

# **Tuckswood Academy and Nursery**

Tuckswood Centre, Tuckswood, Norwich, Norfolk NR4 6BP

**Inspection dates** 20–21 February 2018

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

## This is a school that requires improvement

- Until recently, leaders, governors and the trust have been unable to recruit a stable, high-quality staffing team since the school opened in 2015. This has hampered their ability to secure improvements in standards more rapidly across the whole school.
- Leaders' monitoring of teaching and learning is not always sufficiently precise to support staff to raise standards in teaching.
- Some leaders are relatively new to their roles and have not yet been able to demonstrate the full impact of their work on pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics across the whole school.
- Standards at the end of key stage 1 have been below the national average for reading, writing and mathematics since the school opened, and remained so in 2017.

#### The school has the following strengths

- The trust and governors have worked diligently to overcome the historical challenges that they faced when the school opened. They have now secured a stable staffing team that is starting to bring about more secure improvements.
- Provision in the early years is effective, leading to children's good progress from their starting points. Children are increasingly well prepared to start Year 1.

- Pupils' development of skills in reading, writing, mathematics and handwriting across the curriculum are not yet well developed.
- Teachers' use of assessment to plan learning is not yet fully effective. Consequently, teachers do not have consistently high expectations about what pupils are able to achieve, especially the most able pupils.
- Leaders have not evaluated the impact of pupil premium funding on eligible pupils' achievement across all year groups. Disadvantaged pupils in all year groups are not yet consistently making the good progress of which they are capable.
- Leaders' administration around some areas of safeguarding is not consistently well maintained.
- Leaders, well supported by the trust, have an effective reporting system for assessment. This year, Year 6 pupils are receiving targeted quality support to catch up and are making better progress.
- Positive working partnerships with parents are being developed effectively. This is resulting in better communication and improvements in pupils' positive attitudes towards school.



## Full report

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

- Develop the effectiveness and impact of leaders at all levels further by:
  - making sure that all administration around pupils' safeguarding records is centralised and detailed in the information that it provides about leaders' actions, monitoring and subsequent follow-up
  - developing leaders' monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning so that leaders can support staff to increase the pace of pupils' progress
  - ensuring that disadvantaged pupils make more rapid progress and attain higher standards, including through a more precise and effective use of the additional funding that the school receives and a more thorough analysis of the impact of this funding
  - continuing to develop the curriculum to provide pupils with regular opportunities to practise their skills in reading, writing, mathematics and handwriting.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
  - assessment information is used effectively by teachers to plan learning activities, so that pupils' progress accelerates across the curriculum, particularly in reading and mathematics in every year group
  - teachers have consistently high expectations about what pupils can achieve,
     especially the most able pupils, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds
  - teachers consistently check pupils' understanding and provide them with precise guidance that enables them to improve their learning rapidly
  - the teaching of handwriting equips pupils with the skills to form letters accurately and present their writing well.
- Further improve standards in key stage 1 by consistently raising expectations and building on the good start made in the early years.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.



## **Inspection judgements**

#### **Effectiveness of leadership and management**

**Requires improvement** 

- Since the school opened, the trust has faced entrenched low standards and a history of underachievement. Overcoming these issues has taken time and a wealth of resources. Until recently, staffing turbulence and challenges in recruiting permanent high-quality staff have further hindered leaders' work to embed greater consistency in the quality of the provision. As a result, standards in teaching and achievement over time are not yet securely good.
- Leaders' work is not ensuring that disadvantaged pupils across the whole school make rapid enough progress. Leaders have used the pupil premium funding to put in place additional teaching and individualised activities to support disadvantaged pupils. While there is evidence of this making a difference in Year 6, the impact of these initiatives on pupils' achievement in all year groups, including the early years, is not as precisely evaluated to ensure that the progress pupils make from their starting points is quicker.
- The curriculum provides infrequent opportunities for pupils to practise and apply their reading, writing and mathematics knowledge and skills in other subjects. Pupils do not develop their skills in all subjects as consistently as they should. Leaders' monitoring of the curriculum through the newly formed 'analytical' and 'creative' teams is currently less frequent than in mathematics, reading and writing. This means that leaders cannot fully assure themselves that pupils are making good progress in all subjects.
- While subject-specific skills are not being applied consistently throughout the curriculum subjects, there is evidence that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is being promoted. For example, the space ship landing in the school grounds sparked pupils' enthusiasm, early years children found out about Chinese New Year and in the key stage assemblies, pupils respectfully considered the life of Malala Yousafzai. Opportunities like these, along with the chance to consider democracy, respect and tolerance within the curriculum, are successfully promoting pupils' cultural awareness and preparing them for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders are starting to bring significant improvements in the provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Leaders are now ensuring that additional funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is effectively spent to support these pupils to learn. They achieve this by tailoring programmes to meet pupils' specific needs and following the progress of individuals carefully. This clearly demonstrates that the school's work in this area is becoming more effective.
- The school makes effective use of additional funding for physical education (PE) and sport. Leaders have recruited a sports coach to provide training for staff, which improves the teaching of PE. Additionally, pupils benefit from being able to more regularly access a wider range of activities. There has been a focus on developing healthy lifestyles, for example participation in the 'Tuckswood mile' early morning run and fitness testing. Events such as these are helping pupils understand what to do to lead a healthier everyday life.
- The trust's support is effective. It provides significant guidance to leaders and staff. For example, it deploys teachers from its teaching school to provide coaching support for



new teachers and is proactive where a particular development need has been identified. The trust also promotes the collaborative working of the schools within the trust. So while there are unique features to each school, including Tuckswood, there are also common aspects so experiences can be shared. For example, all the trust's schools use the same assessment system so that they can carry out checking of each other's standards. The trust is ensuring that it supports leaders but equally holds them rigorously to account for the work of the school.

- The trust, including the local governing body, has been steadfast in its view that weak leadership and mediocre teaching are not good enough for the pupils at Tuckswood. Despite the challenges, leaders from the trust have not been deterred from striving to improve the school's provision. They have been resilient in carrying through improvements despite the uphill struggle from a very low starting point. While it has taken time to secure improvements, due mainly to challenges in recruitment of school leaders and staff, they are now beginning to see positive results, for example, improvement in the early years provision and better progress for Year 6 pupils reflected in the 2017 key stage 2 outcomes.
- Leaders' determination to form constructive positive relationships with parents and carers and to involve them in their children's learning is paying off, with increasing numbers of parents attending events in school. Consequently, discussions with parents and recent school parent surveys are mainly positive about the school's work. One parent, who spoke for many, commented, 'I have seen vast improvements in all aspects of this school in the last three to four years... Children are developing a "can do" attitude which I put down to the effective teaching and encouragement they receive to give things a try and not to give up. I recommend this school to other parents.'
- The trust and governors have successfully secured a positive ethos that is supportive to staff. Staff have confidence in the school's leadership and say that the school has improved rapidly in a relatively short time.
- Newly qualified teachers are well supported when they join the school. Equally, teachers new to the school, and those more established, access appropriately targeted professional development through the trust. The responses to the Ofsted staff questionnaire indicate that staff value the support and advice that they receive, and are proud to work at Tuckswood.

#### **Governance of the school**

- Since the trust took over the school, the governing body has developed its focus on improvement. Governors are ambitious for the school. Minutes from their meetings show that they ask challenging questions of school leaders, holding them to account for any weaknesses in pupils' achievement and leaders' overall performance.
- Governors gain a first-hand understanding of the school through regular visits to check out the information that school leaders provide. Governors recognise the need to secure better outcomes in all year groups and have worked with the trust and leaders to secure staff who can deliver better-quality teaching and learning in order to achieve this.



■ Governors work with leaders effectively as a team and are determined to ensure that the school's future is positive.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All staff have been trained to identify signs of any safeguarding issues including indications of extremism and radicalisation among pupils. Staff are astutely aware of how to act to keep pupils safe.
- Checks carried out on staff before they join the school are thorough. Records of these checks are maintained meticulously by the trust, which ensures that they comply with all legal requirements.
- The school's parent school liaison officer understands the needs of the most vulnerable pupils and families that she works with. She provides timely, appropriate and relevant support to families. Furthermore, she makes sure that external agencies are involved where needed and has a very positive working relationship with parents.
- Leaders have identified that while staff make referrals and act on concerns about pupils appropriately, the current internal system for recording concerns does not always ensure that all safeguarding records are centralised for easy access and continued ongoing security. Leaders are in the process of implementing a new electronic system to further tighten up the recording system so that it is more rigorous.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Requires improvement** 

- The teaching of reading, writing and mathematics has not enabled pupils of differing needs and abilities to achieve as well as they could. This is because not all teachers are taking sufficient account of the information they have to plan teaching and learning precisely, so that it secures more rapid progress for pupils. This is particularly evident for the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils. This has resulted in few achieving at greater depth in key stage 1 or at the higher standard in key stage 2.
- Some teachers too readily accept poorly presented work from pupils instead of demanding well-presented work that reflects the highest expectations. Additionally, handwriting skills are not taught well enough across the school and adults do not consistently model good handwriting for pupils to know what the expectations are. This is hindering pupils' ability to accurately form letters and, subsequently, to be able to write and present their work neatly.
- Teachers' questioning is not always sufficiently probing, which means that teachers are not fully able to assess how well pupils understand what they are learning nor to encourage pupils to think more deeply. However, where questioning is more effective, pupils are expected to provide reasons for their responses. This helps to improve their use of a range of vocabulary. For example, in Year 4, a teacher was particularly skilled



in prompting pupils for different words so that they could use them to write about why someone should join the Roman army.

- Generally, additional well-targeted help supports pupils who are falling behind. For example, short teaching sessions before and after lessons help adults to pick up on and correct pupils' misunderstandings. This helps pupils to be well prepared for the next stage of their learning. Although teaching support is helping pupils to move forward in their learning, it does not consistently help them make rapid and sustained progress in every year group.
- Most recently, the more accurate identification of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is enabling staff to target individuals and groups of pupils for additional support in lessons or small groups. Pupils' current books demonstrate that this focused work is resulting in these pupils making better progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- There is some effective teaching across the school. Where this is having the most impact, teachers are checking pupils' knowledge and quickly dealing with pupils' errors or misunderstandings. For example, in a Year 6 English lesson, the teacher effectively modelled spoken language, supporting pupils well to check their own work and further develop their own responses to identify accurately how the text they were reading supported the argument. This led to pupils successfully deepening their knowledge and understanding.
- This year, evidence of stronger teaching over time is enabling pupils to make better progress, particularly in phonics and reading. Leaders have raised the profile of reading in the school. As a result, more pupils are now reading at home and teachers have an increasing knowledge of how to teach phonics and reading skills well. This is leading to higher-quality teaching. The school's current assessment information indicates that pupils' outcomes in reading are likely to be an improvement on the previous year.
- The teaching of mathematics is helping pupils to secure better basic skills in number and calculation. Teachers are planning more opportunities for pupils to develop their reasoning skills and to use and apply these skills to mathematical problems. However, teachers are not consistently planning tasks that meet the needs of all pupils. There is evidence to confirm that some pupils are not able to access work set because they have fundamental gaps in their basic mathematical knowledge such as place value. Consequently, in these cases, pupils' progress slows.
- The curriculum provides limited opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their reading, writing and mathematics in other subjects. This prevents them from building on and consolidating these skills in a wide range of subjects. This is particularly noteworthy in writing. Pupils have limited opportunities for sustained and extended writing in both their English work and across other subject areas.
- The quality of teaching and learning is improving. This is particularly the case in the early years and Year 6. This is because the leader of teaching, learning and assessment role models well, and provides all adults with appropriate guidance and support to improve their practice.



## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

## **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils have a thorough understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They talk confidently about safety on the internet and the dangers of sharing information on social media. They understand that there are different forms of bullying. Pupils have confidence in the adults around them to keep them safe. They say that if any incidents occur, they are resolved quickly by adults in school.
- Pupils are proud to share their learning with their parents. For example, all classes lead regular 'reading cafés' and participate in 'show and share' events. These succeed in developing pupils' confidence and equipping them with additional skills, such as speaking publicly in front of an audience and preparing and organising themselves.
- A variety of roles and responsibilities are undertaken by pupils. For example, they are school librarians and play leaders. Pupils take pride in being elected to represent their peers as school councillors. They feel this gives them a voice in decision-making within the school. For example, the extra-curricular clubs at lunchtime and after school have been chosen as a result of school council discussions.
- Pupils who require additional emotional support are well looked after. Staff care deeply about pupils' well-being and are nurturing in their support. Pupils respond positively and access individualised support, for example in the nurture group. Resources like this ensure that pupils integrate well into the normal day-to-day classroom routines, and adhere to the instructions and rules in place. This ensures that there is little, if any, disruption to learning for both themselves and other pupils.

#### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Expectations for good behaviour are clearly evident because positive behaviour is consistent across the school. Although pupils understand how they are rewarded, which encourages them to try harder, they also realise that the expectations are high and know the purpose of following the school rules and routines.
- Adult and pupil relationships across the school are positive. Teachers regularly praise pupils focusing on the positive choices pupils make. Staff use the school behaviour policy consistently, which underpins pupils' consistently good behaviour displayed throughout the school.
- Pupils now attend school more regularly. Recent work, carried out by leaders alongside the increasingly effective partnerships being developed with parents, is securing better attendance over time so that it is much closer to the national average. Persistent absence is also improving for all groups, especially disadvantaged pupils. One of the reasons for this is because the successful breakfast club ensures that they make a good and punctual start at the beginning of the day.



## **Outcomes for pupils**

### **Requires improvement**

- From their individual starting points, the progress of groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, remains too variable in reading, writing and mathematics across the whole school. While leaders have recognised that pupils in Year 6 need to be better prepared for their secondary education and they have successfully focused on quickening Year 6 pupils' progress, the progress in other year groups is not as rapid.
- Although pupils make good progress through the early years, this then slows during key stage 1. This means that, after the Reception Year, they continue to achieve less well than other pupils nationally. This is reflected in both the 2016 and 2017 attainment outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics, which were below the national average in all three subjects.
- Pupils' knowledge of phonics is rapidly improving. Although in 2017, the proportion of Year 1 pupils who achieved the expected standard in the phonics screening check was below the national average, there is strong evidence in both teaching and in written work to indicate that this should increase. This is because the teaching of phonics has significantly improved. Where pupils are behind, extra work is used well to help them catch up and pupils are becoming more confident in breaking down sounds of letters and putting them together to read unfamiliar words.
- The work in pupils' books, including those of disadvantaged pupils, confirms that better progress is being made in Year 6. However, while there is evidence that some pupils in other year groups are making good progress, not enough are making consistently quicker progress to ensure that they catch up before they reach Year 6.
- Pupils' progress across the wider curriculum is slower. There are not consistently well-embedded opportunities for pupils to both learn subject-specific skills and be able to apply their basic skills. This is particularly the case in writing where there are fewer opportunities for pupils to develop, extend and use their writing skills. The school works with other schools to improve pupils' achievement across the curriculum. The impact of this work on raising pupils' achievement across all year groups is too soon to assess.
- The trust has a steadfast view and determination that pupils leaving primary school need to be ready for their secondary education. The trust is making good use of its secondary resources to provide pupils with valuable experiences to achieve this. For example, pupils can regularly use the sporting and other facilities at the trust's secondary schools as well as taking part in project work, all of which helps pupils be ready for life at secondary school.
- A higher proportion of current Year 6 pupils are now on track to reach the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave in 2018. As a result, they are now being better prepared for the next stage of their education than pupils previously.

## **Early years provision**

Good

■ The early years leader and teachers have a sound understanding of how children learn



in the early years. They make sure that children are provided with a wide range of activities and are able to make their own choices, as well as effectively engaging in tasks led by adults.

- Children start their early years with knowledge and skills lower than is typically expected for their age. In particular, children's communication and language skills are weaker. However, children progress well in their learning and development throughout Nursery and Reception so that by the end of the Reception Year an increasing proportion of children are well prepared to join Year 1.
- Staff across Nursery and Reception meet frequently to discuss the progress of individual children. This ensures that staff know children well and plan appropriately for their transition between the two year groups.
- Adults regularly observe learning and use this information to plan experiences that will help children to acquire new skills. Activities provided for children are successfully helping children to listen, to work both independently and cooperatively, and to develop an excitement for learning. For example, children enthusiastically became 'investigators' to explore a spaceship landing in the school grounds. This experience was further enhanced by the adults' questioning: 'Where? How? What is it made of?' This successfully helped the children to make progress in their listening, speaking and writing skills.
- The indoor classrooms and outdoor areas are equipped well to support effective learning. These spaces are used to good effect by adults to provide stimulating learning experiences for the children. The early years curriculum is well suited to children's needs. Increasingly, across all early years classes, there are more opportunities provided for children to practise their reading, writing and number skills.
- Recent improvements in writing are more evident. Pupils are having the opportunity to mark-make and write more frequently, know whom they are writing for and are becoming increasingly accurate when spelling words through their improving phonics knowledge.
- Teachers and other adults such as the key workers have successfully engaged parents in their children's learning. For example, the early years team holds 'introduction to foundation stage' meetings, reading cafés, and mathematics and phonics workshops. Also many parents are now contributing towards the assessment of what their children can do by adding their own comments to the school's chosen recording system. This is ensuring that positive home—school relationships are established and, consequently, teachers ascertain a more accurate picture of the 'whole child' upon which to plan their teaching.
- Parents are very positive about their children's start to their education at Tuckswood. Parents are particularly complimentary about how quickly and well their children settled in at the beginning of the academic year.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged children is used to provide appropriate support to meet children's needs. However, this is not always effectively evaluated so that leaders know the precise difference it makes to children's outcomes.
- Staff look after the children well and ensure that statutory welfare requirements are met.



## **School details**

Unique reference number 141661

Local authority Norfolk

Inspection number 10041749

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

Type of school Primary and Nursery

School category Academy sponsor-led

Age range of pupils 3 to 11

Gender of pupils Mixed

Number of pupils on the school roll 330

Appropriate authority Board of trustees

Acting Chair Terry Cook

Head of School Ian Winter

Telephone number 01603 454 479

Website www.tuckswoodacademy.co.uk

Email address office@tuckswoodacademy.co.uk

Date of previous inspection Not previously inspected

#### Information about this school

- Tuckswood Academy and Nursery opened as an academy with the Rightforsuccess multi-academy trust in March 2015.
- The school is a growing, slightly larger than average-sized primary school and nursery. While this is a two-form entry school, there is currently only one Year 6 class and this will increase to two Year 6 classes in September 2018.
- Since conversion to an academy, the school has experienced significant staff and leadership changes. The current head of school and deputy headteacher took up their posts in the autumn term 2016.
- Leaders work with other local schools within the trust to raise pupils' achievement.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is above the national average.



- The proportion of pupils who have additional support to meet their SEN and/or disabilities is below national average.
- In 2017, the school met the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment in English and mathematics.



## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited classes to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school day on both inspection days. Some observations were undertaken jointly with the head of school and deputy headteacher. While visiting the classrooms, inspectors talked to pupils and also looked at a wide range of pupils' work in books.
- The lead inspector observed two assemblies and listened to pupils read while visiting classrooms. Additionally, the team inspector undertook work scrutiny of a large sample of pupils' books with the deputy headteacher.
- A number of meetings were held with a wide range of leaders. These included the head of school, the deputy headteacher who is also the English leader, the mathematics leader, and the key stage 1 and early years leaders. Additionally, inspectors met with the SEN coordinator, representatives of the local governing body including the acting chair of the governing body, and members of the trust including the trust's chief executive officer.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils during lessons and in breaktimes and lunchtimes about their school experience and their views about their learning, safety and behaviour. There were no pupils' responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire.
- Many school documents were scrutinised including the school's self-evaluation; records of the monitoring of teaching and learning; the school development plan; the school's current progress and assessment information, including details on the progress of particular pupil groups; and minutes from governing body meetings. Documents outlining the arrangements for the use of pupil premium funding and the primary school PE and sport funding were also considered.
- The lead inspector carried out scrutiny of safeguarding documentation, including the single central record that is maintained by the trust. Furthermore, the lead inspector also met with the parent school liaison officer and the safeguarding governor.
- Inspectors spoke to parents informally during the morning of the second day of the inspection to seek their views about the school and also scrutinised the recent parent surveys undertaken by leaders. Additionally, inspectors took account of the 26 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 25 text-service messages.
- During both days of the inspection, inspectors spoke to various members of staff and also took into consideration the 20 responses to the confidential staff questionnaire.

## **Inspection team**

Tracy Fielding, lead inspector

Steve Mellors

Lynn Lowery

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector



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