

Five Spires Academy

Cherry Orchard, Lichfield, Staffordshire WS14 9AN

Inspection dates

15–16 May 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

- Senior leaders and governors have established a school with a clear ethos, 'everyone inspire, everyone aspire'. Pupils experience a breadth of opportunities and most are working at the level expected for their age.
- Governors are focused on continuously improving the quality of education. As the school expands, they need to further refine their approaches to hold leaders to account.
- The senior leadership team is highly effective. Due to the current size of the school, middle leadership roles are yet to be fully developed.
- The school is well supported by the sponsoring multi-academy trust.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good. Leaders and teachers are working together to develop consistency in the approaches to teaching.
- Leaders and teachers make effective use of assessment information to help pupils make good progress. They have a clear understanding of pupils' progress in English and mathematics. However, this is not as well developed in other subject areas.
- Phonics teaching is highly effective. By the end of Year 1, almost all pupils are able to use their phonics skills well to help them read. There is a strong focus on developing pupils' vocabulary and reading has a high profile.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and now rarely miss a day. They are friendly, polite and generally behave very well.
- Pupils are safe in school and safeguarding is effective. Pupils know that they can trust the adults in school to help keep them safe if they have any worries.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and generally have high expectations about what pupils can achieve. In some lessons, teaching is not matched closely enough to pupils' needs. As a result, there is sometimes a lack of challenge, especially for the most able. When this happens, pupils do not make as much progress as they could.
- Children in the early years get off to a positive start. Although almost all children make good progress from their individual starting points, the most able could achieve even more.
- Teachers and teaching assistants use skilful questioning to develop pupils' understanding. However, teaching assistants do not always make the best use of time to maximise pupils' progress.
- Leaders regularly review the curriculum to ensure that it meets pupils' needs. New approaches, such as in mathematics, need time to embed fully to impact on pupils' outcomes, especially in key stage 1.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Secure the quality of teaching and learning and pupil outcomes across the school, including in the early years, by ensuring:
 - that activities closely match the needs of the pupils and that there is sufficient challenge, especially for the most able
 - that teaching assistants are used effectively to maximise pupils' learning
 - that developments to the curriculum are embedded, especially in key stage 1
 - consistency in the approaches to teaching used across school, as the school expands and new teachers arrive.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring:
 - greater leadership capacity through the development of the roles and responsibilities of middle leaders
 - that governors develop a focused action plan to strengthen their effectiveness at holding senior leaders to account
 - that leaders are able to track the progress pupils are making in all curriculum subjects.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Along with governors, the headteacher and deputy headteacher have successfully established a new school. They have set high expectations for staff and pupils and, as a result, most pupils are making good progress and they are achieving well. The school's vision, 'everyone inspire, everyone aspire', is evident in all aspects of school life, for example in the opportunities available for pupils and their positive attitudes to learning.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher currently hold most of the school's leadership roles between them and they take responsibility for driving forward developments. They are highly effective and credible in their roles. However, the headteacher is aware that, as the school grows, leadership structures will need to develop. There are plans in place to enable teachers to take on middle leadership roles, for example in the early years and in some subject areas.
- School leaders have a realistic view of the school's strengths and the areas that need to be developed further. They are constantly looking for ways to improve the curriculum and the quality of education. For example, they have introduced a new approach to teaching mathematics because the previous system was not fully meeting the needs of pupils in key stage 1.
- Leaders work closely with teachers, especially those who are new to the school, to ensure that everyone is following the same systems and has the same high expectations of the pupils. Leaders are aware that they need to ensure that there is consistency and continuity in approaches to teaching in order to maximise pupils' progress.
- All staff who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire said that they are proud to work in the school. They all agree that the school has a culture that encourages calm and orderly conduct and is aspirational for all pupils.
- The multi-academy trust provides leaders and governors with an effective balance of support and challenge. Trust representatives regularly monitor standards and check the accuracy of leaders' and governors' views. They support staff through access to a wide range of professional development opportunities, including training courses and the chance to share effective practice. This is having a positive impact on the quality of teaching within the school.
- The school has secure systems in place to identify and assess pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Their needs are addressed in a variety of ways, including extra support in class and specialist interventions from school staff. The impact of additional support on pupils' progress is tracked carefully and activities are adapted as necessary. Additional funding to support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is well managed.
- Careful consideration is given to how the pupil premium funding is spent. As a result, the small number of disadvantaged pupils are supported effectively and have opportunities to take part in all that the school has to offer. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are also well supported and support is tailored to meet their

individual needs. Senior leaders and staff are aware of the barriers to learning and the challenges that these pupils may face. As a result, vulnerable pupils are achieving as well as other pupils, in school and nationally.

- The primary physical education (PE) and sport premium funding is used effectively to improve the quality of PE lessons through training for staff and the purchase of additional resources. Pupils' participation in, and enjoyment of, sport is increased through input from sports coaches at lunchtimes and during some breakfast club sessions.
- The school has developed an engaging curriculum based on a series of half-termly topics. These topics, such as the current Year 1 topic 'paws, claws and whiskers', engage pupils' interests and help to motivate them to learn. Many topics are brought to life by trips, for example to the zoo. Leaders have ensured that the curriculum covers all the requirements of the national curriculum.
- All pupils have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument and experience forest school. The curriculum is further enhanced by the school's 4D-cinema room. For example, during a 'Moon Zoom!' topic, pupils were able to experience what it might feel like to be in outer space. Pupils also benefit from extra-curricular sports and music opportunities.
- The school supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education (SMSC) effectively through a wide range of activities, such as theatre trips, arts projects, residential trips and raising money for charity. There are also termly 'inspire days' which provide pupils with a range of experiences linked to different faiths and cultures. For example, to celebrate Diwali, pupils learned the story of Rama and Sita, tasted some new foods and created Rangoli patterns. Parents and carers are invited to participate in these events.
- Senior leaders have set up effective systems to assess and monitor pupils' progress in English and mathematics. Leaders and teachers have a clear understanding of pupils' progress in these areas. This information is used to adapt future planning. For example, leaders have worked with key stage 1 teachers to ensure that pupils write more often and with increased independence. This is having a positive impact on the standards of pupils' work. Systems to track pupils' progress in other curriculum areas are yet to be developed.
- The great majority of parents are positive about the work of the school. They particularly value the commitment shown by staff to ensuring that all pupils are well looked after in school. As one parent said: 'My child has everything he needs and you can see this by his confidence. He is happy going to and from school. The teachers welcome and listen to you; they take the time to get to know you; they want the best for everyone and it shines through.'

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective. The governing body is focused on continuously improving the quality of education and governors are clearly ambitious for the school and its pupils. They know the school's strengths and those areas that need to improve further.
- Governors use information gathered through visits to school, reports from external advisers and reports provided by leaders to ask challenging questions in order to bring

about improvements. The governing body has recently recruited new members with relevant skills and knowledge to continue to challenge leaders to raise standards further. Additional training, provided by the multi-academy trust, is in place to support the development of the governing body.

- The chair of governors is aware of the need to draw up an action plan to link the work of the governing body more closely to the school's priorities. This will enable the governing body to better hold leaders to account for outcomes and to ensure that the quality of teaching is consistent.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Ensuring that children are safe is central to the work of the school and leaders have created a culture where staff know that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. As a result, the school is a safe environment for pupils and they are well cared for at all times.
- All staff have regular training to understand their responsibilities in keeping pupils safe. They have a good awareness of what constitutes abuse and are vigilant in looking out for indicators of risk or harm.
- The safeguarding team maintains the required confidential records and, when appropriate, the team shares information with relevant external agencies.
- Leaders ensure that appropriate checks are carried out on all adults appointed to work at the school.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and know who to talk to if they have any worries or concerns. Pupils are confident that any issues raised will be quickly resolved.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Across the school, teaching is effective and enables most pupils to make good progress. Classrooms are positive and purposeful learning environments. Adults have strong relationships with pupils and act as good role models.
- Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge. They focus on modelling good examples for pupils to use as a starting point for their own work. Teachers and teaching assistants question pupils effectively to extend their thinking and deepen their learning. They also encourage the pupils to use the correct technical vocabulary. For example, in one mathematics lesson, the teacher emphasised the need for pupils to 'make sure both sides of the equation balance'. Teaching assistants provide effective support to groups of pupils. However, in some lessons, they could be more directly involved during whole-class teaching in order to maximise the progress of all pupils.
- Lessons are planned well and, generally, build on pupils' existing knowledge and understanding. Teachers ensure that pupils are clear about what they are learning and the steps that they need to take to achieve success. Teachers' plans identify the different levels of challenge or support required to help meet the pupils' needs. In many cases, tasks are pitched appropriately. However, this is not always the case and for a minority of pupils, especially the most able, this affects the amount of progress

they make in some lessons.

- Teachers and pupils understand the school's marking and feedback policy. The policy is being used with increasing consistency.
- Leaders and teachers regularly review the progress pupils are making. They have a shared understanding of the standards pupils are expected to reach and additional actions are identified to support any pupil who is at risk of falling behind. Parents are informed about their children's progress through termly parents' meetings and an annual written report.
- Reading has a high priority across the school. Phonics is taught systematically and effectively, helping to ensure that pupils' decoding skills are strong. Pupils readily apply these skills to read and write new and unfamiliar words. Throughout the school, pupils are encouraged to read widely and often. Pupils' reading books are well matched to their phonics skills. Pupils also have access to other graded reading books but, because these are not so closely matched to pupils' needs, some struggle to understand what they are reading about. Pupils can also access books from the school library. Teachers place a strong emphasis on developing pupils' vocabulary and comprehension skills.
- Teachers link opportunities for writing into the current class topic to give pupils a context and purpose for writing. Until recently, pupils in key stage 1 did not have enough opportunities to write independently and at length. Leaders have addressed this and the results of higher expectations can be seen in most pupils' books.
- Following the introduction of a new approach to the teaching of mathematics, teachers plan lessons that enable pupils to develop their problem-solving skills, as well as developing their basic skills and ability to complete calculations accurately. Although pupils are becoming more confident in mathematics lessons, this approach needs more time to become fully embedded in order to improve pupils' outcomes.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to develop pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are polite, happy and confident. They show positive attitudes to learning and are proud of their school.
- Around the school, there is a wide range of displays to support pupils' learning and celebrate their achievements, for example in mathematics, music and sport. Regular celebration assemblies acknowledge pupils' successes, whether they are for academic achievement, effort, behaviour or attendance.
- Pupils have opportunities to make a contribution to school life and the wider community, for instance by taking part in events to raise money for charity. Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of the importance of treating everyone fairly and equally. For example, some displays show work generated during anti-bullying week.
- As an introduction to fundamental British values, pupils learn about democracy and they elect their school council representatives. The school council has been actively involved in raising money for the Poppy Appeal, sharing a 'child friendly' anti-bullying policy with the other children and a learning walk with senior leaders that focused on

reading.

- Pupils who attend the school-run breakfast and after-school clubs are well looked after and have access to a range of games and activities. There are clear systems in place to safeguard pupils on arrival and departure. Pupils socialise well with adults and each other.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The behaviour observed throughout the inspection was of a high standard.
- The school's behaviour policy is simple and understood by pupils, parents and staff alike. The policy celebrates good behaviour and motivates the pupils to behave well.
- Behaviour in classrooms is good, with most pupils working well in small groups, in pairs and independently, concentrating on their work. Occasionally, pupils lose focus if the level or the pace of the lesson is not right for them. This can affect the progress that they make.
- Attendance has improved and the number of pupils who are regularly absent has reduced considerably. Pupils are rarely late for school. However, school leaders are not complacent about these improvements and good attendance has a high profile across the school. For example, classes, and individual pupils, are rewarded for high levels of attendance. Leaders track attendance carefully and promptly follow up any absence. They are alert to the possibility of children going missing from education and work with external agencies to minimise any risk.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In-school information for current pupils shows that almost all pupils are making good progress and the great majority are on track to achieve the standards that are expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. However, some pupils are capable of making more progress than they currently do, especially those who are most able.
- The small numbers of pupils who are disadvantaged or vulnerable achieve as well as other pupils, in school and nationally. This is because of effectively targeted support.
- Good phonics teaching successfully enables the great majority of pupils to reach the required standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check. Additional support is in place for those pupils who require it.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are making good progress in relation to their individual starting points. Leaders monitor pupils' progress carefully and adapt support and intervention according to need.
- There are clear systems in place for regularly tracking the progress of all individuals and groups of pupils. These include a combination of teachers' assessments and external, standardised assessments. School leaders, and representatives of the multi-academy trust, monitor the accuracy of teachers' assessments. Teachers also work with colleagues from other schools to check the accuracy of their judgements.

Early years provision

Good

- Children enter the early years with skills and knowledge that are broadly typical for their age. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year has been above the national average since the school opened. This represents good progress. Information for current children suggests that most are on track to achieve a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year. The children are well prepared for their transition into Year 1.
- The children are confident and eager to join in activities. Children's behaviour is good and they show respect for each other. Both Nursery-age and Reception-age children play cooperatively, sharing resources and discussing their activities. Children generally respond well to instructions from adults. The children know and follow clear classroom routines so that little learning time is wasted.
- The children are encouraged to be independent and to take responsibility for themselves. For example, in the Nursery class, children register themselves on arrival to school by moving their picture on to the zone board. In a similar way, Reception-age children record the tasks that they complete.
- Adults know the children well and relationships are positive and strong. Children are well cared for. Safeguarding procedures are effective and welfare requirements in the early years are met fully.
- As in key stage 1, the teaching of early literacy skills through phonics is effective. Children are accurately taught how to recognise the sounds that letters make and blend these together to make words. Many Reception-age children are beginning to write independently in sentences.
- The curriculum is well organised and planned to address children's needs through exciting topics and activities. Where possible, teachers adapt the curriculum to follow children's interests and, at the start of each topic, adults work with children to find out what they want to learn.
- Teachers collect detailed information about what each child can do and what they need to do to develop further. They then use this information to plan activities that match the children's different needs. For example, teachers have introduced additional listening games and activities to support children whose communication skills were weaker. In the past, activities have sometimes lacked sufficient challenge for the most able children. As a result, the proportion of children 'exceeding' the standards expected at the end of the early years has not been as high as the school's profile would suggest it could be. Leaders and teachers are taking actions to tackle this area for improvement.
- There are effective transition arrangements in place to support children as they start in the early years. As a result, children are happy to come to school. There are strong links between early years staff and parents. Parents get regular updates about their children's progress and they are encouraged to share 'wow' moments from home as well as school.
- The work of the early years team is currently led by the headteacher. However, the Reception class teacher is increasingly taking on this role and she has an action plan in place to develop further the provision. The early years team now meets regularly and is

working on ensuring consistency between Nursery and Reception classes to support children's progress and the effective transition from one class to the other. The early years team meets with other settings to share, and learn from, effective practice.

- Across the early years, reading, writing and mathematics activities have a high profile. Adult-led activities provide children with regular opportunities to practise their number, phonics and writing skills. However, there are also many opportunities for children to self-select literacy- or mathematics-based activities. During the inspection, children in both Nursery and Reception classes initiated independent writing activities.
- Both indoor and outdoor learning environments are well resourced. The outdoor learning environment caters for all aspects of the curriculum, including messy areas, such as the mud kitchen, and the opportunity for risk taking, such as climbing equipment. The outdoor learning environment also provides opportunities for children to write and to complete number- and shape-based tasks. Within the classroom, there are several challenges set out for the children to complete. Children are able to access these independently because they can play a recording of the written instructions.

School details

Unique reference number	141203
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10048328

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	113
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Sue Winson
Headteacher	Helen Bye
Telephone number	01543 223680
Website	www.fivespiresacademy.co.uk
Email address	office@fivespiresacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Five Spires Academy opened as a new academy in September 2015 to meet the increasing demand for primary school places in the south of the city of Lichfield. It is sponsored by REAch2 Academy Trust.
- There are currently four classes in school, Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 2. When the school reaches full capacity, in September 2021, there will be one class in each year group from Reception to Year 6, in addition to the Nursery.
- Nursery children attend on either a part-time or a full-time basis. Children in the Reception class attend full-time.
- The local governing body works with the headteacher and deputy headteacher to oversee the work of the school. The local governing body reports to the regional governance board for the multi-academy trust which, in turn, reports to the board of trustees.

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have been in post since the school opened.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The remainder of pupils are from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds.
- A small number of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below the national average, as is the proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan.
- Very few pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium.
- The school offers breakfast and after-school clubs. The governing body manages this provision.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector made visits to lessons in all classes. Some of these visits were undertaken jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and members of staff. The inspector met with the chair of the governing body. The inspector also met with the academy trust deputy regional director for the West Midlands.
- The inspector met with a group of Year 2 pupils and listened to some key stage 1 pupils read. She looked at examples of pupils' work and spoke to pupils informally. The inspector observed pupils' behaviour at breaktime, lunchtime and around the school, as well as in lessons. She also observed pupils at the breakfast and after-school clubs.
- The inspector scrutinised a wide range of documentation. This included information relating to safeguarding, the quality of teaching and learning, pupils' outcomes and governing body matters.
- The inspector considered parents' opinions through 47 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 28 free-text responses. The inspector also spoke to some parents on the first day of the inspection.
- The inspector considered nine responses to the staff survey and 34 responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Catherine Crooks, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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