

William de Yaxley Church of England Academy

Landsdowne Road, Yaxley, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire PE7 3JL

Inspection dates

11–12 October 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	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

- Standards at William de Yaxley are not yet good. Despite senior leaders' determination to improve the school rapidly, and their success at eradicating inadequate teaching, there remain inconsistencies.
- Achievement in mathematics is particularly low. Attainment in 2016 was significantly below the national average, leaving Year 6 pupils at a disadvantage on entry to secondary school.
- Teachers do not use assessment information precisely enough to identify when specific groups of pupils are not making rapid enough progress.
- Inaccurate assessment by some teachers means that pupils do not have learning activities matched accurately to their needs. Where this occurs, pupils are not making as much progress as they could.
- Pupils do not have regular opportunities, outside of English, to practise and develop their writing skills. For some pupils, this means that they do not make rapid enough progress to diminish the difference between their attainment and that of their peers nationally.
- Despite most pupils enjoying school and attending well, some are disadvantaged by low attendance. The school's overall attendance is below average.

The school has the following strengths

- Governors and leaders share a collective passion to raise standards and ensure that pupils at William de Yaxley achieve all they can.
- A shared ambition and vision for the school mean that significant improvements have been made to the quality of the curriculum and pupils' attitudes and behaviour.
- Staff speak highly of leaders, including the wider trust, and are proud to work at the school. They form a strong team who are dedicated to continuous improvement.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a high priority. Pupils are happy and safe and enjoy going to school.
- Leaders' efforts to improve pupils' reading, spelling, punctuation and grammar skills have been particularly effective.
- Middle leaders are knowledgeable and take an active role in school development. They know what the school does well and how to sort out the weaknesses.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes rapidly by:
 - monitoring the progress of specific groups of pupils precisely to ensure that, where the gaps in their learning are not closing quickly enough, timely action can be taken
 - tackling the inconsistencies in pupils' progress and attainment swiftly in mathematics, particularly in the development of their calculation skills
 - providing good opportunities for pupils to practise their creative writing skills in a variety of contexts across subjects.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - making sure that the school's assessment and feedback system is used consistently by all teachers, so that the rapid progress seen by some pupils is replicated across the school
 - ensuring that teaching is closely matched to the abilities of different groups of pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- This is an improving school. Parents, pupils and governors articulate clearly the positive changes that have been brought about by the current leadership team and agree that the school, which had many weaknesses on becoming a new school, is now considerably better.
- Both the executive headteacher and the head of school have the unwavering support of staff, who willingly share their vision and relentless push for improvement. Due to this, the school is now a harmonious environment where pupils feel safe and are nurtured and where the vast majority make at least steady progress year on year.
- Senior leaders have successfully tackled inadequate teaching and are precise in their target-setting and monitoring of teaching across the school. While there remain some inconsistencies, their approach has led to a much-improved quality of teaching and learning over time.
- Support from the wider trust is timely and has developed middle leaders' skills and confidence. Those responsible for specific subjects regularly check planning, monitor teaching, learning and assessment and produce focused action plans and reports.
- Diagnostic reviews enable established middle leaders to quickly respond to emerging needs and refocus action plans to address weaknesses. Their role contributes positively to the improvements to date in teaching and the use of assessment and to pupils' improving rates of progress.
- Leaders ensure that the curriculum is exciting and sparks pupils' interests. A variety of trips and practical activities bring learning to life for the pupils at William de Yaxley. For example, pupils in Year 4 were learning how to write a news report and were given opportunities to interview a local journalist to find out, first-hand, the main features for their writing. Following this, pupils were motivated and keen to learn. They applied their new skills quickly, resulting in most making rapid progress.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is expertly promoted. Sitting alongside the school's Christian values and aligning with the promotion of fundamental British values, pupils learn to be tolerant, value equality, celebrate differences and develop a strong understanding of right and wrong. Pupils are well prepared to become productive members of society.
- The physical education and sport premium funding has been used effectively to provide pupils with a wide range of sporting activities, both during and after school. Consequently, pupils are enthusiastic, regularly participate in physical activity and are aware of how to follow a healthy lifestyle.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are fully integrated into school life and the provision to meet their needs has considerably improved. Leaders use special educational needs funding well to provide a range of interventions and resources to help pupils improve their reading, writing and mathematics skills. However, these interventions are not always evaluated thoroughly to check they are having a clear impact on pupils' progress.
- Additional government funding to support disadvantaged pupils is used thoughtfully to

ensure that they are able to access all of the opportunities on offer at the school. This is having a positive impact on pupils' progress, but it is not yet rapid enough to significantly diminish the differences in their attainment.

- The gap in some pupils' learning is not narrowing quickly enough. Where this is the case, pupils are leaving for secondary school without the writing and mathematical skills they should have.

Governance of the school

- The governing body has considerably developed its strategic role since the school became an academy. It takes an active role in planning and monitoring the effectiveness of the school and accurately identifies the next steps to secure improvement.
- Governors are knowledgeable about the school and know its strengths and weaknesses. They challenge and hold leaders to account for pupils' performance. Specifically, governors know the need to accelerate the rate of progress for those pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding so that the difference in attainment between them and their peers nationally can be reduced further.
- Governors and the wider trust regularly monitor that safeguarding arrangements are effective. Additional checks have been completed to ensure this, such as conducting a risk assessment around the open front access to the site and establishing robust systems to ensure pupils' safety when they arrive at and depart from school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have established a caring ethos, with pupils' safety and welfare at its heart.
- All staff are highly vigilant and clear on what they have to do if they have a concern about any child. As one member of staff described the school's approach: 'Safeguarding at William de Yaxley is like a stick of rock. No matter where you break it, pupils' welfare flows through the middle, which is the ethos.' This view is supported by others.
- Adults responsible for child protection keep detailed records, which allows them to carefully monitor those pupils most at risk. Referrals to social care and other professional services are thorough and timely. This ensures that pupils and their families receive the support they need quickly.
- Senior leaders ensure that all adults working with children are kept up to date with training on how to keep children safe and the signs of potential harm. As a result, all staff are knowledgeable and alert to potential risks and view child protection as 'everyone's responsibility'.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The stronger practice seen in some classes is not consistently evident in others. When inconsistencies occur, pupils are not clear what they are learning. This absence of clarity from the teachers means that lessons lack the pace and enthusiasm that pupils require to keep their learning moving at a good rate.
- Pupils are not making rapid enough progress in mathematics, particularly in lower key stage 2. Therefore, as pupils move through the school, some are not secure enough in their knowledge to move onto harder concepts. For example, pupils in Year 4 were not confident in adding and subtracting three-digit numbers using written methods, so were still working on age-appropriate skills.
- Inspectors identified occasions when teachers' assessment of pupils' work had not been accurate. Where this was the case, subsequent learning activities were not accurately matched to pupils' ability. Therefore, progress for pupils was hindered. For example, inspectors saw most-able pupils repeating calculations they had already demonstrated they were able to do.
- Pupils understand and can explain how teachers' feedback improves their learning. However, inspection evidence shows that the feedback sometimes lacks precision. When this is the case, teachers are slow in identifying specific aspects of learning that pupils, and groups of pupils, are struggling with. Consequently, additional support is not timely.
- Work in books shows that pupils work hard and produce high-quality work across a range of subjects, especially in their English and mathematics books. The introduction of longer, creative writing pieces in the spring term of 2016/17 means that pupils are beginning to have a range of opportunities and contexts in which to practise their writing skills in different ways. However, not enough regular opportunities are available.
- Teachers use individual solutions to help pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities access their work, such as the use of laptops to facilitate their writing. Consequently, pupils can more readily access their learning and are making steady, and sometimes rapid, progress.
- Teachers ensure that teaching assistants are well prepared and know what pupils have to do in lessons. As a result, teaching assistants effectively support pupils' learning and progress.
- Leaders' work to improve the teaching of reading has been targeted and specific. Pupils are reading more widely and, from joining the school in Year 3, are being challenged to interpret and draw inference from texts. In 2017, this led to considerably more pupils reaching the expected standard at the end of Year 6.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school curriculum and collective worship help pupils understand how to value difference, develop and maintain positive relationships and treat others with respect. Pupils can articulate, and are shining examples of, the school mantra 'treat others how you wish to be treated yourself'.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are fully integrated and feel empowered by the support offered to them. For example, leaders have purchased specialised equipment to provide additional support to meet complex needs.
- The school's 'buddy' and 'prefect' system effectively promotes responsibility and awareness of others. Year 6 pupils apply to hold these positions and speak passionately about the benefit it has for younger pupils. Likewise, younger pupils describe their older peers as 'role models' and feel supported and valued by them.
- There are some exemplary aspects to the promotion of equality, diversity and opportunity, which result in a positive school culture. These include learning about different faiths, and charitable events such as 'The Samaritans Purse Lent Challenge'. Participation in inter-school debate competitions and performances in a number of musical festivals make a considerable contribution to pupils' personal development and their sense of achievement and self-esteem.
- Pupils feel safe and talk positively about the school and the adults in it. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including on the internet, and are confident that they have a number of people at school who they feel supported by, can trust and talk to if they have worries.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- School records demonstrate that significant improvements have been made since becoming an academy, particularly during the last academic year.
- The school environment is orderly and purposeful. All staff set high expectations for behaviour. Pupils behave well in lessons and when playing and moving around the school. Pupils are motivated to learn and are polite, respectful and embracing of differences.
- Pupils cooperate well during lessons and at playtimes. Leaders have improved the provision of games and equipment that pupils can use during their free time. The adults on duty are good role models of how to share and play collaboratively. Consequently, pupils stay positively involved in some form of activity throughout their free time.
- Pupils are supported effectively to understand the different types of bullying and their impact. Because of this, and staff rigour at following up pupils' concerns, incidents are rare and pupils are confident that adults respond quickly to any issues.
- The large majority of pupils attend well, or have specific medical reasons why they

miss school. However, attendance for the academic year 2016/17 was below the national average. Leaders have identified the need to work with the families most affected by low attendance to reduce persistent absence and ensure that, for those pupils where absence is a necessity, progress and attainment are not hampered.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Progress from key stage 1 to key stage 2 is not yet rapid enough for some pupils to diminish the difference between their attainment and that of their peers nationally. This is especially the case in mathematics. For example, some pupils do not have the mathematical calculation, reasoning and problem-solving skills that are typical of pupils of the same age.
- Although standards for the most able pupils are in line with the national average in writing, and were above average in 2016 for the proportion achieving greater depth, this is not the case for mathematics. These pupils could do better.
- In the best examples, pupils' books demonstrate rapid progress from their starting points in writing, especially in their spelling, punctuation and grammar skills. However, outcomes are not yet good because rates of progress are inconsistent. Too many pupils in Year 6 leave with standards that are below the national average.
- Leaders ensure that they thoroughly assess pupils at the point of entry to junior school. Inspection evidence shows that, from these accurate baseline assessments, the progress of most pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, is improving.
- Pupils who have not reached the expected standard in the phonics screening check before they join the school are given additional support to acquire the knowledge they need to sound out letters and sounds. More pupils are using this knowledge confidently to help with their reading. This approach, alongside a whole-school focus on improving reading, has led to the inadequate attainment in reading being eradicated. The unverified 2017 statutory assessment results show pupils' attainment in reading to be above the national average.
- Leaders and teachers ensure that the pupils receive a rich curriculum, with opportunities, for example, to conduct scientific experiments, to develop their sporting and creative skills and to learn about important historical events. Consequently, pupils achieve well in subjects other than just reading, writing and mathematics.

School details

Unique reference number	141211
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10036105

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy sponsor led
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	224
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Mrs Gayle Ludgate
Executive Headteacher	Mrs Kay Corley
Telephone number	01733 240 323
Website	www.williamdeyaxley@cambs.sch.uk
Email address	head@williamdeyaxley.cambs.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 a two-form-entry junior school, which is about the size of an average primary school.
- The school became a sponsored academy, part of the Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust, in November 2014.
- The predecessor school was William de Yaxley Church of England Aided Junior School, which was judged inadequate at its last inspection.
- The executive headteacher leads across two church junior schools, and the day-to-day running of William de Yaxley is the responsibility of the head of school.

- There have been changes to staffing since becoming an academy, including teaching staff and middle leadership roles.
- Most of the pupils come from White British backgrounds, with others coming from a range of minority ethnic groups.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is significantly below the national average.
- The proportion of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average, as is the proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible to receive the pupil premium funding is lower than the national average.
- The school did not meet the government's floor standards in 2016, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes at least twice, some jointly with the executive headteacher and the head of school. During these observations, inspectors looked at pupils' books and spoke with children to ascertain how they felt about school and the learning in lessons.
- Inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher, the head of school, the special educational needs coordinator, all middle leaders, the adult responsible for attendance, the school's designated lead for safeguarding, new members of staff and those with curriculum responsibilities. Members of the governing body and representatives from the trust met with inspectors. Discussions explored a wide range of aspects of leadership and management, pupils' achievement, teaching, learning and assessment, pupils' attendance and safeguarding arrangements.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of school documents, including the school's self-evaluation of its current performance and its plans for improvement, information relating to the safeguarding of children, the school's most recent information on the attainment and progress of pupils, minutes of meetings of the governing body and the school's most recent information relating to the attendance and welfare of pupils.
- The inspectors spoke informally with parents and took account of the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 36 parental texts, as well as the 15 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors did not receive any responses from the pupil questionnaire. However, pupils attended a formal meeting with inspectors and spoke informally to them at playtimes, lunchtimes and during lessons.

Inspection team

Kerry Grubb-Moore, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Mark Carter-Tufnell

Ofsted Inspector

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