

John Wheeldon Primary Academy

Corporation Street, Stafford, Staffordshire ST16 3LX

Inspection dates

23–24 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	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Teaching is not yet consistently good. In Years 3, 4 and 5, the quality of teaching varies considerably. As a result, not enough pupils are achieving the standards that they should be.
- Teachers do not use assessment information to plan work that matches closely to pupils' needs. This slows down pupils' progress.
- Teachers do not respond consistently to pupils' needs during lessons. Some pupils are not adequately supported with work that they do not understand, while others are not moved on to more challenging work quickly enough.
- There is variation in teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics, which is leading to gaps in pupils' understanding.
- The teaching of grammar, punctuation and handwriting is not applied consistently when pupils write longer pieces of work.
- Leaders are not making effective use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils. This leads to underachievement for a significant proportion of disadvantaged pupils.
- While leaders have improved teaching over time, they have not addressed the remaining weaker teaching with enough urgency.
- Leaders do not plan or monitor the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities with sufficient precision. As a result, provision is not targeted specifically to individual pupils' needs.
- Leaders have not ensured that assessments have been accurate in the early years. Consequently, children have not received the targeted support required.
- Systems for managing behaviour are not embedded consistently by staff or leaders.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher provides a clear direction for the school. This is echoed in the views of parents, pupils and staff. Other leaders, some of whom are new in post, are beginning to have early impact in their roles.
- The chief executive of the trust and the local academy council have made important changes in the school since academy conversion.
- Teachers have fostered a culture for reading. Pupils are enthused and they read regularly.
- The quality of teaching in key stage 1 and Year 6 is good.
- Pupils' personal development is good because of the positive and caring relationships among staff, pupils and parents.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency and quality of teaching by making sure that teachers:
 - use assessment information to plan work that is sufficiently matched to pupils' needs
 - respond to the needs of pupils during lessons in order to provide further support or to move them on to more challenging work
 - apply consistently precise subject knowledge when teaching mathematics
 - continue to improve the teaching of grammar, punctuation and handwriting, so that pupils embed the skills when they write longer pieces of work.
- Improve the impact that leadership has on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement by:
 - addressing the weaker teaching in the school with quality monitoring and support
 - making sure that additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is targeted effectively and measured for impact, so that disadvantaged pupils can make better progress
 - ensuring that provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is sharply focused on individual needs and is regularly monitored for impact
 - improving the analysis of assessment information in the early years, so that leaders and staff have a clear understanding of the children that require additional support
 - embedding behaviour management processes across the school.
- An external review of the school's use of pupil premium funding 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

- When the school opened, there were significant weaknesses in the quality of teaching. While leaders have improved teaching over time, they have not been swift enough to address the remaining weaker teaching. Teachers who require additional support are not monitored and developed with sufficient urgency. This has led to variability in the quality of teaching, especially in Years 3, 4 and 5.
- Leaders have not been precise when allocating additional funding for disadvantaged pupils. The spending is not targeted specifically to individuals, which means that they do not receive the support required. Consequently, too many disadvantaged pupils in key stage 2 are underachieving. Leaders have started to address this issue, but it is too early to measure the impact of their actions.
- Leaders do not plan the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities with appropriate precision. As a result, additional interventions and classroom support are not targeted to meet pupils' specific needs. This leads to slow progress for this group of pupils. Staff have not had sufficient professional development to help them to provide better support to these pupils in class.
- Leaders are not being thorough in monitoring the impact of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders cannot measure the success of individual pupils' plans or the additional support that they receive.
- While leaders have reviewed and adapted the behaviour policy, there is still inconsistency in the management of behaviour across the school. Some staff do not apply the policy on a consistent basis, and leaders do not have a strong system to analyse the trends in behaviour incidents. Subsequently, some pupils' behaviour is not improving quickly enough, and fixed-term exclusions remain relatively high.
- The new headteacher has had a positive impact on the quality of education since his arrival in September 2016. He has an accurate understanding of the school and what needs to be done. Parents who spoke to inspectors were very complimentary about the improvements in the school. Comments included, 'The school is now going in the right direction.' The headteacher has developed a clear sense of purpose, which is shared by other leaders in school. There is a positive sense of trust and teamwork among staff, pupils and parents.
- The headteacher has put into place a new leadership structure. Leaders have greater responsibility, which is developing the school's capacity to make the necessary improvements. Leaders have put in place some appropriate actions. However, because some of these actions are in the early stages, the exact impact is not fully evident. For example, the new reading programme is clearly encouraging pupils to read more regularly but it is not yet resulting in improved outcomes.
- Leaders have been successful in establishing and maintaining effective support for pupils who speak English as an additional language. These pupils receive targeted support and make good progress.
- The headteacher has been proactive in addressing the accuracy of assessment, and leaders are now able to analyse reliable information. This was a weakness of the school

in the past. Leaders and teachers are now able to respond to dips in pupils' progress and put in place additional support where it is most needed.

- Leaders' checks on the quality of teaching are accurate. These checks help teachers to identify what they need to do next to improve their practice. Teachers are also now receiving more appropriate and regular professional development. This has led to some improvements in teaching, particularly since the arrival of the new headteacher.
- Leaders have developed a broad and balanced curriculum. Pupils are excited by the learning that they are doing in their topic work. For example, during the inspection, pupils were learning about the Stone Age in history. Pupils watched a video about bows and arrows to spark their ideas before acting out their own adverts. These creative approaches to the curriculum are deepening pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in a range of subjects.
- The leadership of physical education (PE) and school sport is effective. The PE and sport premium funding is used to train staff and improve their confidence in the delivery of the subject. Pupils' participation in sports clubs and in physical activity has increased. The 'daily mile' activity and the use of older pupils as play leaders have enabled purposeful physical activity during breaktimes.

Governance of the school

- The academy council provides an effective level of challenge because it understands the school and the areas that need to be improved. The council was newly established after the school converted to become an academy. Academy councillors are aware of the historic inconsistencies in teaching and the effect that this has had on pupils' achievement. They ask increasingly probing questions of leaders, which is evidenced in minutes of their meetings and in their visit notes.
- Academy councillors, along with the trust, were directly involved in the appointment of the new headteacher and have ensured that his performance management has clear success criteria linked to improving the quality of teaching and the outcomes for pupils.
- The academy council is aware that the management of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils has not been as effective as it should be. Now that leaders' assessment information is more reliable, councillors are in a better position to challenge how well this group of pupils are doing.
- The chief executive officer was appointed to the trust in 2015 and has provided strong leadership to the school. Prior to the appointment of the new headteacher, the chief executive officer instigated important changes to staffing and recruited a skilled academy council. These actions have provided a strong foundation for the school and are now allowing the new headteacher to focus on improving the quality of teaching.
- The trust has also appointed an improvement partner who works with leaders on a regular basis. Visit notes show that this support is providing an effective level of challenge and direction for leaders.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

- Systems for keeping pupils safe are organised and secure. Leaders have ensured that the safeguarding policy is kept up to date and in line with statutory guidelines. Staff have an effective understanding of how to keep pupils safe because they are given the appropriate training. As a result of these processes, staff are vigilant, and there is a culture of safety around the school.
- Leaders responsible for safeguarding are thorough in their record-keeping. If staff are concerned about a child, they complete a cause for concern form. Concerns are followed up tenaciously by leaders. When it is appropriate to do so, leaders work in close partnership with parents and relevant local agencies to keep pupils safe.
- The school manages risk very well. There are thorough risk assessments for the building and for the different activities that take place in the school. There is an extensive health and safety review, which adds further support to the safety and well-being of staff and pupils.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe. For example, several pupils could talk about where it was safe to go in the school grounds and what to do to stay safe when they are on the internet. Leaders have integrated learning about safety into the curriculum and into wider aspects of school life.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it is not yet consistently good across the school. There is particular variability in the quality of teaching in Years 3, 4 and 5.
- Teachers do not use assessment information to plan work that precisely matches pupils' needs. Where this occurs, teachers are not giving sufficient consideration to pupils' prior learning. As a result, some of the work that pupils do is either too easy or too hard, and their progress slows down.
- Teachers do not respond consistently to pupils' needs during lessons. In some lessons, pupils are not given sufficient support when they find learning difficult. Conversely, in some lessons, pupils are not moved on to more challenging work when they are ready for this. When this occurs, some pupils lose concentration and make less progress.
- The provision during lessons for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is not effective enough. Teachers have not received sufficient support and training in order to understand how to address this group of pupils' specific needs.
- The teaching of mathematics varies across classes. Some teachers do not demonstrate consistently accurate subject knowledge. Consequently, some pupils are developing gaps in their knowledge and understanding in key areas of mathematics. For example, Year 3 pupils' understanding of fractions is particularly fragile.
- The teaching of grammar, punctuation and handwriting is happening more regularly but is not yet applied consistently in pupils' writing. Where teaching is stronger, pupils are applying their skills in longer pieces of writing. For example, in Year 5, a teacher effectively demonstrated the use of coordinating and subordinating conjunctions. As a result of the strong teaching, pupils were able to use a range of conjunctions accurately in their writing. Pupils made good progress because of the thoughtful and accurate teaching they received.

- The quality of teaching in key stage 1 and in Year 6 is more consistent. Teachers provide appropriate challenge and support by asking probing questions to deepen pupils' understanding. As a result, pupils secure better progress. Teachers in Year 2 and Year 6 are sharing their good practice, which is helping other teachers to improve.
- Teachers have developed a growing culture and love of reading among pupils. A new reading programme is enabling pupils to read stimulating and appropriately challenging texts on a regular basis. One pupil in key stage 2 proudly told inspectors that they had read seven books in the last three months. While this approach is in its early stages, it is having a clear impact on pupils. This is evident in the understanding that pupils demonstrate through 'end of book quizzes'. Several parents shared with inspectors how pleased they were with their child's improvement in reading.
- Some elements of mathematics teaching are providing better support for pupils. For example, during the inspection, practical apparatus was used in key stage 1 to help pupils to visualise number bonds and, similarly so, in key stage 2 to recognise lines of symmetry. Additionally, leaders have recently introduced the regular practice of key mathematical skills. This is helping to fully cover the mathematics curriculum and address some of the gaps in pupils' knowledge.
- The use of more specialist teaching is having a positive impact on pupils and enabling them to develop skills, understanding and knowledge appropriate for their age. For example, specialist teachers are used to provide additional expertise in modern foreign languages (French) and music.

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 enjoy coming to school. They are happy and display a sense of pride in their school community. Staff have created a nurturing ethos in which pupils feel safe and cared for. As a result of these positive relationships, pupils' personal development is well catered for.
- Leaders and teachers help pupils to develop important morals and values. Pupils discuss a range of issues in assemblies and in the classroom. They have a good understanding of British values, like democracy and equality. One pupil commented, 'We are all treated fairly and nobody is treated differently.' Pupils also spoke of learning about civil rights and racial discrimination through their research of Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King. As a result of the school's work in this area, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is developing well.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are increasingly positive. Most pupils work hard and apply themselves in lessons. Occasionally, when teaching is less effective, some pupils do not concentrate on their learning as well as they should.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe. They understand what bullying is and, in the rare moments that it does occur, pupils feel that it is quickly addressed by teachers. Pupils talked confidently about the impact of e-safety week and how it helped them to understand how to keep themselves safe online. The school has also

organised talks from visitors, for example, from the police, which helps to further embed a safe culture.

- Parents and pupils spoke enthusiastically about the range of clubs that they can access in school, including football, dance, tag rugby, Zumba and karate. Pupils also have leadership opportunities in school and can be elected to the school council or can volunteer to become a play leader at lunchtime. These wider opportunities are making pupils feel valued, while also developing a broader range of skills.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Leaders have reviewed and refined the school behaviour management policy. They recognise that the school's behaviour systems have not been followed consistently enough. This has led to a culture where some low-level disruption is not challenged with the appropriate strategies. As a result, some pupils are still not behaving as well as they could in lessons and at other times in the school day.
- There are a number of pupils in the school who have complex social, emotional and behaviour needs. Leaders and staff provide some effective strategies and support for these pupils. However, exclusions are increasing and remain quite high. Leaders do not analyse behaviour trends with sufficient precision and are therefore not able to evaluate how they can better support pupils to manage their behaviour.
- Where staff are consistent with behaviour management procedures, and where teaching is stronger, pupils' behaviour is appropriate. However, this is not the consistent picture across the school.
- Pupils' attendance has historically been better than the national average. However, so far this academic year, it has declined. Furthermore, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils has dropped significantly and attendance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is also low. Too many pupils arrive at school after the official start time. Punctuality and attendance require improvement for these vulnerable groups of pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Due to inconsistencies in teaching, pupils' progress is too slow in Years 3, 4 and 5. This is particularly the case in Year 3 and Year 5 where just half of the pupils are at the expected standard in writing, reading and mathematics. Where teaching is weak, pupils are not accessing work that is appropriately matched to their ability.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities did not achieve well in the end of key stage 2 tests in 2016 and made weak progress across key stage 2. There was a similar pattern of under-achievement in 2015 and current pupils' progress for this group is fragile. The provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is not specifically targeted. This is leading to gaps in their understanding and to slow progress.
- The progress for disadvantaged pupils is variable in different parts of the school. In key stage 2, disadvantaged pupils are making slow progress. By the end of Year 6, pupils

are not diminishing the difference with other pupils nationally who are not disadvantaged. In the end of key stage 2 tests in 2016, disadvantaged pupils did not achieve well. Less than half of the pupils achieved the expected standards in writing and mathematics, and less than a third of pupils did so in reading. In 2015, progress was also weak for this group of pupils. Leaders are not doing enough to accelerate the progress of disadvantaged pupils in key stage 2. This group of pupils does make better progress in key stage 1 because teaching is more precisely targeted.

- The most able pupils performed well in the 2016 end of key stage 2 tests. Their progress was above the national average in reading and mathematics. The progress of the most able pupils currently in key stage 2 varies. In Year 6, they have made good progress this academic year. However, in other year groups, some most-able pupils' progress slows because they are not moved on to challenging work quickly enough.
- In key stage 1, pupils are making better progress because they receive more consistent teaching. In the 2016 end of key stage 1 national assessments, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics was above the national average. However, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher standards in reading and writing was below the national average.
- The most able pupils in Years 1 and 2, including the most able disadvantaged, are not always challenged. Leaders have started to address this issue and current assessment information and work in pupils' books, show that more pupils are achieving the higher standards now than at the same point in the last academic year.
- Pupils' progress accelerates in Year 6 because of consistently good teaching. Teachers plan work that is appropriately challenging and they have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Consequently, pupils make strong progress and are able to address some of the gaps in their learning from earlier on in key stage 2.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language are making good progress. This was evident in the school's assessment information and in the work seen in pupils' books. This group of pupils is supported to acquire new language through specific additional support. Pupils then apply this language with increasing skill, in whole-class teaching, as they move through the school.
- The teaching of phonics is a strength of the school. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check was above the national average in 2015, and in 2016 it was just below the national average. However, in 2016, pupils made good progress from their starting points. Teachers use precise subject knowledge when teaching phonics and, as a result, pupils segment and blend sounds with confidence. This is helping pupils to understand tricky words and read fluently.
- The new approach to the teaching of reading is leading to better progress. Pupils are reading more often and within a wider range of interesting texts. Inspectors listened to pupils read and found that they were enjoying their books. The new reading initiative now needs more time to embed so that the impact is more evident in pupils' progress over time.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The early years requires improvement because weaknesses have appeared during the

current academic year. Leaders have not been robust enough in monitoring the quality of the provision during a period of staffing transition. This has led to weak progress for some children and, as a result, the proportion of children who are at the expected standard is declining, when compared to previous years.

- Some of the assessments that staff have made of children during this academic year have not been accurate. Furthermore, leaders have not been analysing assessment information as robustly as they usually do. Consequently, children requiring specific additional support have not received the help that they require.
- This is particularly the case in writing, where children's progress varies the most. Boys, in particular, have made slow progress this year, which is evident in some of their books. Some writing activities are not stimulating children's interest.
- Children enter Reception with skills just below those that are typical for their age. In 2015 and 2016, the proportion of children that reached the expected level for their age was just above the national average by the end of Reception. This represents a positive picture of achievement. However, current assessment information shows that this has declined during this academic year, with at least a third of children unlikely to reach a good level of development by the end of the year.
- Some activities and some adult support do not have high enough expectations of what children can do. For example, some activities spark children's interest but lack purpose or the opportunity to extend their thinking. Adults' questions do not sufficiently challenge children or allow them to think deeply about what they are doing. This means that some children's progress is not as rapid as it should be.
- Children are happy and settled in Reception. There is a positive climate for learning because of the warm relationships between staff and children. As a result, behaviour is good and children are confident individuals.
- During independent play, the range of activities are often very stimulating. Children enjoy activities because they enable both social interaction and opportunities for independence. The different areas of learning are well catered for because the curriculum offers appropriate breadth and balance. For example, during one activity, two children were smelling different spices and talking about how these were grown and whereabouts in the world they might be from.
- The teaching of phonics is precise, which leads to good progress. Staff support children's development of vocabulary in phonics sessions and help them to learn sounds at an appropriate level.
- Parents are positive about the start that their children receive in Reception. They also appreciate the updates that they receive about their child's progress. Staff regularly share photos of children's learning with families. Photos include comments about the progress that is taking place.
- The leader of the early years is competent and ambitious and has high expectations of the staff and children. She has the skills and capacity to bring about the necessary improvements.
- The staff ensure children's welfare and safety through regular checks. Risk assessments are robust and support staff to keep children safe. Staff are well trained and all statutory welfare requirements are met.

School details

Unique reference number	141186
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10032560

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	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	441
Appropriate authority	Staffordshire University Academies Trust
Chair	Lesley Rollason
Principal	Richard Sutton
Telephone number	01785 594444
Website	www.johnwheeldon.staffs.sch.uk/
Email address	headteacher@johnwheeldon.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

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 school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is below the national average.
- A large majority of pupils come from a White British background.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is just below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics for pupils by the end of Year 6.
- The school is part of the Staffordshire University Academies Trust, which has legal and strategic responsibilities for all of the schools within the trust. The local academy council provides support and challenge to the school, and a link with the local community. The school opened as an academy in September 2014. When its predecessor school was inspected by Ofsted in June 2014, it was judged to require improvement.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2016.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed pupils' learning in 29 lessons or parts of lessons. A number of these observations were undertaken with senior leaders.
- The inspectors scrutinised work in pupils' books and listened to pupils read. They met with two groups of pupils to gain their views of the school. The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktime, lunchtime and at the end of the school day, as well as in lessons and in an assembly.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy Headteacher and five other leaders. The lead inspector met with three members of the local academy council, including the chair. The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documentation including: assessments and records of pupils' progress; the school's checks and records relating to safeguarding; child protection and attendance records; records of how teaching is monitored and the school's improvement plans.
- Inspectors took account of 63 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors considered 62 free-text responses from parents. They also talked to parents at the start and end of the school day. Inspectors reviewed 26 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Matt Meckin, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Mark Cadwallader	Ofsted Inspector
Diane Pye	Ofsted Inspector

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