

Castle Wood Academy

The Avenue, Gainsborough, Lincolnshire DN21 1EH

Inspection dates

5–6 June 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of teaching and learning in key stages 1 varies too much. Pupils are often not challenged to extend their thinking and deepen their understanding.
- Teachers do not consistently check that work is accurately matched to pupils' abilities. Pupils often repeat activities rather than develop their skills and then practise them in new situations.
- Too often, teachers do not provide the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, with enough challenge in their learning. Some pupils do not reach the standards of which they are capable, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- Teachers do not have consistently high expectations for the standard of pupils' handwriting.
- Teachers do not consistently make sure that any misunderstandings pupils have in their learning are dealt with effectively and promptly.
- Subject leaders for English and mathematics are new to their roles. They are not yet sufficiently established in their roles to have an impact on teaching in these subjects.

The school has the following strengths

- The executive headteacher, with the support of the head of school, leads the academy well. She has skilfully guided and developed a leadership team that is ambitious and focused on securing school improvement.
- Children make an excellent start to their education in the early years. They thrive and are enthusiastic learners because the early years leader and teacher plan inspiring and engaging learning activities that help children effectively to know and remember more.
- The teaching of phonics is effective. A higher than average proportion of pupils achieve the national standard by the end of Year 1.
- The school's promotion of pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The school has a calm and nurturing atmosphere where pupils enjoy learning.
- The provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is good. They receive support which enables them to make good progress.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' achievement across all subjects by ensuring that all teachers:
 - accurately identify next steps in pupils' learning so that work is more closely matched to pupils' abilities
 - challenge the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, so that they achieve the high standards of which they are capable, particularly in writing and mathematics
 - consistently reinforce high expectations for pupils' handwriting
 - promptly address pupils' misconceptions so that they can improve their work and make strong progress.
- Develop the roles of the English and mathematics subject leaders so that they are able to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since her appointment in September 2016, the executive headteacher has used her considerable expertise to skilfully develop staff to become effective leaders. The recent appointment of a new head of school has further strengthened the leadership team and created a secure platform for the continued future improvement of the school.
- The executive headteacher and head of school have taken wide-ranging actions to secure improvements, including in the quality of teaching. Their shared determination and vision have been key to their successes so far, in the early years and in the teaching of, and achievement in, phonics. Although continuing to improve, good teaching is not firmly established throughout the school.
- Most subject and middle leaders lead their areas of responsibility well. They have correctly identified the priorities and actions needed to improve achievement for pupils. The new subject leaders for English and mathematics have not yet established themselves in their roles. They are receiving effective support and guidance from experienced colleagues across the trust to bring improvements in writing and mathematics.
- Senior leaders work well with staff across the school. Members of staff say they are well supported by senior leaders to improve their practice. They appreciate the measures leaders have put in place to ensure that they are valued team members who are consulted on school improvement priorities. They highly value the consideration leaders give to the workload of staff.
- The coordinator for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities has ensured that extra funding received by the academy is used effectively to raise standards for these pupils. She works closely with colleagues and parents to make sure that support is closely matched to pupils' needs.
- Leaders ensure that the academy provides a broad and balanced curriculum for the pupils. Themes and activities are chosen to provide a wide range of learning activities for pupils to develop skills in different areas. Staff provide enrichment activities such as external visitors and trips, and a variety of extra-curricular clubs. Leaders have identified that a review of the curriculum is necessary as a result of pupils now moving into key stage 2. They are ambitious to ensure that the curriculum accurately reflects the needs of the community from which the pupils are drawn.
- Leaders use the pupil premium funding effectively to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. However, leaders recognise that funding could be more sharply evaluated and targeted to enable pupils to make good progress. As a result, leaders carried out a review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding. The suggested actions from this recent review have not yet been implemented.

Governance of the school

- Until recently the governance of the academy was overseen by trustees. In September 2017, a local governing body was appointed. Members of the local governing body are well supported by trustees and have a range of relevant skills and knowledge.
- Governors demonstrate a strong commitment to the academy and are ambitious for pupils. They understand their responsibilities and are increasingly effective at holding senior leaders to account for school improvement.
- Governors and members of the trust work closely with academy leaders and staff to support many aspects of development in areas such as safeguarding, curricular enrichment and parental communication.
- Governors understand the importance of monitoring the use of additional funding. The recent review of the pupil premium spending has enabled governors to clarify how the funding is used to improve outcomes for pupils. They understand that they need to check provision for eligible pupils carefully and ensure that the actions taken by leaders are having the best possible impact.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff and members of the local governing body have undergone training in safeguarding. Staff understand that they have a duty to be vigilant and are aware of the different forms of abuse.
- Designated leaders for safeguarding are well trained and knowledgeable. They ensure that pupils and their families are referred to external support agencies promptly, when required. Records relating to safeguarding are thorough and kept in a well-ordered fashion.
- Leaders know the school community well. A robust system is in place to enable staff to report any safeguarding concerns they may have about a pupil. This enables leaders to take timely action to keep pupils safe. They work effectively with families to ensure the well-being of children whose circumstances may make them particularly vulnerable. Leaders ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Although improving, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently good across the school. While some pupils do well, inconsistency contributes to others not learning and progressing as well as they should.
- Teachers do not consistently match work they give to pupils to their abilities. There are occasions when pupils repeat activities unnecessarily rather than developing their skills and practising them in new contexts. This is one of the reasons why pupils are not making good progress.
- Teaching does not provide sufficient and prompt challenge for the most able pupils, so that they can securely achieve a deeper understanding, particularly in writing and

mathematics.

- Teachers' expectations of what pupils should achieve in their handwriting are not consistently high across year groups and classes. While some present their work neatly, others do not take enough care.
- Teachers are not thorough in their assessment and evaluations of pupils' work and the progress they make in different subjects. They do not ensure that the quality of pupils' work is of a consistently high standard over a period of time and in different contexts.
- Teachers do not ensure that misconceptions in pupils' learning are promptly addressed. Pupils often repeat the same mistakes in their work.
- The teaching of phonics is effective. This provides pupils with a secure base on which to build their wider reading skills. Pupils who read to the inspector were able to use their phonics knowledge well to read unfamiliar words.
- Teachers use captivating extracts from stories, topics of interest to pupils and carefully tailored resources, to motivate and inspire pupils to write across a range of topics and genres. For example, pupils in Year 2 used a dramatic film clip as a stimulus to write their descriptions of conditions experienced by Florence Nightingale during the Crimean War.
- Work in pupils' books shows that teachers provide increasingly regular opportunities for pupils to practise and apply their mathematical skills through problem-solving activities. Where challenge is appropriate, pupils are developing their mathematical skills well.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities receive effective support from skilled teaching assistants. Teachers provide additional, sharply focused work. Both teachers and teaching assistants work closely with parents and the inclusion leader to ensure that additional support meets pupils' needs.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school has a friendly and nurturing atmosphere where pupils enjoy learning. Relationships between pupils and staff are warm and caring.
- Pupils are articulate and are encouraged to be aspirational. One pupil told me that she enjoyed writing because, 'when I get older, I want to be an author more than anything else in the world'.
- Pupils are proud of their school and parents speak highly of school staff. One parent praised how the school 'does a great job communicating with parents and dealing swiftly and efficiently with anything that arises'. Another parent praised the nurture provision and the 'brilliant care of staff'.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They say that they are confident to talk to adults in school about any worries or problems they may have. They are taught how to keep safe in a variety of situations, including when using the internet. The vast majority of parents who spoke with the inspector and who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire said

that they feel their children are safe in school.

- Leaders promote healthy lifestyles effectively. Pupils were able to explain to the inspector how to stay healthy by eating well and exercising regularly. They enjoy the range of clubs and activities provided by the school and appreciate that these change regularly to keep pupils interested and provide them with different experiences.
- Leaders ensure that pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs receive well targeted support. The 'Explorers' nurture provision is securing pupils' well-being, enabling them to access the curriculum and helping them to attend school regularly.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are confident, polite and courteous.
- The vast majority of parents are positive about the behaviour of pupils in school. For example, one parent who spoke with the inspector praised the 'clear behaviour policy which means parents and pupils know what's expected of them'.
- In lessons, pupils are often encouraged to work together. Relationships are positive. They collaborate well and show mutual respect for each other. In some lessons, pupils lost focus only if their work was not well-matched to their needs.
- Pupils' attendance since the school opened has been below that seen nationally, though figures have been affected by a small number of pupils who, for legitimate reasons, have periods of long-term absence. Figures are also affected by the high number of pupils who move in and out of the school on a regular basis. Leaders monitor attendance very closely. The new head of school has successfully raised the profile of attendance in the school with parents. The overall attendance of pupils is improving and is now close to the national average. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, while below that seen nationally, is improving. The attendance and health care leader works very effectively with families to improve attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Children join the school in the Reception Year with skills that are mostly typical for their age. They make strong progress and the majority leave the Reception class having achieved a good level of development. However, observations of learning and evidence in pupils' books show that this strong progress is not consistently maintained and built on as pupils move through key stage 1.
- The quality of pupils' work in their books in Years 1 and 2 is inconsistent. Too often, the quality of pupils' writing is let down by inaccuracies and poor handwriting. In mathematics, work is sometimes too easy for pupils. There are too few examples of pupils, particularly the most able, being challenged to extend and deepen their thinking in writing and mathematics.
- Analysis of the school's current assessment information shows that disadvantaged pupils are making similar, but sometimes not as much, progress as other pupils. Leaders' plans to ensure that disadvantaged pupils receive effective, focused support through the government funding to enable them to make good progress, have not yet

been implemented.

- In some classes, pupils' progress is not as strong as in others because their work is not well-matched to their abilities. This mostly affects the most able pupils because they are not sufficiently challenged to develop a great depth of understanding.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points. The inclusion leader works closely with teachers to ensure that these pupils receive precisely focused additional adult support and work to meet their specific needs.
- A high proportion of pupils have left or joined the school in Year 2 this academic year. The information the school collects about pupils' progress shows that this is having an impact on the school's overall performance. Analysis shows that pupils who are on roll at the school throughout key stage 1 are making better progress in reading, writing and mathematics than those who joined during the course of the school year.
- In 2017, the proportion of pupils who attained the required standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check was above national averages. Current information and observations of pupils learning new letter sounds indicate that the majority of pupils in Year 1 are making good progress in their knowledge and use of phonics. They are on track to attain the expected standard.
- For the last two years, the proportion of children who reach a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year has been above national figures. School information shared with the inspector indicates that a higher proportion of current children are on track to attain a good level of development.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Leadership of the early years is outstanding. The leader for early years is extremely knowledgeable and has very high expectations for children's learning. She has had a significant impact on securing the exceptionally good outcomes that have been sustained since the school opened.
- The children make an excellent start to their school life when they enter the Reception Year. The highly skilled teacher plans sharply focused, exceptionally motivating activities for the children. These activities are based on her very thorough assessment of children's needs and abilities, to ensure that they make gains in all areas rapidly.
- The leader for early years has worked very effectively with the teacher of the Reception class to cement strong relationships with parents and external organisations to ensure that the needs of children are met.
- The majority of the children start the Reception Year with skills which are broadly typical for their age. Children of all abilities and backgrounds make strong progress over time, leaving the early years at good levels of development that are above those seen nationally. They are very well prepared for Year 1 as a result of very effective assessment procedures which accurately contribute to the next steps in children's learning.
- Children who are disadvantaged and those who have SEN and/or disabilities are supported with great skill. Teachers provide extra adult support and adapt activities to make sure they meet children's specific needs.

- Children in the Reception Year are very well cared for and procedures for keeping them safe are effective. The classroom environment is a highly motivating and safe place for children to learn. They benefit from a well-planned curriculum that engages pupils, in particular boys, and stimulates their interests. Adults have consistently high expectations of each child and extend their learning through thought-provoking questions that encourage children to think deeply for themselves.
- Children work cooperatively together to develop their vocabulary and social skills. For example, in a role play area, children worked collaboratively to examine the mysterious arrival of a huge dinosaur egg. They enthusiastically worked together to put their detective skills into action and investigate the crime scene for clues.
- The indoor and outdoor environments provide children with many exciting opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding in different areas of the curriculum. Children develop into resilient learners who persevere at tasks for extended periods of time. Children are often absorbed in their learning. For example, children independently created a habitat for a baby dinosaur out of straw, bark chippings and sticks. They animatedly discussed what the dinosaur would need to stay warm, safe and alive.
- Children's reading, writing and mathematics skills are developed very well. Daily phonics lessons and shared reading with adults are rapidly improving pupils' reading skills. They are provided with ample opportunities to practise their letter sounds and write for different purposes. For example, pupils designed and made warning posters for the dinosaur crime scene. Children develop their mathematical understanding by solving problems in a variety of situations. For example, the inspector observed some children measuring and recording the height of towers they had built.
- Relationships between adults and children are extremely positive. Well-structured routines and procedures mean that children move happily around the classroom spaces and behave exceptionally well.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 140329 |
| Local authority | Lincolnshire |
| Inspection number | 10048103 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Academy free school |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 117 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair | Caroline Jackson |
| Headteacher | Sue Wilson (executive headteacher) Gary Brown (head of school) |
| Telephone number | 01427 811516 |
| Website | www.talloaksacademy.co.uk |
| Email address | enquiries@talloaksacademy.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Information about this school

- The academy opened as a new primary school in 2015. Currently, there are Reception and key stage 1 classes in the school. The school will have its first cohort of key stage 2 pupils in September 2018.
- The school is a member of the Tall Oaks Academy Trust. The board of trustees is the legal governing body within the trust. The school has a local governing body.
- The school is a smaller than average-sized primary school that is expanding rapidly.
- A new executive headteacher has been appointed since the academy opened.
- A new head of school was appointed in October 2017.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language is

lower than the national average.

- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching in all year groups, including joint observations with the head of school. The inspector observed the teaching of reading and listened to pupils reading. She talked to pupils about their school and looked at examples of pupils' work.
- The inspector held meetings with the executive headteacher, head of school and several middle leaders. She also met with the leaders for English and mathematics.
- The inspector held meetings with representatives of the local governing body and the chair of the board of trustees.
- The inspector spoke with parents informally at the start of the school day. She took account of the 22 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View).
- The 18 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff and the one response to the pupil survey were also considered.
- A range of documents were scrutinised by the inspector, including the academy's self-evaluation of current performance and plans for improvement; the academy's most recent information on the achievement and progress of pupils; information relating to the safeguarding of pupils; information about the behaviour management of pupils; information relating to the academy's use of the pupil premium funding; the academy's most recent information relating to the attendance of pupils; and minutes from a number of local governing body meetings.

Inspection team

Stephanie Innes-Taylor, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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

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