learning activities.
- The teaching of phonics is variable. In the best examples, positive relationships and high expectations ensure that pupils develop skills of segmenting and blending. This support ensures that most pupils in key stage 1 are able to read unknown words. However, the least able pupils in key stage 1 have gaps in their phonics knowledge which hinder their progress towards becoming fluent readers.
- There has been a clear focus on promoting a love of writing in Year 2 this year. Pupils proudly explained how they have designed their own storyboards to plan and produce extended pieces of creative writing relating to contexts such as 'The enormous crocodile' or the nativity. Although there was some variation between classes, the best learning seen occurred where teachers gave pupils time to draft, refine and improve their work. Pupils engaged in using 'wow' words and developing an authorial voice, but importantly were encouraged to learn from their own mistakes to improve spellings and punctuation.
- The work of teaching assistants to support pupils who speak English as an additional language is particularly effective in ensuring that these pupils make good progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- The headteacher passionately cares about the pupils and fosters a nurturing and caring culture. School leaders have put in place measures to mitigate against the impact of staffing turbulence on relationships with pupils. However, a small minority of parents

were concerned about staffing turbulence and raised concerns about bullying taking time to resolve or that their child had been upset in the classroom.

- Inconsistent levels of supervision around the school were seen during the course of the inspection. On the first day of the inspection, there was a lack of equipment and limited numbers of staff on duty in the playground. This reduced the range of exercise and fitness activities that pupils were able to participate in.
- Most relationships between adults and pupils are positive and supportive. Pupils told inspectors that they trust that they could share any concerns with an adult and that appropriate actions would be taken.
- Pupils have a well-developed understanding of what it means to live in modern Britain. Assemblies, a focus on the school's golden rules, and lessons designed to deepen their understanding of different faiths and beliefs all contribute towards this. The school council works with staff to improve aspects of school life. Its members have recently contributed to improving the school environment through getting pictures around the school and the painting of the friendship bench in the playground.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Too often, when teaching is not well matched to meet their needs, some pupils lose concentration and fidget, chatter or distract others. This inhibits their own progress and that of others.
- Attendance figures have declined for the last three years and persistent absence figures are too high. Current figures are below national averages with disadvantaged pupils' attendance being particularly poor. Leaders' sustained efforts to reverse this decline are only just starting to show signs of impact. The chair of the governing body and headteacher have recently introduced new systems designed to challenge improvements to attendance and punctuality. This has raised awareness among pupils and parents and there are some limited signs of improvement this term, particularly for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Pupils are courteous and polite and confident to talk to visitors. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong and most play sensibly on the playgrounds at break and lunchtime. Pupils quickly spot if another pupil is upset or hurt, and make sure that this is brought to the attention of a member of staff.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Children enter the school with levels of development below those seen typically, particularly in terms of communication, language and literacy skills. Progress in the early years is good and a far greater proportion of children are equipped for learning in key stage 1.
- Pupils do not make sufficient progress during key stage 1. Last year, pupils leaving Year 2 had made less progress than pupils from the same starting points in reading and writing. Boys achieved less well than girls. All groups of pupils underperformed in mathematics in 2016. Disadvantaged pupils did not achieve as well as others nationally.
- In 2015, all attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was in line with national averages. In 2016, fewer pupils attained the expected standard in reading and writing

than the national averages, and outcomes in mathematics were well below the expected standard.

- Outcomes in phonics require improvement. Although the overall proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the phonics screening check in Year 1 improved in 2015, it was still below the national average. It remained at that level in 2016. However, the differences between disadvantaged pupils and their peers are diminishing.
- School assessment and tracking systems are not used effectively enough to eradicate differences in the progress made by different classes. Books show that in mathematics, although there is evidence of strong progress in some Year 2 classes, there are inconsistencies depending on the quality of teaching over time. The overall rate of progress in mathematics, particularly for the most able pupils, is too slow. Similarly, in writing, there is a variable picture of progress across Year 2 and the most able pupils are not always being stretched sufficiently. Books evidence better progress in literacy skills during Year 1.
- Pupils' books evidence that pupils do not regularly apply their skills to write in depth when they learn about science, technology or the humanities. Consequently, progress over time in the wider curriculum is too slow, particularly for the most able pupils.
- Leaders monitor the progress of individual pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and offer bespoke interventions. Inspectors witnessed how good relationships and the effective support given in these sessions underpin the improved progress in literacy and mathematics that these pupils make from their starting points.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress because of the highly effective bespoke support that they receive.

Early years provision

Good

- Children get off to a flying start in Nursery. They make good progress, many from low starting points, and are well prepared to enter Reception classes. In Reception, although there is some variability in the quality of teaching, overall, children continue to make strong progress. The proportion who reached a good level of development in the early years foundation stage profile has improved in recent years and is just below the national average.
- Leadership in the early years is stronger than in key stage 1 and staff work well together to share ideas and planning. Leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development in Nursery and Reception. They have high aspirations and are determined that all children should make good or better progress. Following recent flood damage, staff have worked very hard to create rich learning experiences for children in the Nursery with limited resources.
- Leaders' risk assessments support staff to ensure that all aspects of the provision are managed well to keep children safe. Staff are vigilant about the safety of children, both indoors and out. They have received safeguarding training and hold appropriate teaching qualifications. All safeguarding arrangements are sound.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work well as a team to assess children's progress, then identify and plan suitable next steps. Highly effective specialist support is given to

children who speak English as an additional language. This enables them to integrate well and make rapid progress.

- In the early years, children benefit from bright and stimulating environments which offer easily accessible, interesting activities that promote child-centred learning. Children confidently move between the indoor and outdoor areas engaging in a wide variety of well-planned activities supporting all areas of their learning.
- The Nursery provides a warm and welcoming environment where children are happy, secure and develop the confidence to chat to each other, staff and visitors. Leaders ensure that staff provide a wide range of activities that appeal to boys as well as girls, and that a range of specialist help is available to support pupils who have additional needs. As a result, all children make good progress from their starting points.
- The teaching of basic skills in Nursery is particularly effective in helping children to develop their communication and language skills and fostering their curiosity and creativity. For example, indoors children inside the 'Bear cave' were playing collaboratively to role play and whisper because 'baby was asleep'. Outdoors, two girls playing on the slide imagined themselves as the characters in the Disney film *Frozen*. Skilful questioning by the teacher prompted collaborative play and discussion about what the film characters may do in the same situation.
- Children in Reception have learned a wide variety of sounds and blend them together to make words which they link to form sentences. Nearly all children make a good start in learning to read because most of the teaching of phonics is effective. Leaders are aware that in some Reception lessons there is more to do to make sure that all teaching of phonics is as strong as it is elsewhere in the school.
- The needs of disadvantaged children and children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are carefully considered and catered for. Staff know the children really well and meet their needs and liaise well with parents. This highly individualised focus ensures that these children make strong progress from typically low starting points.
- Communication with parents is effective and parents contribute well to assessment of their children's progress through learning journals. Nearly all parents are positive about the provision in the early years. This was demonstrated by the positive feedback contained within Parent View and the huge audience attending the Reception Year's Christmas show during the inspection.

School details

Unique reference number	110257
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	10000796

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	Infant
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	379
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John O'Donnell
Headteacher	Helen Hann
Telephone number	01908 312 275
Website	www.wyvernschool.org
Email address	office@wyvernschool.org
Date of previous inspection	23–24 February 2012

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about use of the pupil premium funding, use of the sports funding or the required special educational needs and/or disabilities information on its website.
- Wyvern School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is much higher than average. Approximately one third of the pupils speak English as an additional language, which is well above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those who are supported by the pupil premium funding, is in line with national figures.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with the national average.

- A separate provider operates Nursery provision before and after school and during the holidays on the same site. This is not run by the governors and is inspected separately.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils in 21 lessons and an assembly in order to gather evidence to contribute to inspectors' evaluation of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Many of these observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, acting deputy headteachers, middle leaders, two members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about their learning and looked at the work in their books across a range of subjects. They spoke to pupils on the playground, during lessons and met with two groups of pupils to gather their views.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about reading and heard some of the pupils read.
- Conversations were held with a number of parents at the beginning of the school day. Inspectors also considered the views expressed in a letter received from a parent and the 81 responses to Parent View, which included 46 written comments.
- A wide range of school documentation was scrutinised, including that relating to policies, strategic planning documents, safety, self-evaluation documents, pupils' achievement and behaviour, and attendance information.
- Inspectors reviewed the checks made on staff about their suitability to work with children.

Inspection team

Matthew Newberry, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Stephen Phillips	Ofsted Inspector
Sue Rolfe	Ofsted Inspector
Christopher Crouch	Ofsted Inspector

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