

Winter Gardens Academy

Hilton Road, Canvey Island, Essex SS8 9QA

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	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Teachers in key stages 1 and 2 do not typically have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They do not routinely help pupils to deepen their knowledge and understanding, or move their learning on rapidly.
- In a number of instances, pupils' misconceptions are not picked up or addressed. Where this happens, pupils go on to make the same mistakes repeatedly and do not learn.
- Many pupils are now making better progress in reading, writing and mathematics than in the past. However, it is not yet good given their starting points.
- In Years 4, 5 and 6, disadvantaged pupils do not make enough progress. Their attainment remains below that of other pupils in the school and nationally.
- While leaders' work to improve attendance overall is having a clear impact, persistent absence remains too high.
- Some parents and carers and some pupils raised concerns about bullying. While these were not supported by other inspection evidence, leaders agree they need to work with parents and pupils to develop their understanding of what bullying is and how it is dealt with.
- During lessons, some pupils are easily distracted. A small minority disrupt the learning of others. Many pupils are unaware of how to develop their own learning. Consequently, lesson time is not used as well as it could be.
- Out of lessons, some pupils' behaviour is overly boisterous and sometimes inappropriate.

The school has the following strengths

- From the weak provision Winter Gardens Academy replaced, leaders' work has notably improved the quality of education pupils receive. While there is still more to do, leaders have demonstrated a clear capacity to improve the school.
- Staff are motivated. They say the school is well led and managed and they work effectively to implement leaders' plans for improvement.
- Early years provision is good. Children are well cared for and well taught. Children make good progress through the early years.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, learning and assessment so that outcomes are at least good, by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - ensuring that teachers plan lessons which deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding
 - making sure that teachers move pupils' learning on more rapidly
 - ensuring that teachers consistently identify and address pupils' misconceptions so that these are not allowed to persist.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare, by:
 - developing some parents' and some pupils' understanding of different types of bullying, and ensuring that they all know the school's procedures for dealing with bullying
 - ensuring that pupils remain engaged in their learning during lesson time and that low-level disruption is minimised
 - teaching pupils the skills of being effective learners, so that they know how to maximise their own progress
 - reducing the level of persistent absence so that it is in line with the national average or lower.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that the use of pupil premium funding reduces the gap between the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils and the progress and attainment of other pupils nationally.

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

Good

- Winter Gardens Academy opened in 2015. It replaced Winter Gardens Primary School, which was judged by Ofsted to be providing an inadequate standard of education. While the quality of education is not yet good, there are clear improvements in the way pupils are taught and the progress they make. This is evident across the school, and especially in the early years. Leaders have credible plans in place to continue to improve the school.
- Early years provision is good. Leaders have taken effective steps to ensure that pupils are well cared for and well taught. Children take pride in their work and make good progress.
- Leaders make good use of funding to support pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Since 2015, they have set about systematically identifying and recording the needs individual pupils have. Leaders now have a secure understanding of what those needs are and of how to address them. They have put in place effective extra help for those pupils. Inspectors noted, for example, many occasions when learning support assistants were working well with pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, both in and out of lessons. Some pupils who, in the past, had difficulty regulating their behaviour have been given strategies which now help them to do so. The range of support leaders provide to pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is effective in helping them overcome their individual barriers to learning.
- Staff are motivated and well supported by leaders. Almost all staff who completed their survey said that they think the school has improved. They feel that it is well led and managed and that leaders support their work with pupils. Staff also reported that leaders are taking effective action to help them improve their own practice. This is reflected in inspectors' observations of teachers' work. Leaders have secured the commitment of staff to the improvements they are making. This is having a positive impact on the quality of education pupils receive.
- Leaders have a wide-ranging approach to promoting pupils' physical and mental well-being. They use the physical education and sport premium well to promote pupils' participation in sport. Through a local sports partnership, for example, talented pupils are given the opportunity to try different sports which challenge them. Extra swimming lessons are provided to increase the number of pupils who can swim 25 metres. Leaders also run a 'well-being hub', which supports pupils with other aspects of their good health. Pupils learn about topics including healthy eating and dealing with anxiety. Pupils' fitness levels are improving and their welfare is enhanced.
- Leaders' work to promote fundamental British values has led to pupils treating each other with respect. They understand that it is okay to be different. One pupil told inspectors that: 'We are all one big family', while another said: 'Inside, we are all the same.' The small number of homophobic incidents has been reduced and pupils told inspectors that having two dads would not be a problem at this school. Ninety-two per cent of pupils who responded to Ofsted's survey said that the school encourages them to respect people from other backgrounds and to treat everyone equally.

- The curriculum provides pupils with opportunities to study a range of different subjects, such as modern foreign languages, technology and history. This breadth of study helps to prepare pupils for their next steps at secondary school. There is still more to do, though, in ensuring that these subjects are consistently well taught.
- Most parents are positive about the progress the school is making. All parents who spoke with inspectors were complimentary about the school. Nearly three quarters of parents who completed Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, said they would recommend the school to others. Leaders recognise there is still more work to do to secure some parents' commitment to the work of the school, including with regard to some parents' perceptions of bullying.
- Leaders use pupil premium funding to provide support such as catch-up sessions for disadvantaged pupils who have been absent, and giving pupils extra time each week with their teacher. In the early years, disadvantaged pupils make good progress. However, across key stage 1, and particularly key stage 2, they do not. Leaders recognise there is more to do to support disadvantaged pupils.

Governance of the school

- Governance of the school is undertaken by the directors of a multi-academy trust.
- The directors have a good understanding of education and of leadership. Between them, they bring experience which helps them to understand the quality of education pupils should receive. They know what to expect from an effective leadership team, and are ambitious for pupils.
- The trust provides leaders with opportunities to work collaboratively across the trust to share ideas and best practice. It has established a leadership academy which helps staff to develop their skills and to feel supported and valued. The school works particularly closely with another academy in the trust to develop the way in which teachers teach. Teaching is improving as a result, and morale is high. Ninety-three per cent of staff who responded to Ofsted's survey said they enjoy working at the school.
- The directors ask appropriate questions of leaders at regular meetings. They follow up discussions with visits. While directors' chosen approach typically allows them to ensure improvements are being made, there are occasions on which they need to challenge leaders more. For example, directors do not have a precise understanding of the varying levels of progress of pupils across the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders maintain accurate and up-to-date records of checks on adults who work with children. They ensure that staff are well trained and have a good understanding of how to keep children safe. Concerns about pupils' welfare are clearly recorded and follow-up actions taken as necessary. Leaders work with external agencies where appropriate to secure pupils' well-being.
- Pupils are well taught about how to keep safe. During the inspection, pupils explained to inspectors how to stay safe online. They learn about risky behaviours and road

safety. They are taught about the risks of social media and about good mental health. Pupils know that there is someone in school they can talk to if they are worried.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teachers' expectations of pupils are typically not high enough. In mathematics, for example, teaching is better than it was because teachers now routinely build in opportunities for pupils to demonstrate reasoning. However, this is often not deep reasoning. It does not challenge pupils to develop an understanding of mathematical concepts and techniques.
- Teachers provide pupils with guidance which helps them to learn. However, they sometimes provide pupils with more support than they need. They oversimplify some tasks. This means that pupils are not routinely given the chance to think deeply and reflect on how to solve a problem. As a result, their progress is limited.
- Teachers do not consistently plan activities which move pupils' learning on fast enough. For example, pupils in Year 6 were seen undertaking an activity to build a mud hut. Their work was simplistic and did not demand thought or hard work. As a consequence, pupils became distracted and achieved little. In Year 3, pupils were seen completing a task to find strange spelling patterns. They enjoyed this, but finished it quickly and were not encouraged to move on. They became distracted. Leaders' chosen use of '1, 2, 3 challenges' means pupils now have the opportunity to extend their learning. However, when they finish these activities pupils are often unsure of what to do next.
- Misconceptions in pupils' work are often either not identified or identified and not put right. Where this happens, pupils repeat the same mistakes over a prolonged period of time. For example, in Year 6 in literacy pupils were seen to be making the same mistakes in May 2018 as in September 2017. This limits the progress pupils make in some subjects in some classes.
- Leaders have invested in additional books to support pupils' reading development. They have introduced a new way of teaching reading and pupils receive regular reading lessons. However, these lessons are reliant on pupils helping each other. Some pupils are not secure enough in their own reading to do this. While there is a greater range of books for pupils to choose from, teachers do not guide pupils on which types of texts they should be reading. Leaders have been successful in ensuring that pupils read often, but not in ensuring that they read fluently and widely.
- Leaders' chosen strategies for improving teaching, learning and assessment are beginning to have a positive effect in the classroom. They have made effective use of training to develop the techniques teachers use. Teachers consistently adopt leaders' chosen strategies and they are used across the school. However, while they are more consistently used, they are not typically used well enough to have as much of an impact as they could.
- Learning support assistants work well with pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. They make good use of questioning to draw answers out from pupils. They support pupils to understand the work, and then let them solve problems for themselves. Sometimes, learning support assistants work with pupils in small groups outside the

classroom. They do so skilfully. They ensure that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are able to successfully overcome their barriers to 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.
- Pupils have not typically developed the skills of effective learners. When they complete tasks, for example, some pupils stop working. Some choose to work on similar tasks without seeking to deepen their understanding. When work is too easy, pupils become distracted. Pupils are usually willing to return to what they should be doing, but need teachers to guide them to do so.
- Some parents and some pupils raised concerns about bullying. However, when inspectors explored these concerns with pupils, it became clear that some pupils confuse poor behaviour with bullying. Pupils who spoke with inspectors, including those who initially said they were worried about bullying, confirmed that there is some poor behaviour, but that bullying is rare and dealt with well by staff. Leaders recognise the need to work with parents and pupils more to ensure that all members of the school community understand what bullying is and how the school deals with it.
- Leaders effectively monitor the personal development and welfare of pupils who are educated elsewhere on behalf of the school. They work in collaboration with the other education providers and track pupils' attendance, behaviour and progress well.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Despite improvements in pupils' behaviour, some inappropriate behaviour persists. In lessons, a minority of pupils disrupt the learning of others. Teachers are consistent at dealing with this, but it continues to waste valuable lesson time. Some pupils are too slow to respond to teachers' requests. As a result, low-level disruption hinders the progress that pupils make.
- At breaktime and lunchtime, behaviour is more boisterous than it should be. Adults often need to intervene to prevent inappropriate behaviour. Pupils told inspectors that behaviour varies. It is sometimes good and sometimes not.
- Since the academy opened, absence rates have been above the national average. Leaders' work to improve this is having a positive impact. Attendance rates are improving year on year and are now closer to the national average. Leaders' work to reduce the amount of time missed from school through persistent absence has been less effective. This remains too high, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders have put in place a range of strategies to improve behaviour, including teaching pupils to regulate their own behaviour and tackling poor behaviour when it occurs. Leaders and teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Their own records, older pupils' views and inspectors' observations all show that

behaviour is improving.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2016 and 2017, pupils' progress was weak at key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result of improvements in teaching, many pupils in key stage 2 are now making stronger progress, but this is not enough to make up for their lack of progress in the past. Pupils' attainment continues to be low. In some areas, such as in writing in Year 6, pupils still make less progress than they should because teaching does not meet their needs well enough.
- Pupils' reading attainment at the end of key stage 1 was broadly in line with the national average in 2017. This was an improvement on 2016 and represented average progress across key stage 1. In writing and mathematics, attainment and progress in 2017 remained below average.
- Across key stage 1 now, pupils make broadly average progress from their starting points in reading and writing, but not in mathematics. Leaders are aware of why progress in mathematics is slower and are in the process of addressing it. The progress pupils make in key stage 1 is improving, but it is not yet good.
- In Years 1, 2 and 3, disadvantaged pupils make progress broadly in line with other pupils in the school. In Years 4, 5 and 6, disadvantaged pupils do not make as much progress as other pupils in the school or nationally. Their attainment and progress remain too low.
- Pupils' understanding of a wide range of curriculum areas, such as computing, design and technology, history and modern foreign languages, is developed through a broad curriculum. This helps to prepare them for secondary school. However, because the way in which they are taught these subjects is not consistently good, their progress is limited.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are well supported to overcome their barriers to learning. Because of the effective support they receive, they have good access to the curriculum and develop well from their individual starting points.

Early years provision

Good

- Leaders in the early years are ambitious and have high expectations. They have created an environment which is stimulating and welcoming. Adults are well trained and respond well to children's needs. Leaders monitor the progress children make and have a good awareness of their current level of development. Leaders provide extra support where this is required to ensure that all pupils can get the most from the early years. When they leave the early years, children are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Teachers and other adults have established consistent routines which are well understood by children. Children are confident and enjoy a sense of achievement. They are keen to learn and wear their reward bands with pride. Children learn to respect and celebrate each other's differences, and they show care in the way they treat others.

Children's personal development and welfare needs are well met.

- Teachers in the early years make good use of assessment to determine how well children are progressing. They are responsive to children's individual needs and changing levels of development. They adapt what they and children do accordingly. Adults provide children with opportunities to build on and deepen what they have already learned. As a result of the good teaching they receive, children are excited about learning.
- Children typically enter the early years at a lower level of development than would be expected for their age. They make good progress through the early years and are well supported as they move from Nursery to Reception, and then to Year 1. When they leave the early years, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development is in line with the national average. Disadvantaged children make particularly strong progress. By the end of Reception, their attainment is typically similar to other pupils.

School details

Unique reference number	142000
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10046615

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	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	460
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Mr Mike Simmonds
Headteacher	Mrs Catherine Stalham
Telephone number	01268 699305
Website	www.wintergardensacademy.org
Email address	admin@wintergardensacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Winter Gardens Academy opened in 2015 and replaced Winter Gardens Primary School. Winter Gardens Primary School was judged by Ofsted to be providing an inadequate standard of education.
- The school is part of the South Essex Academy Trust. The trust has a board of directors to whom it delegates the responsibility for overall leadership of the academy.
- The school receives support from another academy within the South Essex Academy Trust. Some pupils from the school receive part of their education at The Arc at Ghyllgrove Community Junior School or at Canvey Restart at Canvey Junior School.
- Winter Gardens Academy is a larger-than-average primary school, which serves the area of Canvey Island. It meets the current government floor standards for the minimum standards and progress pupils should achieve at key stage 2 in English and mathematics.
- The proportion of pupils who have been eligible for free school meals at any time

during the last six years is above average.

- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who receive support for SEN and/or disabilities is below average, but the proportion who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is above average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited all classes, sometimes accompanied by leaders, and reviewed the work of pupils in their books.
- Inspectors met with senior and other leaders, as well as directors of the trust. They spoke with an adviser who works with the school.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation including the school's central record of recruitment checks and safeguarding files. They considered leaders' self-evaluation and improvement plans. Inspectors reviewed documents demonstrating the work of governors and the school's information on pupils' progress, attendance and behaviour.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils, parents and staff. They considered the 53 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the 51 responses to parents' free-text option, as well as the 42 responses to the staff survey and the 161 responses by pupils to their survey.

Inspection team

Andrew Hemmings, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Al Mistrano	Her Majesty's Inspector
Deborah Estcourt	Ofsted 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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