

# Warwick Academy

Dulley Avenue, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire NN8 2PS

## Inspection dates

1–2 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
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- The principal has sustained the timely actions she introduced when taking up post 19 months ago. However, the drawn-out transition to a new academy sponsor and further staffing turmoil have slowed the impact.
- Other school leaders are not sufficiently skilled in their roles to support the principal to rapidly improve teaching.
- Leaders' analysis of monitoring information is not sufficiently sharp to inform precise actions to secure more rapid improvement.
- Teaching is not yet consistently good across the school. Teachers do not use assessment with adequate precision to identify the next steps in learning that will move pupils rapidly forward.
- Teachers are not consistently effective at showing pupils how to improve their work to attain higher standards, particularly in reading. They are not checking pupils' understanding to successfully tackle more challenging questions.
- Additional adults are not consistently effective in supporting pupils to improve their learning.
- Although pupils enjoy the topics they are taught, the curriculum framework does not ensure that pupils systematically build up their knowledge and skills.
- Absence and exclusions are at too high a level, despite the actions in place.
- Outcomes at key stage 2 remain low. Improvements are not sufficiently rapid to make up for historic underachievement.

### The school has the following strengths

- The resilient principal has kept a clear focus on improving pupils' outcomes.
- Outcomes in the early years and key stage 1 have improved considerably.
- Leaders have established a calm and welcoming learning environment where pupils are now keen to learn. Pupils are respectful, friendly and polite to each other and to adults.
- Recent external support has increased access to effective training for staff and is having a positive impact. Staff are relishing these opportunities.
- Pupils' personal, social and emotional well-being is promoted very well. Vulnerable pupils and their families are sensitively supported. Pupils are proud of their school and feel safe.

## Full report

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

- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - leaders sharply analyse information to inform actions that secure more rapid improvement
  - all leaders understand their roles and responsibilities so that they can be held fully to account for moving teaching and outcomes forward rapidly
  - leaders review the school's curriculum to ensure that it systematically develops the knowledge and skills pupils need
  - leaders improve attendance and reduce exclusions.
- Improve teaching and learning to be consistently good by ensuring that:
  - teachers use assessment information to plan more accurately for the needs of all pupils
  - teachers deepen their subject knowledge so that they can show pupils how to improve their work to achieve higher standards
  - teachers effectively teach comprehension skills to deepen pupils' understanding of what they are reading
  - teachers check pupils' understanding within lessons to quickly move learning on
  - other adults have the necessary subject knowledge and skills to support teachers to move pupils' learning forward more rapidly.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- The principal joined the school just before the previous inspection as a joint interim principal. She was immediately effective in implementing appropriate actions to address weak teaching and refocus the school on pupils' outcomes. A high level of staff turnover ensued.
- Since being appointed as the permanent principal in September 2016, she has resolutely maintained a clear focus on improving teaching and outcomes. She was proactive in seeking training and support from local partnerships. However, there has been further staffing turmoil. The protracted rebrokering of the school to a new academy sponsor, which is still not completed, has created additional instability and uncertainty. This has impeded the rate of improvement.
- At the last section 8 inspection, it was recognised that the current academy sponsors had improved the effectiveness of their support through regular monitoring, training, challenge and support. Senior leaders have valued the professional and effective support that has continued to be provided by The Education Fellowship Trust (TEFT) allocated staff, despite their limited resources during this time of transition. However, the restricted capacity of TEFT has limited access to the quality and extent of training that were required to assist leaders to rapidly improve teaching and outcomes.
- Funding was recently put in place by the Department for Education (DfE) to enable the potential new sponsor to work in advance with the school. Lion Academy Trust (LAT) has a strong track record of rapid school improvement. There has been an immediate positive impact. School leaders have been provided with effective training to sharpen action planning. LAT has also provided access to highly skilled lead teachers to model new approaches to teaching. This is a promising start to their partnership. However, leaders are not effectively analysing the wide range of internal information and data about pupils to inform next steps with sufficient clarity and timeliness to bring about consistently rapid improvement.
- Until these recent improvements, the drive to move the school forward has been overly reliant upon the principal. The reorganisation of responsibilities to other leaders is starting to improve the understanding of roles and accountability. However, these changes are not yet sufficiently embedded for all leaders to be driving forward rapid improvements in teaching and learning. Deployment of leaders across year groups has strengthened the consistency of approaches and routines across the school. However, they are not able to model the outstanding practice that is required to bring about rapid improvement.
- Leaders' actions have ensured that the assessment system used by the school provides teachers with a consistent framework for planning learning in English and mathematics. Leaders have provided effective training so that teachers are routinely assessing pupils' learning. Evidence gathered during the inspection confirmed leaders' self-evaluation that assessment of age-related expectations is now accurate. Teachers are consistently held to account for improving pupils' outcomes through regular pupil progress meetings.
- Leaders' use of the school's pupil premium funding has led to some improvements in

the progress and attainment made by disadvantaged pupils. Investment in the effective pastoral team and careful planning to improve pupils' social and emotional skills are contributing to improving behaviour for learning. However, as the quality of teaching and learning is not consistently good, some gaps remain in some classes and in some subject areas when comparing the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils with those of their peers.

- The leader responsible for pupils who have special education needs (SEN) and/or disabilities knows these pupils' needs well. Leaders monitor the pupils requiring additional help closely. They ensure that parents, carers and pupils are involved in developing their 'SEN passports' and use external support where necessary. The proportion of pupils being supported by 'SEN passports' is now considerably higher than the proportion of pupils formally identified on the special needs register. The impact of this support on the academic outcomes of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is not yet consistently good.
- Leaders use the additional funding provided through the primary physical education (PE) and sport premium well. In addition to providing good-quality teaching and coaching skills, more pupils participate in a range of sporting activities and competitions than previously.
- Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is broad and balanced. They have ensured that the curriculum provides a wide range of learning activities to enthuse pupils. Pupils also benefit from a range of extra-curricular opportunities. However, the curriculum framework is not yet systematically building up pupils' knowledge and skills as consistently as in English and mathematics.
- Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education well. Pupils regularly learn about world faiths and cultural similarities and differences. Current news events are explored through assemblies and class discussions. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities such as planning charity fundraising, and older pupils work as part of an anti-bullying action group. Overall, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The principal has established a clear vision of improvement. Almost all staff who completed the Ofsted online questionnaire and who spoke with inspectors are supportive of leaders.
- The majority of parents who spoke with inspectors had confidence in the school. However, a considerable proportion of the parents who chose to give their views on Ofsted's online parent questionnaire were unhappy with leaders' communication and response to their concerns. Evidence gathered during the inspection showed that leaders had consistently drawn on a range of views and information to make well-considered decisions. Leaders are mindful that they need to continue to find ways to ensure that all parents feel equally well informed.

## **Governance of the school**

- Since the time of the previous inspection, the main responsibilities of governance have been held by TEFT, supported by an academy advisory board with very limited responsibilities.
- A new and highly experienced chair of governors was recently appointed to support

leaders through the final stages of the transition to a new academy sponsor.

- The principal has made sure that the academy advisory board has an accurate understanding of the school. Governors on the advisory board have shown a commitment to fulfilling their responsibilities, including visits to the school and discussions with leaders. Although recently appointed, the chair has used his experience and expertise well to challenge the principal to reflect upon, and begin to refine, the information reported to the academy advisory board.
- The TEFT advisory staff who have been responsible for providing challenge and support for the school in terms of statutory governance have ensured that key policies and procedures are appropriately implemented during this interim period. Nevertheless, the drawn-out rebrokering process has hindered the refinement of school policies and actions.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There are clear and rigorous systems and procedures in place, which are understood by all staff. Leaders carry out all necessary checks before adults begin to work or volunteer at the school.
- Leaders keep precise records to ensure effective and timely work with external agencies. Staff receive frequent relevant training and updates, including on radicalisation and extremism.
- The culture of safeguarding in the school is evident. Pupils spoken to by inspectors said they feel safe. Learning how to keep safe is woven into pupils' learning across the school curriculum. The school has a strong link with local police, which has helped them to work effectively with pupils to give them strategies to protect themselves against inappropriate adult or peer pressure.
- Case studies and records show that vulnerable children and their families are well supported. Leaders have made considerable investments in welfare provision, recognising the high level of need in the community. Although there have been continuing incidents of exclusion, these are stringently logged. The pastoral team works tenaciously to secure appropriate support from external agencies to meet the complex needs of excluded pupils. Leaders are quick to investigate and follow up on any concerns.
- The academy trust holds the responsibility for challenging and supporting school leaders in relation to their safeguarding responsibilities. TEFT's safeguarding and inclusion officer has been thorough in checking and supporting the rigour of school procedures.

**Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Requires improvement**

- The quality of teaching is not consistently good. Although appropriate actions are in place to improve pupils' progress towards achieving age-appropriate expectations, a continued high rate of staff turnover has slowed the intended impact.
- Leaders have ensured that teachers' assessments are now accurate through updating assessment systems, effective training and internal and external moderation. However, teachers across the school do not all have the skills and depth of subject knowledge to use assessment well enough to inform their planning for the next steps in learning and to ensure that all pupils are appropriately challenged.
- Teachers consistently share learning intentions and success criteria with pupils, in line with school policy. However, teachers are not sufficiently skilled at showing pupils how they can improve. Pupils' books showed that teachers are diligent in following the school's marking policy, especially in corrections of punctuation and spelling. However, they are not regularly giving guidance that ensures that pupils go back, self-check and learn from mistakes as the school's policy indicates.
- The teaching of phonics is effective in ensuring that pupils are successfully able to read words accurately. However, teachers are not consistently ensuring that pupils understand the vocabulary and concepts within the texts they are reading. This is limiting pupils' ability to develop deeper comprehension skills and attain higher outcomes in reading. For example, an able Year 5 reader was expected to answer the question 'Why did the author refer to trees as "the lungs of the earth"?' However, although she could read the words 'photosynthesis' and 'carbon dioxide', she was not familiar with what they meant.
- The specialist mathematics teacher has introduced a systematic calculation policy that has secured clear improvement in the teaching of number skills across the school. This is ensuring that the majority of pupils can accurately use age-appropriate calculation strategies. However, teachers are not consistent in giving pupils frequent and well-matched opportunities to apply, prove and deepen their understanding.
- The teaching of writing across the school is a stronger aspect. Work in pupils' books shows clear year-on-year progress that is appropriate to age-related expectations. Where teaching is strongest, pupils are shown how to craft and develop their ideas. For example, a Year 6 pupil wrote, 'Despite their best endeavours, they still crashed against rocks, causing them to capsize.'
- Teaching assistants provide effective care and support so that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities feel confident in undertaking learning tasks. Some teaching assistants are able then to skilfully reshape questions and learning activities to move pupils' learning forward. However, there is variability in teaching assistants' skills and personal subject knowledge.
- Teachers have good relationships with pupils and pupils are keen to learn. Pupils are proud to receive achievement awards in weekly celebration assemblies.
- Teachers consistently maintain routines and approaches in line with school policies. This has secured a consistently calm and focused climate for learning.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Requires improvement

## Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- The principal has successfully led significant improvements to the learning environment and has established the school's values of 'resilience, respect, independence, teamwork, curiosity and honesty'. There were also many examples during the inspection of pupils showing inspectors that they are keen and ambitious to improve their learning.
- However, teachers are not yet consistently ensuring that pupils have the skills to be as independent and successful in their learning as they need to be. For example, pupils are still heavily reliant on adults reminding them of routine expectations, such as habits of basic punctuation.
- Leaders set a strong example in treating all pupils with dignity and respect and they are very effective role models for pupils.
- Pupils walk around the school respectfully and hold doors open for others in school. They are lively at playtimes, but not rowdy. Pupils settle down to work in lessons quickly and most follow the teachers' instructions readily. Pupils work well together and very little disruption of learning was observed during the inspection.
- Pupils who use the school's breakfast club enjoy their time with their peers and are well prepared for the start of the school day.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe and told inspectors they feel safe. They know who to speak to in school if they have any worries and particularly trust the principal to sort out concerns. They understand the different forms of bullying, including cyber bullying, and how to keep themselves safe online. School is particularly aware of building pupils' resilience to cope with inappropriate peer pressure in order to help them feel confident in transferring to secondary school. School records show that bullying is rare and staff vigilance is high when monitoring this.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- There are high rates of persistent absence and a low attendance rate when compared to those seen in most schools. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is greater than seen in most schools. Although leaders are taking action to tackle pupils' absence, figures are slow to improve.
- Leaders are ensuring that there is a great deal of care and sensitive support being offered to individuals and their families, and case studies show very positive impact. However, the detailed tracking and analysis of patterns of absence are not established and this sometimes delays decisive action.
- There are still a number of older key stage 2 pupils who have been slower to respond to the shift in behavioural and learning expectations that is tangible across the majority of the school. The number of exclusions has been high over the past two years, including repeat exclusions. External advice, particularly since February, has helped the pastoral team and teaching assistants manage these situations more effectively. This

has led to recent month-on-month reductions in the number of pupils being excluded.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Over time, there are inconsistencies in the progress made by different groups of pupils and in different subject areas. Standards are improving, but pupils across the school, particularly at key stage 2, do not make consistently good progress.
- Outcomes for pupils in key stage 2 have been low over several years. In 2017, pupils did improve their overall attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. However, these were still well below national averages. Outcomes were slightly stronger in writing and were ratified by external moderation in both 2016 and 2017. Mathematics attainment showed the most improvement, from being very low in 2016.
- The improvements in key stage 2 outcomes in 2017 were not reflected in the rates of progress in published data. At the time of the last inspection, it was identified that assessment had historically been inaccurate. This has resulted in published figures continuing to show lower gains than have been made.
- Outcomes for pupils in key stage 1 improved significantly to be close to national averages for reading, writing and mathematics in 2017. Given the low starting points of pupils on entry to the school, this is strong progress. Boys' progress was particularly strong.
- Current school assessment information is consistent with what pupils' books show – that current pupils are making stronger progress than in previous years. Current Year 6 pupils are making more rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics compared to pupils in 2017 and from what pupil books showed as their starting point at the start of the academic year. The proportion of Year 6 pupils whom the school believes are on track to achieve expected and higher standards in all three subjects is continuing to improve.

## Early years provision

## Requires improvement

- Leaders have recently ensured that provision in the early years is rapidly improving. However, this improvement is heavily reliant on the intervention and support of the principal, who is currently also the early years leader. Although there are appropriate plans to delegate this responsibility, these are not yet in place.
- The proportion of children in the early years who achieved a good level of development improved in 2017 to be slightly above national averages. However, there is still variability in how well adults are supporting children to extend their language, stamina and independence so that they are well prepared to build on their learning in Year 1.
- The majority of pupils enter the Reception Year with skills below those typically expected for their age. Leaders have improved the assessment on entry and how this is now used to plan for progress. However, information is not yet sharply analysed to closely check the rates of progress for different pupils.
- Leaders ensure that adult-led activities are well planned and that they are focused on developing skills to enable children to be ready to tackle the challenges of Year 1. For



example, a teacher was skilfully weaving in phonics learning while supporting children to write sentences.

- Teachers provide a wide range of activities, both indoors and outdoors. Prompts and questions are provided to give purpose to activities, for example seeds had been planted and labelled 'What is happening?' However, children were choosing to play within a small range of preferred areas, such as construction and the home corner. Supporting adults were not helping children to use the resources provided to extend their play and learning. Opportunities to model language and questions to encourage children to reason were also missed. As a consequence, activities did not build on what is learned in more formal group sessions.
- All adults model clear expectations and respectful and caring relationships. Children develop positive attitudes and play cooperatively with each other. Staff settle children quickly into the routines and ensure that they learn to get along well with others.
- Safeguarding in the early years is effective and children are happy and confident. Parents appreciate the approachability of staff and are rightly confident that their children are safe and cared for well.

## School details

Unique reference number	138887
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10047994

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	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	360
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Mr Bob Townson
Principal	Mrs Sarah Sears
Telephone number	01933 446 900
Website	<a href="http://warwickacademy.education/">http://warwickacademy.education/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:principal@warwickprimary.net">principal@warwickprimary.net</a>
Date of previous inspection	7–8 June 2016

## Information about this school

- The headteacher joined the school in April 2016. There have been considerable changes in staffing since the previous inspection.
- Since the last inspection, governance has been the responsibility of the academy sponsor, TEFT, via an academy advisory board.
- In March 2017, the DfE agreed to a request from the current sponsor, TEFT, to terminate their funding agreement for all 12 of their schools. As a result, all of them, including Warwick Academy, are being rebrokered by the regional schools commissioner. TEFT remains in place as the sponsor until that matter is resolved.
- The DfE has provided funding for LAT to undertake consultancy work with the school during the rebrokering process.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The school runs a breakfast club.
- In 2017, the school did not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school meets the DfE's definition of a coasting school based on key stage 2 academic performance results for the past three years.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 27 lessons, including nine jointly observed with the principal. Inspectors heard pupils read. The inspectors talked with pupils about their school and looked at pupils' books while visiting lessons. The team scrutinised a large sample of pupils' work jointly with the principal and leadership team to gain a view of the impact of teaching over time.
- Meetings were held with the principal and other leaders, including the vice principals, and leaders responsible for the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, pastoral care, English, mathematics, PE, the early years and age phases. A meeting was held with the chair and a governor from the academy advisory board. Meetings were held with representatives of the current academy sponsor (TEFT) and also the proposed academy sponsor (LAT).
- Inspectors spoke with 30 parents informally at the start of the school day and considered 35 responses to Ofsted's online parent questionnaire, Parent View, and the free-text service for parents.
- Inspectors considered 23 responses to the online survey of staff and four responses to the online survey of pupils.
- The inspectors observed pupils across the school day, including at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plans, academy sponsor reviews, the school's most recent information on pupils' achievement, information related to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance and the information published on the school's website.

## Inspection team

Mandy Wilding, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Elizabeth Mace	Ofsted Inspector
Jane Ferguson	Ofsted Inspector

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