

Woodlands Primary Academy

Church Walk, Bradwell, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk NR31 8QQ

Inspection dates

27–28 June 2017

| Overall effectiveness | Good |
|----------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Good |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Good |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Good |
| Outcomes for pupils | Good |
| Early years provision | Good |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Requires improvement |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Woodlands Primary Academy is a rapidly improving school. The interim headteacher provides strong leadership, ably supported by his leadership team and the academy trust.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have been focused on high impact actions to improve the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils.
- The academy trust provides very effective support in overseeing key aspects and high-quality support for school improvement.
- Leaders have tackled previous under-performance. They hold teachers to account through performance management and effective monitoring of teaching and learning so that teachers continue to develop effective practice. Middle leaders are new to their roles and their impact is yet to be fully felt.
- High expectations have been set for what pupils should achieve in lessons. Pupils understand what they are learning, but tasks are not always adapted as their learning needs change to ensure that they achieve the best possible outcomes.
- The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum which gives pupils opportunities to write for a range of 'audiences and purposes' through their topic themes.
- There is a step-by-step approach to teaching a range of mathematical concepts, but pupils do not always have sufficient opportunities to apply their mathematical knowledge to problem solving and develop greater depths in their reasoning skills.
- The behaviour of pupils has improved. There are clear expectations and consequences for poor behaviour. Pupils have responded to this and generally show positive attitudes to learning, particularly when lessons are matched to their needs.
- Pupils enjoy school and say that they feel safe. They are taught to respect and treat each other equally within an inclusive environment.
- In the early years, children are taught well and make a good start to their school life. Outcomes for current pupils are improving rapidly as historic underachievement is being addressed and leaders have higher expectations.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. The differences in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally as they move up through the school are diminishing.
- Leaders are working hard to raise the profile of the school and work closely with families. Many parents recognise the improvements that have already been made.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the impact of middle leaders in contributing to school improvement by:
 - developing their role in monitoring and evaluating so that next steps for improvement are clearly identified
 - holding middle leaders to account for their identified responsibilities for school improvement.
- Improve the use of assessment so that tasks are consistently modified and adjusted, as required, to enable all pupils to achieve the best possible outcomes.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The interim headteacher provides strong leadership and, with support from the academy trust, has been instrumental in the school improving rapidly since the last inspection. Self-evaluation by leaders provides an accurate, honest and realistic view of the school. Through this process leaders have identified key school priorities for the school's development and improvement plan.
- Following his appointment, the interim headteacher developed a rapid improvement plan for the interim period, which has been tightly focused on high-impact actions for school improvement. The newly formed leadership team is working well together and leaders have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
- Leaders have been well supported by the trust in improving standards within the school, but also by the opportunities provided to share and develop good practice through collaboration between the academies within the trust.
- Leaders have been proactive in tackling under-performance and holding teachers to account through pupil progress meetings and performance management. They have recently improved the monitoring systems for teaching and learning, so that areas for improvement are clearly identified and followed through.
- Middle leaders are new to their roles and responsibilities, so are gaining experience as they are being supported in identifying key actions related to their areas of responsibilities and being able to demonstrate the impact of their actions. However, they show good capacity to continue to improve the school even further.
- Pupils access a broad and balanced curriculum. Planning is linked to skills so that teachers can assess pupils' learning and progress in a range of subjects against age-appropriate criteria. Pupils value enrichment activities through educational visits and the outdoor environment. Pupils take part in a range of events with other academies within the trust. For example, the winners of the recent 'writers and reciters' competition were excited to have the opportunity to record their recitals at a recording studio in London. However, the curriculum does not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills to tasks in other subjects, such as science and design technology.
- The use of pupil premium funding is effective. Barriers to learning are identified with potential links made to attendance and behaviour. As a result, the differences between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils, including the most able, and other pupils nationally are diminishing as they move up through the school.
- The special educational needs coordinator is new to the role, but is gaining a growing understanding of the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to ensure that their needs are being met. The youngest pupils benefit from speech and language therapy to develop their communication skills. In other interventions, such as in mathematics, pupils do not always have access to resources to support them in developing their understanding. The special educational needs coordinator is developing positive relationships with parents, and pupils who have

social and emotional needs are well supported so that they are able to fully engage in lessons.

- Effective use is made of the extra funding to promote participation in sport and physical education (PE) and this is a real strength within the school. The school employs a full-time PE leader who shows great commitment to ensuring high levels of participation in a wide range of sports, both at lunchtime and through extra-curricular activities. The school has achieved high levels of success in competition including being recognised as the Norfolk Sports School of the Year.
- Equality and diversity are promoted through religious education lessons and assembly themes. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their feelings, to learn about and respect people from different faith groups and cultures. The school prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They gain a good introduction to the importance of principles, such as the rule of law and democratic processes, through holding their own school council elections and carrying out numerous roles of responsibility in school.
- Leaders are working hard to develop positive relationships with parents by introducing an 'open door' policy and setting up a parents' forum. This is providing a platform to address any concerns and promote the message that leaders are approachable.
- Parents recognise that the leadership and management of the school has improved under the leadership of the interim headteacher. One parent stated that, 'Communication has improved between the school and parents so that they are made aware of changes and development within the school.'

Governance of the school

- The academy trust provides overall governance of the academies within the trust, including Woodlands Primary Academy. The academy trust has been effective in overseeing finance and human resources.
- The local governing body includes representatives from the school community, local community, regional businesses and organisations. It is chaired by the director of standards for the academy trust, who is supporting its development. He also works alongside leaders to evaluate teaching and learning and challenge outcomes for pupils in order to drive school improvement.
- Governors receive a half-termly academic report from the interim headteacher, which ensures that they are meeting all their statutory duties, including safeguarding. Leaders have been both supported and challenged in tackling underperformance.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safer recruitment procedures are robust. Appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that adults employed are suitable to work with pupils.
- Leaders have improved record keeping, which supports them in identifying potentially vulnerable pupils so that their needs are appropriately met.

- Staff receive regular safeguarding training, including in the Prevent duty, which highlights how staff can protect pupils from radicalisation and extremism.
- Leaders and governors responsible for safeguarding work together, undertaking regular audits and health and safety walks so that any issues are quickly addressed and the school continues to have effective arrangements for all aspects of safeguarding.
- Weekly bulletins provide regular safeguarding updates and create a culture within the school that safeguarding is of the highest priority.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is now good and continues to improve and develop as teachers share their practice.
- Teachers plan effectively together across year groups, using assessment criteria to support them in identifying pupils' next steps. Teachers make clear their explanations so that pupils understand what they are learning and what they need to do to be successful.
- When expectations are high, pupils achieve well. However, tasks are not always adapted as the needs of learners change. Sometimes pupils are not given more challenging tasks quickly enough, especially the most able pupils. Equally, teachers do not always identify those pupils who need additional input, and support and learning slows when teachers do not identify the pupils who need more help.
- Teachers are increasingly using open-ended questioning to support their assessments and challenge pupils' thinking, but sometimes opportunities to address misconceptions are missed.
- Leaders have set higher expectations both in the quality and quantity of work overall. This is particularly evident in writing tasks, where the same expectations apply when pupils are writing across a range of subjects. Pupils enjoy regular extended writing opportunities, particularly when tasks are linked to their topic theme or class book. For example, Year 2 pupils described how they created their own world and characters linked to 'The Chronicles of Narnia'. Pupils are becoming increasingly skilled in applying their knowledge of grammar, punctuation and spelling to their writing and take pride in presenting their work well.
- In mathematics, leaders have introduced a framework which provides a step-by-step approach to teaching a range of mathematical concepts. This is supporting teachers when planning and developing their subject knowledge. However, pupils do not always have sufficient opportunity to explain their reasoning by using and applying their mathematical knowledge and skills in order to develop greater depth in their understanding.
- The teaching of phonics is effective and pupils respond positively to the school's approach. Pupils enjoy reading both at home and at school, making good use of their phonics skills to support them.
- Teaching assistants have the skills and knowledge to effectively lead small group

sessions, but they are not always used as effectively when working alongside the teacher with larger groups.

- Home learning provides opportunities for pupils to practise their basic skills as well as to be involved in projects which they enjoy. Pupils have responded very positively to the introduction of 'times tables rock stars'; an online tool to engage them in learning their times tables by competing for the best scores with other pupils both within the school and in other schools.
- Annual reports provide parents with information regarding their child's attainment and progress, but they would like more information on how they could support their child at home.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils describe their school as an inclusive environment where 'children who have disabilities are included and treated equally'. Typically, in a personal, social, health and education lesson, pupils were engaged in creating mimes to show what it means to be a friend and how differences can be resolved. They were very reflective and encouraged to think about their own personal relationships with friends.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They say they can approach an adult if they have a problem knowing that it will be quickly resolved. They have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying and learn about how to keep themselves safe and healthy.
- The school supports pupils in understanding how to be safe when using the internet.
- Attendance is well managed and improving towards the national averages as a result of the school's close work with families and pastoral support to reduce persistent absence, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.
- The pastoral team tracks the behaviour of pupils and ensures that they are fully supported, so that they learn strategies to control their behaviour.
- Pupils value the opportunity to take on additional roles and responsibilities such as becoming prefects, anti-bullying ambassadors, play makers and caring crusaders, and as members of the school council.
- The breakfast club provides pupils with a nutritious start to the school day.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are polite and happy, and enjoy learning in school.
- The school is a calm and ordered environment. Pupils move sensibly around the school and enjoy socialising with each other at breaktimes and lunchtimes, when they are proud to be chosen to sit on the 'top table' for exemplary behaviour.

- Leaders have set higher expectations for behaviour and the presentation of work. Pupils have responded to this by taking greater pride in their work.
- The structured approach to behaviour management supports pupils in understanding the rules and that there are consequences for poor behaviour. There has been a significant improvement in behaviour recently and pupils recognise that sanctions are applied fairly as rules are more reasonable and clear.
- Pupils generally show positive attitudes to learning by responding quickly to instructions and remaining attentive. Low-level disruption in lessons is rare, but sometimes pupils are passive and less engaged when lessons are not as well matched to their needs, which impacts on their progress.
- There is a clear system for recording, tracking and reporting bullying, racism and other behaviour incidents to governors, so that they can hold leaders to account for behaviour within the school.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Children in the early years make good progress from their starting points and their attainment at the end of 2017 is above the national average. They are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Good teaching of phonics has ensured that the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check has been improving over the past four years and is above average. Pupils generally read widely, with fluency and comprehension that is appropriate to their age.
- At the end of key stage 1, there has been a further improvement in outcomes in writing and mathematics, and in the number of pupils attaining greater depth in reading.
- Historically, at the end of key stage 2, attainment was below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Higher expectations of leaders and improvements to teaching, learning and assessment have had an impact. The school's own assessment information shows that the percentage of pupils attaining age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics combined is significantly higher than 2016 and above average.
- Leaders and governors track the progress of pupils from their starting points. There are no differences between the attainment of boys and girls throughout the school, including pupils with higher prior attainment. As they move through the school, the differences between the attainment and outcomes of disadvantaged pupils, including the most able, and other pupils nationally are diminishing. Teachers are held to account in regular pupil progress meetings. Throughout the school, current pupils are typically making strong progress from their different starting points. The work in pupils' books shows accelerated progress in writing, particularly more recently, as pupils are developing and using their grammar, punctuation and spelling skills whenever they are writing across a range of subjects.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress as a result of well-targeted intervention support including from teaching assistants.

Early years provision

Good

- The provision in the early years has improved and is now good. Leaders have high expectations and have been well supported by working alongside external advisors from the trust and by visiting other settings.
- Children start school with levels of knowledge and skills similar to those found in most children of their age. Teachers plan together effectively, so that children are well supported in developing their basic skills and make good progress from their starting points.
- As a result, there has been a rapid improvement in the numbers of children achieving a good level of development by the end of their time in early years. Support for disadvantaged children is well targeted and gives them a positive start to school.
- Children are well prepared to make the transition into Year 1 by working more formally for part of the day during the summer term. They demonstrated this when independently writing sentences about pirates, using the phonics wall to find tricky words and their phonics knowledge.
- Activities are purposeful and linked to the interests of the children, who are highly engaged in choosing their learning. There is a good balance between work that is led by the teacher and opportunities for children to explore ideas themselves and follow their interests. Children work well together, taking turns and sharing. Children listen to each other's ideas when playing and working. They show resilience and perseverance in completing tasks.
- There are a range of activities in the outside area, but this needs further development to maximise learning opportunities.
- Children thrive in the early years as a result of the caring relationships they have with adults. Children behave well, and they respect adults, follow the rules and are kind to each other. Leaders ensure that all safeguarding and welfare requirements are met.
- Effective support is provided by adults when leading activities and modelling language. However, adults do not always question, or intervene, sufficiently to provide support and additional challenge and maximise learning opportunities.
- Adults know the children well. They make regular assessments which parents can access and so be involved in their child's learning journey. Adults use these assessments to modify activities and teaching to meet the children's changing needs and interests.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 139580 |
| Local authority | Norfolk |
| Inspection number | 10031358 |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 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 | 408 |
| Appropriate authority | Academy trust |
| Chair | Mark Mumby |
| Headteacher | Andrew Livingstone (interim headteacher) |
| Telephone number | 01493 665 314 |
| Website | www.woodlands.norfolk.sch.uk/ |
| Email address | office@woodlands.norfolk.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 9–10 June 2015 |

Information about this school

- Woodlands Primary Academy is a larger-than-average-sized primary school. The predecessor school, called Woodlands Primary School, became a sponsor-led academy in July 2013. This first arrangement was dissolved and the academy became part of the Creative Education Trust in March 2015.
- There have been a significant number of staff changes over the past year, including senior leaders. There is currently an interim headteacher in place and an acting assistant headteacher.
- 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 including the scheme of delegation.
- The school offers a breakfast club. There is a privately-run nursery on the school site. This is inspected and reported on separately.

- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from other ethnic backgrounds and who speak English as an additional language is much lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly lower than that found in most schools.
- A smaller-than-average proportion of pupils are disadvantaged and supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed pupils' learning in all classrooms, including observations carried out jointly with the interim headteacher and acting assistant headteacher. In addition, inspectors made short visits to observe learning at other times, to observe small groups of pupils being taught and to review the teaching of phonics and the broader curriculum, including how the school promotes aspects of spiritual, moral social and cultural development and British values. One inspector reviewed the provision for pupils attending the school's breakfast club.
- The inspectors looked at pupils' work from all year groups in different subjects, both within lessons and through a joint work scrutiny with leaders, to see what progress they make and how well the school's marking policy is being applied.
- Meetings were held with pupils to discuss their learning and gather their views about the school, behaviour and safety. The inspectors listened to pupils read in Years 1, 2 and 6, and discussed their reading with them.
- Meetings were held with the interim headteacher, acting assistant headteacher and other members of staff with leadership responsibility. Discussions were had with the director of education and director of standards representing the academy trust.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documents including: the school's self-evaluation summary; the academy development and improvement plan; the rapid improvement action plan; information about pupils' learning and progress; planning and monitoring documents; and the school's own checks on the quality of teaching.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding policies and procedures, including records of checks on the suitability of staff and adults, and behaviour and attendance records
- Inspectors took account of the 67 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, the school's evaluation of its recent survey for parents and carers, and other communication received, including speaking to parents and carers at the start of the second day of the inspection. In addition, inspectors took account of the 37 responses to a questionnaire for members of staff and 25 responses to a questionnaire for pupils.

Inspection team

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|-----------------------------------|------------------|
| Pauline MacMillan, lead inspector | Ofsted Inspector |
| Ollie Millington | Ofsted Inspector |
| Richard Griffiths | Ofsted Inspector |

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