

# Water Lane Primary Academy

Broadley Road, Harlow, Essex CM19 5RD

## Inspection dates

14–15 June 2017

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Since the school has become an academy, the executive headteacher and the head of school have established a new teaching team and implemented secure and effective systems that have successfully raised standards and consequently improved pupils' outcomes.
- Leadership is enhanced through the school's membership of REAch2 Academy Trust. The trust provides valuable support and challenge to leaders and teachers at all levels.
- Recent actions to improve the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics have improved pupils' learning in the early years and key stage 1 quickly. Pupils' work shows that they are making good progress.
- School leaders and teachers work well across the trust to ensure that assessment is accurate and that learning meets pupils' needs.
- Funding is used well to support disadvantaged pupils. They achieve well across the school and in line with other pupils nationally.
- Leaders are developing middle leaders effectively in their roles as subject leaders. However, it is too early to fully see the impact of their work on improving pupils' outcomes.
- Vulnerable pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are well cared for. Staff ensure that they receive the support they need to make good progress.
- Children in the early years have a good start to full time education. By the time they leave Reception they are ready for Year 1.
- Staff and pupils are happy and work collaboratively together. Pupils demonstrate good learning behaviours.
- Additional adults support pupils well to catch up and make good progress. However, teachers do not deploy them effectively so that all pupils make as much progress as they could.
- Some teaching and learning is not as effective as it could be to ensure pupils, including the most able pupils, make accelerated progress to reach the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers have not developed pupils' problem-solving skills securely enough so that pupils can approach tasks that develop their deeper understanding of mathematics.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve pupils' achievement, by:
  - ensuring that additional adults are deployed effectively in teaching and learning activities so that more pupils make better progress
  - ensuring that all teaching and learning provides pupils, including the most able, with opportunities to reach the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics
  - developing pupils' mathematical skills to help them problem solve so that more pupils are able to reach the higher standard of attainment.
- Improve leadership and management, by:
  - developing the role of subject leaders so that they contribute positively to improving pupils' outcomes in all subject areas.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Leaders' drive and commitment is ensuring that outcomes for pupils are good and improving. They firmly set high expectations and ensure that effective systems are in place so that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is at least good across the school. The strong vision and leadership provides an effective culture for raising standards across the school.
- The partnership between the school and the sponsoring academy trust is effective. It has ensured increased challenge and raised expectations in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Leaders, including governors, and teachers benefit from effective professional development and training. This ensures that pupils make good progress in mathematics and English in particular across the school.
- Schools work closely across the trust. Staff work collaboratively to check the quality of pupils' work and the accuracy of assessments. Expert knowledge and experience from partnership leaders has provided support to school leaders during a time of significant staff changes. This has ensured that the school has remained good throughout a challenging period.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They rightly identified weaknesses in the achievement of pupils in key stage 1 in 2016. Actions to address underachievement have led to good and better outcomes for current pupils.
- Staff say they receive very good support from leaders to help them develop and improve their teaching practice. Newly qualified staff value the support and training they receive from mentors.
- The few parents who responded to Ofsted's online parent questionnaire, Parent View, are mostly positive about the leadership of the school. Most parents engage well with school activities and value the support they receive. One parent commented, 'I am very impressed with school leaders who take time to listen to parents and act on helpful suggestions.'
- There are strong systems and processes in place to oversee pupils' progress and allocate additional support for pupils who need it. Regular monitoring enables leaders to have a good insight into the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Leaders' monitoring and evaluating demonstrate rigour. Where there is any underperformance, this is swiftly identified and addressed.
- The school's themed curriculum aims to deepen pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. Pupils are learning to develop skills which can be used across all areas of the curriculum. While learning about Brazil, for example, pupils in Year 1 are provided with opportunities to link geography and history skills while they study the flamboyant culture and traditions of carnival, music and dancing.
- Leaders promote spiritual, moral, cultural and social development well through enrichment activities that pupils enjoy. For example, children in Reception enjoy a visit to the seaside and welcome visitors such as dentists and optometrists to the school. Pupils in key stage 2 take part in trips throughout the school year which enhance their knowledge and provide them with a range of experiences. Pupils learn about different

faiths and are taught at a young age to respect others.

- The school's display of fundamental British values recognises historical and present day London. For example, pupils' art work celebrates famous London landmarks and the reconstruction of the city after the Great Fire. Pupils learn about tolerance, respect, democracy, and the various aspects of being a good citizen of modern Britain. Pupils in Year 6 take part in a whole day citizenship course in preparation for their next stage of education.
- Leaders allocate funding for disadvantaged pupils effectively. Small group support and catch up programmes focus on their individual needs, ensuring that disadvantaged pupils, including the most able, achieve in line with other pupils nationally.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making good progress from their different starting points. Funding is used for training for staff. This enables teachers to match support precisely to the wide range of needs of individual pupils.
- Leaders ensure that sport premium funding is used effectively to support physical education (PE). The school's 'Healthy Life Style' award is testament to the emphasis leaders place on ensuring pupils understand what they need to do to keep healthy. The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular clubs such as judo, table tennis and gymnastics. Pupils say they enjoy the PE and sports offered, which is evidenced by increased participation.
- Leaders recognise that pupils, particularly the most able, need to achieve at the higher levels in English and mathematics. Leaders are supporting teachers to develop the skills needed to ensure that pupils achieve at the higher levels in mathematics by developing pupils' problem-solving skills. Additionally, leaders have recognised that not all teachers provide pupils with opportunities to make accelerated progress in all lessons. Leaders have already taken action and have rightly made this a key priority for the school to ensure improved pupil outcomes.
- The school provides its pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum. Subject leaders are new in their roles and their action plans identify specific areas for improvement. However, this work is in its early stages and therefore they are not yet having an impact on improving outcomes for pupils. Leaders, including the trust, rightly recognise that this is a priority and are supporting middle leaders in their roles.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors are effective. They are dedicated and committed to improving the lives of the pupils. They have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school's performance.
- The trustees and governors check closely on all aspects of the leadership and management of the school and provide effective challenge. Governors' minutes show that they hold school leaders to account for the impact of additional spending on the progress pupils make.
- Governors are regular visitors to the school and offer support to leaders. Governors bring valuable skills which help to support and challenge leaders. School leaders ensure that the governors are informed about new initiatives and governors' visits focus carefully on specific aspects related to the school improvement priorities, particularly

pupil progress information and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

- The school makes effective use of resources provided centrally by the trust. Leaders and teachers across the trust share best practice to develop teaching and leadership skills. This has meant that school leaders are very well supported to manage staff changes and absences, while ensuring pupils continue to receive a good standard of education.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities with regard to safeguarding pupils and child protection.
- The governing body ensures the school carries out appropriate checks on adults appointed to work at the school. Leaders ensure that staff undertake regular training so that their knowledge of child protection procedures is up to date.
- Senior leaders have worked successfully to improve pupils' attendance and persistent absenteeism for a small number of pupils. Procedures for ensuring good attendance are rigorous and non-attendance is followed up immediately through the school's 'attendance alert' forms. Attendance is in line with the national averages.
- The school's processes for child protection are effective. Monitoring systems are robust and the school provides excellent pastoral care for vulnerable pupils and families. Leaders are meticulous in the monitoring and following up of concerns swiftly.
- Pupils say they feel safe at school. Parents who responded to questionnaires agree that pupils are safe at school.
- Pupils know how to stay safe in and around school and when using the internet. Pupils are clear that they have someone to speak to if they are unhappy.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Pupils produce work that is appropriate to their age and stage of development across all year groups. Pupils present their work well and the quality of handwriting is of a high standard. The work in pupils' books shows that pupils make good progress throughout the school in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The majority of parents who responded to the Ofsted online parent questionnaire, Parent View, say their children enjoy school and make good progress. One parent commented, 'I feel that my daughter is making great strides within Water Lane due to the fun, interesting and engaging way she is taught.'
- Relationships between staff and pupils are good. Pupils work well together and demonstrate respect for each other and adults. Teachers ensure that pupils understand tasks before they start them. Pupils listen carefully to instructions and engage in activities well. Learning time is maximised because pupils know what they are doing from the start.
- The quality of teaching of subjects other than mathematics and English is good. Pupils learn in a practical fun way. Science lessons provide pupils with valuable skills. Pupils learn effectively how to approach investigations. In Year 3 pupils applied a systematic

approach for testing the properties of rocks, skilfully modelled by the teacher. In Year 4, pupils were recording their findings while testing the impact of distance on sound using the outside space. In both lessons pupils of all abilities worked collaboratively and sensibly when carrying out the investigations, ensuring they could arrive at an appropriate conclusion.

- There has been a strong focus on the teaching and learning of grammar, punctuation and spelling. This is evident in pupils' work where they apply skills very well in writing activities. As a result, the dip in writing in key stage 1 and grammar, punctuation and spelling in 2016 has been addressed effectively. High-quality examples of writing in pupils' work can be seen in Reception through to Year 6.
- The disappointing results at the end of Year 2 in 2016 identified weaknesses in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. This has now been securely addressed and pupils' work demonstrates accelerated progress with good outcomes in key stage 1. Inspiring and good-quality teaching and learning in Year 3 is ensuring that these pupils are now making the good progress they should.
- The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) is secure across the school. All pupils of varying abilities, including disadvantaged and disadvantaged most-able pupils, are supported to make good progress.
- Inspectors listened to readers from Reception to Year 6. All pupils said they loved reading and demonstrated a high level of confidence and accuracy. Pupils listened to across the school are reading well, using fluency and expression. Children heard reading in Reception are confident and exceptionally proficient readers, in some cases reading at a level one year above that typical for their age group.
- Support for disadvantaged pupils, including the most able, is effective. Small-group focused support from teachers and additional adults ensures that pupils make good progress in line with other pupils nationally.
- The leader of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities provides a wide range of support and training to teachers and additional adults who support these pupils. The impact of their work is routinely monitored and evaluated. This support has proven to be very effective and consequently, pupils make good progress from their different starting points.
- Teachers are secure in their teaching of reasoning and fluency in mathematics. Leaders recognise that teachers need to further develop pupils' skills so that they are able to identify appropriate strategies to solve mathematical problems to enable more pupils to reach the higher standards.
- Teachers provide challenge to pupils in various ways. All teachers follow the school's policy for communicating the next steps to pupils. As a result of this, pupils, including the most able, make good progress. Additionally, they are able to select their own level of challenge in lessons. However, not all teachers apply the same urgency in their teaching and learning to ensure that pupils make accelerated progress, enabling them to achieve at the higher levels in English and mathematics.
- Additional adults support pupils well, especially those who are vulnerable in small-group focused activities. However, teachers do not always deploy them effectively in whole-class teaching to support all pupils to make better progress.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils enjoy the responsibilities of being on the school council and the role of play leader. These responsibilities prepare pupils well for their next stage in education.
- Pupils know how to stay safe when using the internet and they can give examples of the type of scenarios to look out for. Pupils are confident with the school's fire procedures and are taught about safety when meeting people they do not know through 'Stranger Danger'.
- Displays around the school celebrate pupils' exceptionally good art work. Pupils engage wholeheartedly in homework projects, creating excellent examples of design and technology which are displayed with pride throughout the school.
- Good attendance is celebrated in the school's communal areas and in the schools' newsletters. Pupils told inspectors they enjoy coming to school. Support for some vulnerable pupils has meant that attendance has improved for these pupils.
- Leaders and teachers ensure that there are opportunities for parents to engage with children in school at different times of the year. The Father's Day breakfast was particularly well supported on the second day of the inspection.
- Assemblies encourage pupils to reflect on their own personal talents and potential. The theme of meeting new challenges, through the teaching of a Mauri song, meant that pupils had to listen carefully to focus on the new language, which they did well.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are polite and courteous and move sensibly around the school. Pupils told inspectors that they really like the online reward system.
- Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy school. Pupils demonstrated good attitudes to learning in lessons and other times of the day. Low-level disruption is rare. Leaders have set high expectations of behaviour for all pupils, who respond well.
- Incidents of poor behaviour are recorded and monitored. There have been no recent serious incidents recorded. Pupils take part in anti-bullying week and say that bullying rarely happens. If it does they are confident adults will deal with it effectively.

## Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In 2016, although pupils' attainment was broadly in line with national figures, some pupils did not make enough progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1. Leaders have addressed this and there is strong evidence to demonstrate that these pupils, currently in Year 3, and pupils in key stage 1 are now making good progress.
- Achievement of pupils in key stage 2 was generally good at the end of 2016. A strong focus on writing has ensured a significant improvement in the achievement of writing

and also in the application of grammar, punctuation and spelling.

- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standards in phonics was in line with national expectation in 2016. Disadvantaged pupils achieved slightly below this. An increase in carefully structured support ensures that these pupils are now making good progress from their different starting points. Current assessment information indicates that outcomes in phonics for all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are set to exceed national figures in Years 1 and 2.
- Funding ensures that precisely focused support ensures that disadvantaged pupils are making good progress and are generally attaining in line with other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders and teachers ensure that funding is used effectively to provide training for adults who support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Adults are given the necessary information and skills to support pupils with their wide range of needs. Consequently, pupils make good progress from their different starting points in all areas of the curriculum.
- Outcomes for the most able pupils, including the disadvantaged most-able, are improving. Leaders' actions to ensure pupils have more opportunities to achieve at the higher standards are beginning to have an impact. Leaders have rightly ensured that this is a priority for the school.
- Outcomes for maths are good; however, leaders and teachers recognise that pupils need to develop strategies for solving problems to develop their deeper knowledge and understanding of mathematical concepts.
- Pupils achieve well in subjects such as science, art and design and technology. Leaders are rightly focusing on improving the work of subject leaders to ensure that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is consistently good and better in all subject areas.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- The leader of the early years is highly committed to ensuring that learning focuses on meeting the children's social and emotional needs on entering Reception. The school's 'school readiness', which runs throughout the summer term, is a valuable tool for gathering information from parents about the new starters. This ensures that children get off to a good start because their learning is well planned to meet their needs.
- Each child is tracked carefully and learning is adapted to ensure that children develop essential social skills quickly. Children very soon settle, learn routines and understand teachers' expectations. They behave exceptionally well, even when working away from adults. Children's work, and the school's assessment information, demonstrates that children make accelerated progress from their starting points.
- Children demonstrate increased confidence. They are able to play together constructively, take turns and share toys.
- The themed curriculum provides children with a range of different learning opportunities. For example, the 'under the sea' theme in Reception inspired children to write facts about coral and crabs. Boys engaged positively in the reading corner,



discussing large colourful photographs naming the sea creatures of all shapes and sizes. Children experienced the taste of fish, experimented with colour mixing for their fish paintings and fished for numbers to help their understanding of number bonds. Children were inspired to gain new knowledge.

- Children have a good grasp of phonics understanding, evidenced in their reading and writing. Communication and language is a focus throughout the year and pupils make accelerated progress as a result.
- Children's writing is of an exceptionally high standard. Progress can be seen in all children's work. Children write sentences and many write at length. In many instances, children choose to write and work shows that children are given opportunities to write for many different purposes.
- Early intervention has had a positive impact on all children. This is particularly so for those who are vulnerable, including pupils who are both disadvantaged and who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. These children make good progress from their starting points because of the close tracking of their progress and the careful planning of learning to meet their individual needs.
- Teaching and learning is planned to give children a wide range of experiences. Children enjoy the well-resourced outside area which caters for every area of learning. Children grow their own vegetables and are keen to show off their sunflowers and discuss which is the tallest. They have ample space to climb, explore, and use natural resources to construct towers and play imaginatively. Children, particularly the disadvantaged, thrive in this environment. All children, including those who are disadvantaged, achieve a good level of development which is above that of other pupils nationally.
- Parents value the school's system for recording and sharing children's progress information. One parent commented that it gave them, 'a real window into the classroom'.
- Adults are skilful at supporting children, in small group activities, to catch up and make good progress. However, during more unstructured activities they are not always deployed well enough to ensure that children make as much progress as they could.
- Children are looked after, happy and safe in the early years. They are very well prepared for the next stage of education.

## School details

Unique reference number	141194
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10031337

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	179
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Iain Macleod
Head of School	Charmaine Ward
Telephone number	01279 417410
Website	<a href="http://www.waterlaneprimary.co.uk">www.waterlaneprimary.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@waterlane.essex.sch.uk">admin@waterlane.essex.sch.uk</a>
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 joined REAch2 Academy Trust in September 2014.
- The majority of the pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language and who are from minority ethnic backgrounds is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for additional pupil premium funding is above 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 set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed teaching and learning across all classes.
- Some observations of learning were carried out jointly with senior leaders.
- The inspection team held meetings with governors, and school staff, including senior and middle leaders.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and looked at pupils' work, including information on pupils' attainment and progress and records of behaviour and safety. They also looked at the monitoring of teaching and the management of teachers' performance, minutes of governing body meetings, safeguarding documents and the school's website.
- Discussions were held with pupils about their learning and subjects they particularly enjoyed at school.
- Policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils were examined, including mandatory checks made regarding the recruitment of new staff.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils read and talked to them about the books they enjoy.
- The lead inspector took account of the 23 responses to the online parental questionnaire, Parent View, and 16 text responses from parents.

## Inspection team

Cindy Impey, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

James Dyke

Ofsted Inspector

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