

Waterman Primary Academy

The Boulevard, Rochford, Essex SS4 1QF

Inspection dates

16–17 January 2018

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	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- School leaders, the local advisory board and the trust are committed to providing the best possible education for all pupils.
- The head of school provides good leadership and has high ambitions for the school. She is well supported by a passionate team from within the school and the trust. Together, they have successfully created a caring and inclusive school within the local community.
- From very low starting points, the majority of current pupils throughout the school make good progress in a range of subjects, including reading, writing and mathematics. Standards at the end of key stage 2, since the school joined the trust, have been low.
- Teaching has improved in the last year and is now good. Leaders have provided effective support and hold teachers rigorously to account for their pupils' progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are nurtured very well and often make strong progress from their individual starting points.
- In the Reception class in 2017, there was a marked increase in the proportion of children who achieved a good level of development. Working with parents and carers and, in particular, pre-schools is at an early stage.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the required standard in the phonics screening check has risen for the previous two years and is closer to the national average.
- Pupils say that learning is fun. It offers them experiences that they might not otherwise have. Sometimes, pupils, especially the more able, are not given work that challenges them or encourages them to challenge themselves.
- Although teachers have the opportunity to learn from effective practice, development of middle leaders is still at an early stage.
- The school develops and nurtures its pupils well. Pupils look out for each other and show care and consideration to their classmates. As a result, pupils feel safe and enjoy coming to school.
- Parents comment very favourably on the school and recognise recent improvements, despite the considerable staff turnover. The vast majority of parents would recommend the school to others.
- The local advisory board has a good understanding of how well pupils are achieving. Its members challenge leaders to show the impact of their work to improve teaching.
- Despite all that the school does to improve attendance, it remains below average.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and pupils' outcomes by:
 - giving pupils, especially the most able, more difficult work, so that they achieve the very best they can
 - continuing to accelerate the progress of pupils in key stage 2, so that the standards at the end of Year 6 are nearer to those found nationally
 - embedding a culture of challenge, so that pupils develop the resilience to challenge themselves
 - continuing to share and learn from the most effective practice seen in the school and within the trust.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - training 'subject champions' within the school so that they understand the part they play in improving pupils' achievement
 - finding even more ways to convince parents that their children's absence has a negative impact on their successful learning
 - strengthening the involvement that parents have in their children's learning and progress in the Reception class
 - further developing the links that the school has with local pre-schools and nurseries so that children are better prepared for their start in the Reception class.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The head of school and the leaders from the trust have been driving improvements at an increased rate in the last 18 months than leaders had previously. The whole team's passion is clearly evident. They have high expectations of staff and pupils to uphold HEARTS' ethos.
- Leaders have established effective systems for checking the school's strengths and areas of development. They use the information to plan actions that lead to improvements in the quality of teaching and current pupils' outcomes. Leaders recognise, however, that the more able pupils are not always challenged to make the best progress they can.
- Leaders regularly observe teaching, scrutinise pupils' work and track their progress. They use their findings to arrange suitable training and appropriate, high-quality trust support, to help teachers and other members of staff to enhance their practice. Leaders hold teachers to account for their pupils' progress and do not shy away from making difficult decisions and taking action when necessary. As a result, the quality of teaching across the key stages is improving and pupils make good progress. However, leaders recognise that there is still some way to go to ensure that pupils at the end of key stage 2 attain as well as their peers nationally.
- The continued professional development offered to teachers and learning support assistants is valued by all adults. Directors of learning and lead practitioners provide excellent role models for less-experienced teachers. Leaders acknowledge the many benefits of working across the trust and with local schools. In order to build capacity in the school, leaders have begun to work with 'subject champions'. However, this is at a very early stage.
- The head of pastoral care provides strong leadership. Excellent pastoral care for pupils and their families is provided to improve their physical, mental and emotional welfare. This work is particularly effective in helping the many pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable in overcoming barriers to their social development and academic progress. As a result, the numerous pupils who are late joiners, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils are well supported and are making good progress.
- The curriculum is a real strength of the school. Much thought has gone into ensuring that pupils have experiences in school and on visits that they might not otherwise get. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the themes that they study and the visits they make. For example in one class, pupils were learning about animation, watching a demonstration of how to make a Victorian image spinner on the interactive whiteboard. Pupils then went on to use resources to make their own spinner of a stick man 'jumping'. They were enthralled with the activity. 'Wow! It actually looks like it moves.' Pupils are given many other opportunities to learn, for example about African drumming, how the Romans built gates around their settlements to keep them safe, and rainfall in Rochford compared with Nairobi.
- The school works hard to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural

development. A range of opportunities is planned for pupils to learn about faiths, cultures and traditions, and to ensure that pupils have a good understanding of British values. Pupils are particularly good at supporting and helping each other to understand what they are learning and to be successful. In one history lesson, pupils were enthusiastically debating, but could not agree on, what pictures of historical artefacts may have been used for. 'If you listen to me, I will explain it again,' said one boy to the girl he was working with.

- Leaders and governors use the considerable allocation of pupil premium funding very effectively to ensure that they provide meaningful support for disadvantaged pupils. As a result, the progress of this group of pupils currently in the school is at least as good as, and often better than, their classmates.
- The primary physical education (PE) and sport premium is used effectively. The funding is partly focused on employing specialists to work with pupils and to support staff to acquire additional skills to enhance their own teaching of PE. Pupils speak positively about the sports activities experienced and how this work helps them to be healthy.
- Leaders actively support and encourage learning support assistants to develop themselves and, if appropriate, to train as teachers. Leaders provide opportunities for others to join the teaching profession, offering them places to train within the school. This not only benefits Waterman and its pupils, but also fosters responsibility for serving the whole of the local community – 'service' being a key aspect of the HEARTS' ethos.
- Adults in the school are committed to continuing to build the links and relationships they have with families. The vast majority of parents have a high regard for the school and its work and are very pleased with their children's progress.

Governance of the school

- The local advisory board (LAB) oversees the work of this school and the other local trust school, Stambridge Primary. Although governors acknowledge it is challenging, they are clearly able to differentiate the needs and the uniqueness of each school, and respond appropriately.
- The LAB and board of trustees have a clear understanding of this school's strengths and areas for development. They have played a positive part in the improvements in the school that have been evident in the last 18 months in particular. For example, they have supported leaders in their drive to raise pupils' and parents' expectations of behaviour and progress.
- Members of the LAB demonstrate an effective balance between the support and challenge they offer leaders of the school. They make visits to speak with the pupils and meet with members of staff who lead specific subjects or hold other areas of responsibility.
- Governors receive regular and detailed information from leaders about all aspects of the school's work, including the use of pupil premium and sport premium funding. As a result, they have secure knowledge of the difference this additional funding, and that for SEN, is making to pupils' progress.

- Governors appreciate the support and guidance offered by the trust. They value the shared opportunities for training and staff development.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The trained designated safeguarding leaders and head of pastoral care know all the pupils and their families extremely well. They, and the trust, provide staff with regular training and ongoing updates on safeguarding issues through the year, ensuring that any new members of staff do not miss out on vital information. As a result, all members of staff are very vigilant and report any concerns immediately.
- The head of school and head of pastoral care work very closely with parents and external agencies to make sure that pupils are safe and that their welfare is assured. Leaders are tenacious in their determination to ensure that pupils and their families receive the appropriate and timely support they need.
- Pupils feel safe in the school. They know that the school cares about them and what to do if they are worried about anything.
- The curriculum helps pupils to understand how to keep themselves safe in different situations. During the inspection, two ex-policemen visited the school and taught the pupils how to stay safe when using the internet. Pupils articulately told the inspector about what they had learned.
- The school also runs workshops for parents to help them understand the dangers that their children may face.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching throughout the school encourages pupils' interest in their learning and supports their good progress. Teachers have strong relationships with their pupils in an atmosphere of mutual respect.
- Teachers benefit from considerable, high-quality support from lead practitioners who work with teachers and pupils. These professionals and the directors of learning provide excellent role models for teachers and learning support assistants. Evidence can clearly be seen of the impact that this continuous professional development has had on adults and, more importantly, the progress of pupils.
- Although planning for learning in all subjects is supplied for the whole of the trust's schools, the absolute expectation is that teachers adapt these plans to suit the needs of the particular pupils in their classes. As a result, teachers plan well for pupils of different ages and abilities in their class, many of whom join the school at a moment's notice.
- Pupils say that teachers and learning support assistants help them to get better in their learning. They value the early-morning work that teachers plan for them. As one pupil said, 'This helps me to practise something and get it in my head.' Pupils make regular and appropriate use of working walls for prompts. Adults remind pupils about what can help them around the classroom, for example word banks, number lines, and the success criteria that accompany the work they are doing at any one time.

- Pupils also say, however, that sometimes their work is too easy. They enjoy being challenged and like to select a 'level' that they can work at, or when they are encouraged to think of what they need to do so that a particular piece of work is the best it can be. These opportunities, while sometimes provided, are not routine. As a result, some pupils, especially the more able, do not achieve as well as they might.
- Teachers regularly check on pupils' understanding and identify any misconceptions they may have. Almost all adults make effective use of questioning and follow up pupils' answers well to deepen their understanding and explain their thinking. For example, in one lesson, pupils were given a map with various features on it. They were asked to select from four locations where they would choose to set up their home. When asked why she had chosen site A, one pupil responded in her book, 'because it is near a forest and the different layers of the trees will protect you from the rain'.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are quickly identified and effective support is provided that helps them make good progress from their starting points, both academically and socially. Adults adopt a wide range of techniques to support these pupils, founded on very clear planning and very effective support from the head of pastoral care, who also leads on SEN provision.
- Learning support assistants ensure that there is effective support for the different groups of pupils in their group or class. Many take groups of pupils to pre-teach skills that they need later in the lesson, or help those who need further consolidation of learning after lessons. They also provide effective support for individual pupils in lessons, ensuring that they are included and make at least good progress.
- The teaching of phonics is effective. Pupils in key stage 1 use their phonic skills well to make sensible guesses at unfamiliar words, which they are beginning to use with accuracy in their writing. Some pupils in key stage 2 still find this aspect of their learning hard, and additional support is provided for them to fill identified gaps in their learning. However, many clearly enjoy reading. One boy, for example, selected a book 'because it looked interesting and challenging'. Another pupil animatedly said that she had chosen to read a non-fiction book about cats as she has cats at home. 'I have learned something fascinating. The very first cat used in a film was a stray called Pepper!'
- Teachers' expectations of the presentation of pupils' written work are consistently high. Writing across the areas of the curriculum, for example in history, geography and religious education (RE), is developing well. Teachers encourage pupils to reflect on and improve their work, evidence of which was very clear in pupils' books. Such high-quality writing as 'The glistening moon was like a wolf's steady eye shining down on the beautiful yacht' is but one example of many. Leaders have ensured that good-quality texts, like 'Bomber dog', are used well to not only motivate pupils to write but also give them a greater understanding of what interests the reader. At the end of one pupil's extended writing, he skilfully, and to great effect, used a cliffhanger: 'Shall I leave him there?'
- Mathematics teaching is consistently effective throughout the school. Leaders have focused on number and its application in solving problems. This has not, however, been to the detriment of other areas of mathematics. For example, work in geography shows the use of bar charts and time; work in science includes designing, completing and analysing different ways of recording results in table form. Word problems such as

'Ellie's car is going to cost £123 to repair. How much overdrawn will Ellie be if she has only £32 in her bank account?' offer pupils opportunities to apply their mathematical knowledge and skills to real-life situations.

- The majority of parents who responded to Parent View, and those who responded to the school's own survey in 2017, say that their children are taught well and make good progress as a result. Parents value the support and opportunities that teachers give them and their children, for example in such events as 'Bacon Butties and Reading'.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The HEARTS ethos permeates all that the school does and its vision to ensure that pupils are, for example, happy and have high self-esteem is clearly evident.
- Members of staff put pupils' welfare at the very heart of their work. Much has been put in place to support individual pupils and families, including, for example, working with speech therapists, the school's counsellor or learning mentor.
- Many pupils join the school at times other than at the beginning of the school year. Leaders have put in place measures to ensure that pupils settle as quickly as they can to life at Waterman Primary. They also support pupils and their parents in taking care of their welfare needs, often going above and beyond what one might expect.
- Pupils have many opportunities to take part in sporting events and to learn about being and staying healthy. The school-run breakfast club is often well attended, supporting leaders' drive to ensure that pupils eat healthily, attend regularly and punctually, and are ready for learning.
- Pupils say that they enjoy the after-school clubs, the visits they make to places as part of their topics, and the visitors to the school. During the inspection, the local pastor took an assembly, building on the work the pupils had just done on Martin Luther King. Pupils clearly understood the need for fairness, and equality, aspects that are supported by the school's work on British values and diversity.
- Parents who responded to Parent View, as well as the school's own records of parents' comments, are very positive about the support that they and their children receive. They are confident that their children are happy, safe and well cared for at school. As one parent said of the head of school, 'Mrs Thorn was and still continues to be amazing in proactively, sensitively and securely dealing with our needs.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good in and around the school, and in the playground during break and lunchtimes. The atmosphere is calm and friendly, pupils enjoying talking to their classmates while eating their lunch.
- Pupils are extremely polite and welcoming to visitors, eager to talk to them about their experiences of their 'fabulous, amazing school'.

- Leaders have set high expectations of pupils' attitudes to learning. The 'Seven Cs' are prominently displayed in the library and adults allude to them during lessons. Through the hard work of all adults in the school, pupils have good attitudes to learning. The environment is calm and purposeful from the very beginning of the day, which contributes to pupils' readiness to learn.
- Pupils cooperate well with their teachers and other adults. They readily work independently and with their classmates and are keen to succeed. These attitudes make a significant contribution to their successful learning.
- Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy the work they are given and would welcome even more challenging work, 'Because challenge is good. Everything isn't meant to be easy, is it?' said one boy.
- Pupils are proud of their school and the additional responsibilities they have, for example as ambassadors or school councillors. Parents value the 'buddy' system that leaders have put in place for Reception class children.
- Leaders have worked tirelessly to reduce absence. However, although school records show that there is a noticeable improvement in the attendance of individual pupils as well as in some classes, attendance remains below the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' standards at Waterman were below the national average at the end of key stage 2 in 2016 and 2017. However, standards have risen in key stage 1 and the early years, and pupils throughout the school are now achieving well. Many pupils in key stage 2 have not had consistently good teaching throughout their time at Waterman. Leaders have worked hard to ensure that gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills are quickly identified and support put in place to fill those gaps. Evidence seen during the inspection shows very clearly that pupils currently in the school are making good and sometimes outstanding progress from often very low starting points.
- Leaders track pupils' progress very carefully and regularly, challenging teachers if progress is not as good as it could be for some individuals. The expectation that teachers accelerate the progress of many pupils is well embedded and understood by all adults. As a result, the proportion of pupils currently in the school who are on track to achieve what is expected of them in reading, writing and mathematics is steadily increasing as pupils move to the next year group.
- Current assessment information for Year 6 pupils shows that they are working at a higher level than last year's Year 6, many making strong progress from key stage 1. Leaders are realistic in their prediction that this group of pupils may not attain as well as others nationally. However, they have targeted individual pupils within this small cohort to ensure that those who are most able achieve the higher standard and that even more pupils make good or better progress than in 2017.
- The results of the 2017 phonics screening check in Year 1 have risen significantly since 2015 and demonstrate clearly the improvement that these pupils made from the end of their Reception Year. This reflects the consistent, good-quality teaching of early reading experienced by pupils and demonstrated when pupils read to the inspector.
- Key stage 1 achievement in reading, writing and mathematics in 2017 rose by some

40% from the year before, influenced largely by a considerable increase in the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in writing. Work in pupils' English and topic books seen during the inspection demonstrated the impact that high-quality teaching has had in key stage 1.

- Although the number of disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 is small, the proportion is high. At the end of key stage 2, these pupils have made less progress than their classmates. However, the progress of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities currently in the school is good. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are capable of achieving the higher standard is increasing, particularly in key stage 1 and lower key stage 2.
- Outcomes for pupils in many other areas of the curriculum are good. This is because teachers plan learning, for example in history, geography and computing, which enables pupils to regularly practise their basic skills, while enhancing their subject-specific knowledge.

Early years provision

Good

- Children enter the school with skills and abilities that are significantly lower than is typical for their age, especially in their language and social skills. Some have had limited pre-school experience and many are new to the local community. Although the proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of the early years is not yet in line with the national average, it rose significantly in 2017. Children are, therefore, better prepared than previously to move into key stage 1.
- Leadership of the early years is good. Leaders have a clear and accurate picture of the strengths and areas for development in the provision. A director of learning has recently been appointed by the trust and has specific responsibility for early years. She and the committed professionals in the Reception class know the children very well and plan engaging and interesting activities across the areas of learning.
- The school quickly identifies individual children's needs, giving timely and effective support to help them settle well into school life. For example, a speech therapist works regularly with children whose communication skills are not as developed as they need to be. Comments from two parents, whose children have just started at the school and who responded to Parent View, were effusive in their praise of the support they and their children have received. 'The Reception team have been amazing,' said one, while another said, 'I do not feel that I would have been as secure in leaving my child anywhere else.'
- A wide variety of learning opportunities are planned. During the inspection, the inspector watched while children made porridge, deciding on the ingredients they needed, measuring them out and cooking the porridge in the microwave. What is more, children who were not involved in this activity could tell me how they were making their own porridge in the sand pit which was full of oats, and what other ingredients they would also need.
- Children's books and evidence on the school's iPad show a variety of work and provide a clear picture of purposeful learning and rapid progress. Leaders are at any early stage of developing parents' contribution to their children's learning. Further

development of this area and strengthening the links with the school's feeder nurseries and pre-schools are needed so that children get the best possible start to their school life.

- There are regular opportunities planned for children to develop their gross motor skills. Children love to venture out, either on to the early years outdoor play area or to take part in forest school activities.
- Despite often lower than expected social and emotional development, children behave well and play independently and with others.
- Leaders ensure that statutory welfare requirements are met and that child protection procedures are consistently adhered to.

School details

Unique reference number	141715
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10041773

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	76
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trustees	Vaughan Collier
Head of school	Eileen Thorn
Telephone number	01702 546237
Website	www.hearts-waterman.uk
Email address	waterman.admin@heartsacademy.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Waterman Primary Academy converted to become an academy school on 1 February 2015. When its predecessor school, Waterman Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be good overall. The school is a member of the HEARTS Trust.
- HEARTS Academy Trust is a multi-academy trust that comprises six schools. Waterman Primary School is governed by a local advisory board which reports directly to the board of trustees.
- Waterman Primary is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- Children in the Reception Year are taught separately. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 are taught in three mixed-age classes.
- A considerable proportion of pupils join and leave the school at times other than the beginning of the academic year.

- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. No pupils currently speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is significantly above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above the national average, as is the proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was undertaken by one inspector for two days.
- During the inspection, the head of school accompanied the lead inspector to observe learning in every class. The inspector observed learning in parts of other lessons across the school.
- The inspector held meetings with the head of school, the executive headteacher, who is also the chief executive officer of the trust, and the head of pastoral care, who also leads the school's work on SEN. The inspector met with the chair and three other representatives from the local advisory board, which also included the chair of the board of trustees.
- The inspector heard pupils read, talked to them about their learning and looked at pupils' books in lessons.
- Together with directors of learning for English, mathematics and early years, the inspector scrutinised work in pupils' English, mathematics and topic books, and discussed the attainment and progress of pupils currently in the school.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation including the school's self-evaluation summary; the school improvement plans; the school's assessment information; leaders' reports and evaluations of the quality of teaching and learning; minutes of meetings of the local advisory board and board of trustees; and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- The inspector considered the 44 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including six texts; 13 responses to the online survey for staff; responses from pupils to the online survey; and the school's own survey of pupils' views.

Inspection team

Ruth Brock, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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