

Weavers Close Church of England Primary School

Alexander Avenue, Earl Shilton, Leicester, Leicestershire LE9 7AH

Inspection dates

3–4 May 2017

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	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The new senior leadership team are taking effective action to drive forward school improvement. However, this is against a backdrop of previously insufficient action prior to their appointment. Therefore, improvements are recent and yet to be fully embedded.
- The implementation of effective actions is over-reliant on the senior leaders. The need to recruit additional leaders and the relative inexperience of current middle leaders have delayed the improvement in middle leadership across the school.
- Teaching and learning are not consistently good. Teachers do not use assessment well to identify the next steps in learning for pupils. Pupils are not always clear about what they are learning and how to improve.
- Teachers are not equally skilled in supporting pupils to apply their skills. Not all teachers encourage pupils to check the accuracy of their grammar, punctuation and spelling when they write. Teachers provide pupils with too few opportunities to develop their reasoning skills to deepen pupils' mathematical understanding.
- Individual pupils' needs, especially for older pupils, have only recently been identified and addressed. This means that progress over time for these pupils has not been sufficiently rapid.
- Early years practitioners are not sufficiently challenging children to extend their language, thinking and skills.
- Senior leaders have not shared the school development plan in sufficient detail for all staff to have a clear understanding of priorities.

The school has the following strengths

- The new senior leaders are effectively driving recent improvements in teaching and learning, backed up with rigorous systems.
- Governance has improved significantly due to effective leadership and well-planned training.
- Safeguarding is effective. Pupils feel safe. The school's inclusion team are tenacious and provide sensitive, effective support for vulnerable pupils and families.
- Leaders and staff are strong role models for key values of caring and respect.
- Pupils enjoy school and their learning experiences. The majority of pupils behave well and follow clear school rules and expectations.
- There is a developing culture for improvement shared by leaders, staff and pupils.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning further to bring about more rapid progress for all pupils by:
 - developing further teachers' subject knowledge to enable them to use accurate assessment to sharpen planning and teaching in order to meet the needs of all pupils, especially the most able, including those who are disadvantaged
 - ensuring that teachers follow the school's policy to require pupils to check the accuracy of their grammar, punctuation and spelling, to further develop their writing across the curriculum
 - ensuring that teachers enhance pupils' ability to apply their reasoning skills in mathematics to deepen their understanding
 - developing pupils' participation in and understanding of what they are learning, so they know how to be successful and how to improve their work
 - ensuring that when children in the early years work or play without the direct supervision of a teacher their learning has a clear purpose.
- Further accelerate progress for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities by:
 - more closely analysing pupils' progress from individual starting points, including their social and emotional development
 - ensuring that targets set for improving their behaviour are sharply focused on improving their learning.
- Improve leadership and management across the school further by:
 - ensuring that the wide range of recent actions for improvement is fully embedded
 - developing the roles of middle and other leaders, so they can be fully held to account for the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in their areas of responsibility
 - ensuring that the school improvement action points are broken down and communicated clearly, so all staff have a clearer understanding of priorities.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- There has been a significant decline in the school's performance since the previous inspection. School leaders, governors and the Diocese of Leicester Academies Trust (DLAT) did not act quickly enough upon the findings of the previous inspection and subsequent monitoring reports. It is only since the appointments of the new executive headteacher and head of school, in September 2016, that stringent actions to stem the decline and move the school forward have been taken.
- The extent of the changes that needed to be made, coupled with five new teachers, as well as further staff changes within the school year, meant that more rapid improvement was not evident until the spring term. The executive headteacher and head of school are honest and accurate in their self-evaluation.
- The two senior leaders have dovetailed their considerable experience and different skills to good effect. They are very clear about what they need to change to ensure sustainable improvement and have carefully planned actions to achieve this. The executive headteacher has combined his considerable experience of overhauling systems, frameworks and policies with the head of school's in-depth understanding of the curriculum and effective teaching, to refocus and stem decline.
- Together, they are driving a compelling but robust vision, focused on progress for all pupils. Leaders' carefully planned actions are now moving the school forward. Senior leaders, including the governing academy transformation board, understand these in great detail. However, not all staff have the necessary understanding of what leaders' priorities are in order to help embed and prioritise the appropriate changes and actions required.
- Leaders' evaluation of the quality of pupils' learning, through regular focused observations, is accurate and used to tailor effective whole-school training and individualised support. Teachers now welcome leaders' systematic routine challenge and support, and they particularly appreciate the head of school's practical and formative feedback. This is then followed through. Staff know they will be asked to explain and demonstrate how they are using training to improve how they support pupils to make progress, in rigorous, but collaborative, pupil-progress meetings.
- Teaching and learning across the school is not consistently good, despite the now rigorous performance management and effective training. This is due to the extent of staff changes, ongoing staffing difficulties and the volume of improvements that have been required in such a short time.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the quality of teaching across the school and where practice is more effective. They are using this appropriately, for example by giving staff opportunities to work with skilled colleagues, and observe and learn from effective practice in other schools.
- School leaders continue to be realistic, but impatient to speed up improvements. They recognise that difficulties with recruiting, and unforeseen staff changes, have meant there is an over-reliance on the head of school. However, middle leaders are now

relishing the opportunities for training and taking on further responsibility to drive change in their areas. However, wider leadership is still underdeveloped.

- Leaders are now using well the additional pupil premium funding and funding to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, there is a considerable legacy of underachievement among these pupils, particularly for those in upper key stage 2. They are now making considerable progress, but this is very recent and follows insufficient previous progress.
- Across the school, senior leaders model and lead a strong sense of care and responsibility towards the pupils and the community. The school's values and behaviour code have been a focus for development and the majority of pupils respond well to them. They explain coherently their understanding of what school rules look like in action and respond to challenges, such as 'be a class act' and to be a star writer or mathematician. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated in the school. The school is now a calmer place where the majority of pupils work and socialise with each other in a respectful and cooperative manner.
- The school's curriculum is broad and balanced. Senior leaders have a clear vision of what they want pupils to experience. This includes the development of positive attitudes to learning and life. Learning is planned through cross-curricular topics, which pupils enjoy. Enrichment activities have also been developed well to help pupils broaden their experiences, including clubs, residential trips and visits to extend learning. Pupils learn about how to be responsible citizens, particularly through reflective, collective worship, which is considerably enhanced by careful use of songs to reinforce messages. However, pupils' learning about different faiths and cultures is not as well developed across the curriculum.
- Leaders use the additional funding for physical education and sport to very good effect. They have ensured that teachers have worked alongside expert coaches and received effective training to improve their teaching and coaching skills. Pupils have had many opportunities to take part in a range of sports, including activities to support less-confident children.
- Leaders have been effective in improving communication with parents. Useful and timely information is provided through newsletters. Meetings are offered to share important information, such as parent meetings to discuss the updated behaviour policy. Parents particularly welcome the information they receive about their children's progress, although this has heightened their awareness of the urgent need for this to improve in the school. The website has a range of useful information, but this is sometimes confusing for parents, due to out-of-date information not being removed quickly. The inclusion leader has been particularly effective in building relationships and securing support for vulnerable families.

Governance of the school

- Governance has recently been significantly strengthened. Once the Diocese of Leicester Academies Trust (DLAT) fully recognised the extent of the school's difficulties, decisive action was taken. This has included putting into place an 'academy transformation board' (ATB), while taking time to recruit and train governors with a range of skills for

the local board.

- Frequent meetings and regular reviews by consultants, followed by more effective brokering of support from the DLAT school improvement staff and schools within the trust, are now providing effective support to the determined senior leaders.
- The appointment of a highly experienced and committed chair of the governing body and the ATB, who is a national leader of governance, has had a significant impact on ensuring that the new senior leaders are stringently held to account, but also supported. She is highly experienced in ensuring that what she is told matches what is actually happening. She also ensures that the Diocese of Leicester Academies Trust members of the ATB are held to account to give necessary support. She adds considerably to the leadership capacity of the school.
- Senior leaders welcome the recent robust challenge and support from the ATB and the chair of the governing body. This means that as an overall leadership team they now have a thorough understanding of the school's strengths and weakness and are using their combined skills to maintain a sharp focus and drive for improvement.
- The local governing body is shadowing and undertaking supported monitoring activities, so that when there is transfer from the ATB to the local board, there will continuity and established capacity.
- Governors are aware of performance data and challenge leaders about the achievement of pupils. Governors know their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and the use of the pupil premium and the physical education and sport funding. However, their knowledge of the impact of the use of such funding is not as strong, nor as timely, as it should be in order for them to hold leaders fully to account.
- Governors have a clear understanding and undertake their duties well in ensuring that safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There are clear and robust systems and procedures in place, which are understood by all staff. Leaders keep detailed records to inform effective and timely work with external agencies. Staff and governors receive relevant training and updates, including on radicalisation and extremism.
- The culture of safeguarding in the school is evident in that pupils feel safe, and parents are confident that their children are safe and the school cares well for them. Pupils confidently explain about ways in which the school helps them to learn to keep themselves safe. For example, pupils told inspectors that they learn about internet safety, including how to block people on the internet. They also explained that they think about everyday safety when doing cookery, working with electrical devices and being careful near hot surfaces.
- Case studies and records show that vulnerable children and their families are now well supported. Governors and school leaders recognise the need to support the welfare of all pupils, hence the high level of investment in welfare provision, including a family support worker, inclusion space, training in emotional literacy support and the funding of additional therapies, such as horse therapy. Leaders are quick to follow up on any

concerns and to check this against information on assessment and attendance, to then put in place appropriate interventions. The inclusion team are willing to have challenging discussions with parents and outside agencies, while building effective relationships with families to achieve sustainable improvements.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching and learning is not consistently good. Although appropriate actions are in place to improve pupils' progress towards achieving age-appropriate expectations, these are relatively recent and are not yet impacting sufficiently to secure consistent and rapid progress of pupils.
- Leaders have ensured that teachers' assessments are now accurate, through updating assessment systems, effective training, and internal and external moderation. However, teachers across the school do not all have the skills and depth of subject knowledge to consistently use assessment well enough to inform their planning for the next steps in learning for pupils, especially for the most able.
- Teachers do not consistently make it clear to pupils what they are expected to learn in lessons and how they can improve. Not all teachers are confident in adapting tasks; nor do they address misconceptions, especially in mathematics. An example of this was when pupils were asked to find a fraction of an amount that was spent, and then to work out how much money was left. Pupils were keen to 'have a go' and had the necessary calculation skills, but they were not explicitly and confidently taught how to go about solving the problem.
- In both writing and mathematics, there is insufficient evidence that teachers routinely and consistently require pupils to apply the skills and knowledge they have learned. Although teachers generally use questioning well, pupils are not routinely given the opportunity to discuss and extend their understanding. They are not consistently required to go back, self-check and learn from mistakes as the school's teaching and learning policy indicates they should. This means that pupils are not systematically deepening their understanding or increasingly learning to work things out for themselves.
- The teaching of reading is more consistently developed. Pupils were keen to read to inspectors, and their books were well chosen and at the right level. Pupils use appropriate expression in their reading. Effective strategies are in place to encourage older pupils to read widely. A pupil told an inspector he had particularly enjoyed reading a poetry book. However, pupils' inference skills are not as fully developed as their reading accuracy.
- Teachers have good relationships with pupils and pupils are keen to learn. Teachers consistently maintain a calm and focused climate for learning.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Senior leaders set a strong lead in treating all pupils with dignity and respect and are very effective role models for pupils.
- Leaders promote the development of pupils' self-awareness and skills to improve pupils' attitudes and behaviour. However, opportunities are missed for pupils to fully articulate, develop and share their thinking.
- Pupils generally work well together and very little disruption of learning was observed during the inspection. Pupils who use the school's breakfast club enjoy their time with their peers and are well prepared for the start of the school day.
- There is still some variability in the pride pupils take in their work. Although pupils are generally keen to learn, teachers' expectations are not fully consistent in terms of accuracy and presentation. Most pupils are reliant upon adult direction, rather than being confident to independently pursue their learning goals. They become more confident to apply and extend their skills to develop their work where teachers ensure that they are clear about the purpose of the task and what they need to do to improve.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe and they feel very safe. They know who to speak to in school if they have any worries. They understand the different forms of bullying, including cyber bullying, and how to keep themselves safe online. School records show that bullying is rare and staff vigilance is high when monitoring this aspect of behaviour.
- The majority of parents who spoke with inspectors, and the responses to Parent View, were rightly confident that children are safe, happy and looked after well.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. The school's policies and rules set clear expectations and the majority of pupils understand them and are keen to comply, enjoying the rewards of 'house points and aces' and receiving the headteacher's 'whopper stars'.
- However, there are still a number of older pupils who aim to disrupt learning or oppose the rules. Although the inclusion provision and clear sanctions are impacting on reducing this, it still causes other pupils concern, and leaders know they need to continue to tackle this and support all staff to deal consistently with such behaviour.
- The majority of pupils show courtesy and consideration towards each other and adults, including visitors.
- The majority of pupils enjoy coming to school. Attendance is currently just above the national average. Persistent absence is just below the national average. Leaders continue to take effective action and support families where they identify absence

issues, in order to bring about improvement.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Overall, over time there are inconsistencies in the progress made by different groups of pupils and in different subject areas.
- Outcomes for pupils in key stage 2 declined in 2015 and the school did not meet the floor standards, the government's current minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment. In 2016, pupils' attainment at key stage 2 remained well below the national average, but met floor standards. While attainment in writing was closer to the national average, it was well below the national averages for reading and mathematics. The proportion achieving above the expected standard in their different subjects was well below that seen nationally.
- At key stage 1, in 2016, pupils attained well below the expected standard for their age, especially for writing. Disadvantaged pupils attained less well than other pupils.
- Attainment in the Year 1 national phonics screening check rose in 2015 to be in line with the national average, although disadvantaged pupils did not do as well as their peers. The overall proportion who achieved this standard in 2016 rose.
- Current school performance data and inspection evidence point to sustained and rapid improvement during the spring term, as the impact of effective staff training and better understanding of policies and systems for assessment, marking, and teaching and learning have become more established. However, such is the legacy of underachievement among pupils in upper key stage 2, the proportion of Year 6 pupils currently on track to achieve the age-related expectations in the forthcoming national tests is still likely to be below average.
- Pupils' knowledge and understanding in other subjects demonstrate that leaders are ensuring that the curriculum is broad and develops age-appropriate knowledge, within a systematic drive for age-appropriate skills development. However, opportunities are not routinely used to extend and develop pupils' writing, and teachers' expectations in wider curriculum work are not as high as in English and mathematics.
- Effective leadership ensures that additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is used effectively. Pupils in both of these groups are making improving progress.
- Senior leaders and governors have invested significantly this year to ensure that Year 6 pupils transfer to secondary school with at least clearly identified needs and appropriate plans. For many pupils, their progress is not measurable through academic tracking, but case studies show that they are now making progress in their willingness to do as teachers ask them and complete appropriate work, which is significant individual progress.
- Scrutiny of pupils' work shows that teachers are ensuring that pupils are working more closely to age expectations, but challenge for the most able, to ensure that they achieve what they are capable of, is not consistent.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Leaders have not ensured that provision in the early years is consistently good. Assessments of children’s development are not used well enough to ensure that learning tasks provided in the indoor and outdoor environments are consistently purposeful and extend children’s learning. As a result, children do not make the progress that they could in extending their language, stamina and independence. This means that children do not leave the early years sufficiently well prepared for Year 1.
- The number of children in the early years who achieved a good level of development was below the national level in 2016. However, many children enter the Reception Year with skills below those typically expected for their age. This means that children make progress, but the rate of progress has varied for groups of pupils over time.
- Teachers provide a wide range of activities which children join in enthusiastically. However, they do not consistently develop learning, nor build on what is learned in more formal group sessions. Children are often not clear on how they might use the resources provided to extend their play and learning. For example, a range of objects for counting and sorting with number cards and place mats were used to make lines and towers, but children did not use the cards or discuss and compare their models.
- When adults did participate in the children’s chosen tasks, they were then able to review and consider their play and develop it further. An example of this was when an adult joined in their brick-building. Lively conversation between children then ensued: ‘look, we fixed this back up’ and ‘let’s do it like this as it will work better’. However, such intervention was not routinely evident in observations, learning journals and timetables.
- In particular, the outdoor area is somewhat barren and not used effectively to develop and extend children’s thinking, nor their literacy and numeracy skills.
- Activities led by adults are more effective and help children to make better progress, especially with phonics skills. For example, when inspectors observed a phonics session led by the class teacher, children joined in enthusiastically and the teacher showed them effectively how to say and write sounds, and segment words. However, other adults are not consistently accurate in their demonstration of sounds. Adults generally did not take the opportunity to put words being spelled into contexts or sentences.
- The early years leader has a secure understanding of appropriate areas for development. These include the outside area, further staff training, strengthening of work with feeder pre-schools, and closer working with parents so they are confident in how best to help their children’s learning.
- All adults model clear expectations and respectful and caring relationships. Children develop positive attitudes and play cooperatively with each other. Staff settle children quickly into the routines and ensure that they learn to get along well with others.
- Safeguarding in the early years is effective and children are happy and confident. Parents appreciate the approachability of staff and are rightly confident that their children are safe and cared for well.

School details

Unique reference number	139200
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	10031164

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	228
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Suzanne Uprichard
Executive Headteacher/Head of School	David Williams/Rebecca Dolby-Molson
Telephone number	01455 842138
Website	www.weaversclose.leics.sch.uk
Email address	hdg@weaversclose.leics.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	28–29 January 2015

Information about this school

- 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.
- The academy is slightly smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most children attending the school come from the immediate area and are White British.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is close to the national average.
- In 2016, the school met the government's current floor standards, which are the

minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.

- The school has been an academy, sponsored by the Diocese of Leicester Academies Trust (DLAT), since March 2013.
- The school runs a breakfast club.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 21 lessons, including four joint observations with the head of school. Inspectors observed the teaching of early reading skills and pupils were heard reading. The inspectors talked with pupils about their school and looked at pupils' books while visiting lessons. The team scrutinised a large sample of pupils' work jointly with the executive headteacher and head of school, to gain a view of the impact of teaching over time.
- Inspectors held discussions with the school's senior and middle leaders, representatives of the governing body and representatives of DLAT.
- Inspectors spoke with parents informally at the start of both school days and considered 25 responses to the Ofsted online parent questionnaire, Parent View. There were no returns from the staff or pupil surveys.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, improvement plans, records of the monitoring of the quality of teaching, the most recent information on pupils' progress and attainment, and information relating to safeguarding, behaviour, attendance and punctuality.
- Inspectors considered the range and quality of information provided on the school's website.

Inspection team

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