

Wreake Valley Academy

Parkstone Road, Syston, Leicester, Leicestershire LE7 1LY

Inspection dates

9–10 May 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	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Until recently, leaders have not acted quickly enough to ensure that outcomes improve rapidly. In 2017, outcomes for pupils were weak, particularly for boys, disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.
- Pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable, because not all teachers have high enough expectations of what pupils are able to achieve or for their behaviour.
- Leaders and governors have not ensured that the use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils has had a positive impact on the progress that these pupils make.
- Until recently, leaders' evaluation of the quality of teaching and pupils' behaviour has been too positive. It has not led to improvements in these aspects of the school's work.
- Leaders' plans to improve the school are not sharp enough.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent across subjects and year groups.
- Teaching does not inspire and enthuse pupils in their learning at key stage 4.
- Teachers do not routinely use prior attainment information thoughtfully enough to challenge pupils and set work that is matched to their abilities.
- Pupils' attendance is improving, but it is not yet good enough for disadvantaged pupils.
- Pupils' attitudes towards their learning are not consistently positive and there is some low-level disruption in lessons. A significant minority of pupils do not follow the school's expectations about behaviour and punctuality.
- Leaders have implemented a new curriculum at key stages 3 and 4. However, it is too soon to see the impact of this on pupils' outcomes.

The school has the following strengths

- The leadership of the sixth form is effective. Students benefit from effective teaching and support, enabling them to achieve well.
- Pastoral care is a strength of this school. Pupils say they feel safe, well supported and cared for.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in mathematics has improved and pupils make good progress in this subject.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - pupil premium funding has a positive impact on improving the attendance and outcomes of disadvantaged pupils
 - the school's improvement plan contains clear success criteria for the school's priorities, so that leaders can monitor the impact of their work and governors are able to hold leaders stringently to account for its effectiveness
 - the monitoring of teaching and learning reliably identifies practice which is not yet good and leaders take action to improve weaker practice
 - the use of resources such as pupil premium funding is evaluated sharply, so that they know which actions are having impact and which are not.
- Improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' outcomes by ensuring that:
 - teachers accurately and consistently use assessment information when planning learning activities so that they are matched to the needs and abilities of pupils
 - teachers consistently have high expectations of what pupils can do so that all pupils routinely complete work that is challenging
 - inconsistencies in the quality of teaching are eradicated
 - boys and disadvantaged pupils make better progress from their starting points.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - ensuring that all teachers have high expectations of behaviour throughout the school
 - ensuring that that the whole school behaviour policy is consistently applied by staff and followed by all pupils
 - reducing the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are regularly absent from school
 - developing pupils' confidence and resilience so that they concentrate in lessons and have more positive attitudes to learning.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding 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

- Leaders have persevered, through very challenging recent circumstances, to restructure the school following significant changes in the local area. Their actions have been effective in securing the current stability of the school and in retaining specialist teachers. However, leaders have not taken sufficient action to ensure that all teaching is good and pupils make good progress.
- Until recently, leaders' evaluation of the quality of teaching and pupil behaviour has been too positive. This has meant that they have not put the right actions in place quickly enough to ensure that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment improved, and that pupils' behaviour is consistently good.
- The impact of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils has not been effective. Disadvantaged pupils underachieve and many are regularly absent from school. The pupil premium strategy is not planned carefully or evaluated sharply enough. This means that leaders and governors do not know which strategies are the most effective for pupils.
- The quality of subject leadership is not consistently good. Recently, the quality of middle leadership has been strengthened by the appointment of new leaders and in the creation of joint leaders in English and mathematics. These new leaders are beginning to ensure that teachers use information about pupils' starting points to plan learning that has the right level of challenge. However, these developments are in their infancy and only beginning to have a positive impact on outcomes.
- Leaders have recently introduced a new programme of training for staff. The training is proving effective in motivating staff but it is too soon to judge its impact on raising achievement.
- Leaders have benefited from the early support provided by the prospective multi-academy trust and from other sources of external expertise. They have invested in programmes to strengthen the school's leadership and support improvements in the curriculum and in academic outcomes, particularly in English, science and in the achievement of boys.
- Leaders have implemented a new curriculum in key stage 3 and different 'pathways' at key stage 4. These new approaches are meeting pupils' needs, interests and abilities and raising their aspirations. However, it is too soon to see an impact on pupils' outcomes.
- Pastoral leadership is a strength of the school, particularly in the care extended towards vulnerable pupils who may find themselves in difficulty.
- The leadership of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is strong. Additional funding for eligible pupils is now sharply focused on ensuring that pupils make the progress that they should. This is evident through the carefully managed use of additional adults in the classroom who effectively reshape learning activities to support more rapid progress.
- The programme for pupils' personal, social, health and economic development is

effective and well planned. Pupils benefit from a wide range of stimulating experiences, which have a positive effect on their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as well as their understanding of fundamental British values. A range of extra-curricular activities, including sports, music and drama, enables pupils to develop their skills and talents outside of the taught curriculum.

- A carefully planned programme of careers education has been implemented from Year 7 to the end of Year 11 to support pupils with their next steps in education, employment or training. Almost all pupils secure placements by the end of key stage 4.
- The catch-up funding for literacy and mathematics is effective in ensuring that those pupils who begin the school with low levels of literacy and numeracy are able to catch up with their peers.
- The ambitious drive for improvement in the sixth form has ensured a very positive, purposeful and highly respected study environment. Younger pupils in the school are aware of the strength of the sixth form and aspire to join it.

Governance of the school

- The governance of the school has recently experienced significant changes in membership and is strengthening.
 - Governors do not have a sharp understanding of the impact of the school's work to improve outcomes for pupils, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. They have not held leaders closely to account for the use of pupil premium funding.
 - Governors are ambitious in their outlook for the school and are keen to see outcomes for pupils improve rapidly. They have been instrumental in the decision to join a local multi-academy trust in September 2018.
 - Governors are skilled and knowledgeable. They are well informed and know the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors ask challenging questions of the headteacher and senior leaders and are now prepared to take decisive action where necessary. For example, they are determined to see improvements in pupils' achievements in English.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The checks made on the recruitment of staff are effective and monitored by senior leaders and governors. Procedures are firmly in place for ensuring that all visitors are suitably checked.
- The designated safeguarding lead is very well supported by a team of staff who are appropriately trained. This includes training on radicalisation and extremism. Leaders work effectively with outside agencies to ensure that pupils receive the right support.
- All staff understand what to do if they have any concerns about a pupil's well-being. School records are well organised and detailed, and demonstrate that prompt action is taken to keep pupils safe. Care for pupils who are vulnerable is sensitive, thorough and well documented.

- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They can identify which adults they need to go to if they have any concerns or worries. The majority of parents and carers agree that safeguarding is a positive feature of the school and that pupils are happy and well cared for.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent between subjects and between key stages.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough, particularly for boys. Teachers do not routinely use information about pupils' prior attainment to ensure that their needs are identified or that work is set at the right level. Many pupils routinely work on the same activities. Consequently, many middle- and higher-attaining pupils do not make as much progress as they should because they are not sufficiently challenged.
- Teaching does not routinely inspire pupils to do their best or find out more, particularly at key stage 4.
- The quality of teachers' questioning of what pupils know or can do is variable, especially at key stage 4. Too often, questioning does not consistently deepen pupils' knowledge, understanding or skills. As a result, pupils are not sufficiently challenged and do not learn rapidly enough.
- The use of assessment varies widely. It is not consistently well used to check pupils' understanding or inform them how they can be more successful. New approaches to assessment have been introduced recently and, where applied, assessment is beginning to improve. However, pupils say that this is inconsistent and that they are sometimes unsure about how well they are doing.
- Teachers do not consistently ensure that pupils respond to, or learn from, feedback in line with the school's policy. Workbooks which were scrutinised during the inspection confirmed this.
- The setting of homework tasks is inconsistent. A high proportion of parents who responded to Ofsted's survey also expressed their concern about the variability in teachers' expectations for setting and acknowledging homework tasks.
- The support provided by additional adults is effective. Their actions are helping to improve the progress made by pupils, particularly those who have SEN and/or disabilities. Inspectors observed how activities and questioning were successfully adapted to meet the needs of pupils and to keep them focused and engaged with their learning.
- There are particular strengths in the teaching of mathematics. In this subject, teachers are effective in setting challenging tasks and in assessing pupils accurately. This leads to more rapid progress.
- Teaching in the sixth form is stronger than in key stage 4. Teachers have higher expectations of behaviour, learning attitudes and engagement from students. Teachers' planning of engaging and challenging activities leads to progress being made more

rapidly. Students say that they enjoy their learning in this key stage.

- There are well planned and effective opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of fundamental British values and spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues. For example, pupils' understanding of democracy is developed through the school's regular debate weeks and participation in the national 'Youth Parliament'. Furthermore, respect for cultural diversity is promoted through events such as food tasting, music and art exhibitions. Assemblies are effectively used to encourage independent thinking about a variety of issues including human rights and staying safe, using approaches such as interactive questioning and 'pause for thought'.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- There is a well-coordinated programme of learning for personal development. This enables pupils to explore issues such as healthy relationships, financial well-being and staying safe, including online safety and child sexual exploitation. The school has also been awarded healthy school status in recognition of the priority that the school places on this aspect of learning.
- Pupils benefit from a well-planned programme of activities linked to careers education, which commences during key stage 3. Pupils are taught how to identify the skills required for different types of employment. At key stage 4, the advice and guidance is carefully targeted and pupils benefit from access to impartial careers advice, motivational speakers and visits to alternative post-16 centres. As a result, the vast majority of pupils secure places in further education, employment or training. The proportion of pupils not in education, employment or training has reduced over the last two years and is below the national average.
- Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. For example, in science pupils discuss moral issues when they are learning about vaccinations and transplants. In art and design, pupils explore the intention and visual expression of words in public as part of the 'graffiti project'.
- Pupils, particularly in key stage 3, perceive incidences of bullying to be low and this is reflected in school records. They were confident that they knew which staff they could talk to and that any issues would be dealt with effectively.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and well cared for. The majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's survey agreed.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils' levels of concentration are not consistent, particularly at key stage 4. When work is not set at the right level or is not sufficiently engaging, their concentration is not as focused and there is some low-level disruption.

- In the vast majority of lessons, pupils follow instructions from their teachers promptly. Inspectors found that pupils are particularly keen to do well in Years 7 to 9. However, at key stage 4 there is greater variability in how well pupils apply themselves to their learning.
- Overall absence and persistent absence were above the national average in 2016 and 2017. Overall attendance has improved very slightly for current pupils. Persistent absence has improved more significantly, particularly for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils not attending school regularly remains high.
- Pupils' conduct around the school is generally calm and orderly. The vast majority of pupils are punctual to lessons, although a significant minority are not. This is particularly evident in the morning prior to tutor time but was also observed by inspectors during lesson changeovers.
- The proportion of fixed-term exclusions increased between 2015 and 2017. School records show that for current pupils the proportion of fixed-term and repeat exclusions has reduced. Levels are now broadly average compared to national figures.
- School records show that the very small proportion of pupils receiving alternative provision off-site generally attend and behave well.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- At the end of key stage 4 in 2016 and 2017, outcomes were weak and pupils underachieved overall. In 2017, outcomes in English and in most optional subjects were weak. By contrast, attainment in mathematics was much stronger and above the national average.
- In 2017, attainment across a range of subjects studied was below that of other pupils nationally. Outcomes were particularly weak for boys, disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- The Year 7 catch-up funding is having a positive impact. Leaders have established a 'fresh start' package for pupils identified initially in Year 7. This programme supports the development of pupils' literacy skills, their self-confidence and resilience. As a result, these pupils are making better progress.
- Over the past year, progress has improved across year groups. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 are making much better progress than they had previously. The introduction of a new curriculum and assessment strategy has positively supported this. Disadvantaged pupils are also beginning to make better progress.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are now making good progress, which is similar to that of other pupils when compared to national figures.
- The school's own performance information, work in pupils' books and evidence from lesson observations indicate that current pupils are making better progress than they did in 2017. Pupils achieve particularly well in key stage 3.
- There is effective support and guidance in helping pupils to find places for their next stage in education or training. The proportion of pupils securing placements is above

the national average.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is consistently good. Students enjoy their lessons and find them interesting and challenging. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and they use this enthusiastically to deepen understanding through, for example, the effective use of a range of questioning and assessment techniques. Teaching in this key stage is stronger than elsewhere in the school.
- Attendance is good and students' attitudes to learning are very positive. Students say that they enjoy their learning and that they value the support provided by their teachers. The retention of students in the completion of their courses is good.
- Achievement in the sixth form is good and continues to improve. In recent years, outcomes have risen consistently and, in 2017, A-level results were close to the national average.
- Expectations are high. For example, students are expected to improve GCSE grades in English and mathematics. Outcomes in the courses are good, particularly in mathematics, and are above average when compared to national figures.
- The leadership of the sixth form is ambitious for further improvement. Leaders are acutely aware of the strengths and areas for further improvement. There is a very positive and respectful ethos and work ethic in the sixth-form study centre. Relationships between staff and students are positive. Students are polite, courteous and helpful. They respect and willingly accept responsibility for making highly effective use of independent study time, for example.
- Work experience is an integral part of the sixth-form study programme and all students are expected to participate. Effective links have been established with a local university and a local business to secure interesting placements. Students say that they have positively benefited from this experience.
- Students receive good pastoral support. The personal development programme is effective in providing information and guidance about the next steps in their education. Students talk positively about the support received from tutors and following impartial careers advice. As a result, the proportion of students entering higher or further education, training or employment is above the national average.

School details

Unique reference number	137983
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	10047630

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	820
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	173
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Mrs Carol Chambers
Principal	Mr Tony Pinnock
Telephone number	0116 264 1080
Website	www.wvacademy.org/
Email address	admin@wvacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school has recently emerged from a period of local restructuring affecting key stage 4. This has resulted in a significant reduction in the number of pupils on roll and in the complement of staff since the time of the last inspection.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is slightly higher than the national average. The proportion in receipt of education, health and care plans is lower

than the national average.

- A small number of pupils attend curriculum provision off-site. The provision used is provided by the Melton Behaviour Partnership.
- The school meets the current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out under Section 5 of the Education Act 2005.
- Inspectors observed 38 parts of lessons across the main school and the sixth form, in a range of subjects. Inspectors also visited tutor time and assembly.
- Inspectors spoke with three groups of pupils, including one group from the sixth form.
- Inspectors met with a range of school leaders, including the principal, vice-principal and assistant principals responsible for teaching and learning, behaviour and the sixth form. Inspectors also spoke with the special educational needs coordinator, the designated safeguarding leader, the leader of careers, pastoral leaders and subject leaders. A meeting was held with four governors, and the lead inspector held a telephone conversation with the chair of the governing body. The lead inspector also met with leaders of the Bradgate Education Partnership. The school is to join this multi-academy trust from 1 September 2018.
- A range of documentation was examined, including the school's self-evaluation, pupils' performance information; the governing body minutes of meetings; behaviour logs; curriculum plans and school policies in relation to safeguarding, behaviour and teaching, learning and assessment.
- Inspectors evaluated the 65 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey.

Inspection team

Chris Stevens, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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Peter Monk	Ofsted Inspector
Karen Hayes	Ofsted Inspector

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