

Lodge Farm Primary School

Willenhall School Sports College Campus, Furzebank Way, Willenhall, West Midlands WV12 4BU

Inspection dates

16–17 October 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher, well supported by leaders and staff, has transformed the school since it became an academy in 2016. Considerable improvement is evident in all areas, including behaviour, teaching and outcomes.
- SHINE Academies has been instrumental in improving the school. Its board of trustees provides excellent support and strong challenge to leaders. However, the local governing body (LGB) currently lacks sufficient expertise to carry out its delegated role.
- Leaders and trustees have planned and put in place a curriculum which contributes exceptionally well to pupils' personal development. Pupils benefit from many and varied opportunities, both in lessons and at other times.
- Teaching is consistently effective in all years. Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to plan activities which interest and engage pupils and help them to learn. Occasionally, teachers do not provide sufficiently challenging work for the most able pupils.
- Pupils behave well in class and around the school. They are courteous and polite. They have good attitudes to learning and are keen to do their best.
- Relationships are excellent throughout the school. Pupils trust their teachers and other adults. Teachers are quick to help pupils improve their work. However, at times, teachers do not address pupils' incorrect use of grammar, punctuation and spelling as well as they should.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. Consequently, attendance is improving, although it remains below the national average for primary schools.
- Pupils are making good progress in all subjects and all years. They attain well in the early years, key stage 1 and lower key stage 2. Attainment is improving in Years 5 and 6 because of the strong teaching which has been in place in recent years.
- The early years foundation stage is well led. Teaching is effective, the curriculum is well planned and children make good progress as a result.
- Staff provide a wide range of high-quality support for pupils and their families, especially when they need extra help. Consequently, pupils feel safe and are well cared for. Parents and carers appreciate all that the school does for them.
- Occasionally, leaders do not evaluate the impact of their work as effectively as they could.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching by ensuring that teachers consistently:
 - provide suitably challenging work for the most able pupils
 - develop pupils' correct use of grammar, punctuation and spelling in all subjects.
- Further strengthen the impact of leadership by ensuring that:
 - leaders carefully evaluate the impact that improvement strategies are having, and then use this evaluation to amend strategies as appropriate
 - the LGB has sufficient expertise to carry out its role, as set out in the school's scheme of delegation
 - attendance continues to improve towards the national average for primary schools.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher's determined leadership has transformed the school from one that was failing to one that now provides a good education for its pupils. She is well supported by a strong team of leaders, teachers and other staff. The school has improved considerably in all respects, including pupils' behaviour, the quality of teaching and the academic progress which pupils make. Parents are very appreciative of the improvements made over the last 30 months. One parent who responded to Parent View spoke for many when they wrote, 'All I can say is that the transformation in this school has been phenomenal.'
- SHINE Academies, the school's sponsor, has played a key part in the school's improvement since it became an academy. It has recruited leaders and other high-quality staff. Its trustees have provided effective governance with strong challenge to leaders. It provides considerable expertise in several areas, including financial management, family support and safeguarding. Each of these areas is strong as a consequence.
- The school's staff form an enthusiastic team that is committed to the school's aim of 'enabling children to become positive, independent, confident and ambitious individuals'. They give generously of their time, for example in offering a very wide range of extra-curricular activities. All staff who completed their inspection questionnaire said that they enjoy working at Lodge Farm and are proud to belong to the school.
- Leaders have thoughtfully planned the school's curriculum to meet pupils' needs. There is a strong focus on improving basic skills, including reading, writing and arithmetic. Pupils make good progress in these areas as a result. Other subjects are not neglected but are equally well planned to engage and excite pupils, while taking into account what they already know and understand. Pupils benefit from good teaching in science, art, the humanities, technology and French. Many pupils learn musical instruments and all pupils in Years 5 and 6 recently took part in a school production of 'Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat'. One parent told inspectors that the impact on her son of taking part in this production had been 'life-changing'.
- Leaders prioritise sport and physical education (PE) and pupils take part enthusiastically. PE is well taught during the school day and there is a wide variety of sporting clubs at lunchtime and after school. Pupils in Year 6 become 'sports leaders', who meet regularly to plan and evaluate the weekly sports clubs which they run for pupils in all years. Leaders make good use of the sport premium to bring in external coaches to teach pupils and, at the same time, train members of staff to teach those sports.
- In addition to sport and the performing arts, staff provide a range of other extra-curricular activities, trips and visits. For example, pupils take part in yoga. They learn to cook. They visit local places of worship and take part in residential visits. Together, the core curriculum of English and mathematics, other subjects, extra-curricular trips and visits and leadership opportunities contribute exceptionally well to pupils' personal development.

- The breadth of experiences serves to broaden pupils' horizons, raise their aspirations and help them to develop into confident and mature young people who are well prepared to move to secondary school.
- Teaching has improved because of strong leadership. Leaders carefully check on the quality of teaching. They provide well-targeted training for individuals and groups of staff and they then check that the training has had the intended impact. SHINE Academies has supported the school well in this respect. For example, newly qualified teachers are very well supported as they begin their careers. Middle leaders have been well prepared to lead the development of their subjects. Training in teaching mathematics has improved teachers' subject knowledge and confidence, and has seen the teaching of this subject improve strongly. Almost all staff who completed their inspection questionnaire said that leaders use professional development well to encourage, challenge and support their improvement.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities has improved considerably over the last two years and is now good. Leaders accurately identify pupils' SEN and/or disabilities and provide teachers with helpful information. Teachers and teaching assistants provide strong support in lessons and these pupils are making good progress as a result.
- Leaders make effective use of the pupil premium to support disadvantaged pupils. They provide a range of academic support, as well as funding extra-curricular activities such as learning a musical instrument. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils' progress is improving and is similar to that of others in the school in all years. However, leaders do not evaluate their pupil-premium-funded strategies as well as they might. As a result, they do not always know which strategies have been most successful and which might need to be discarded or amended.

Governance of the school

- SHINE Academies' board of trustees and LGB provide the school's governance. The responsibilities of each group and the relationship between them are set out in a scheme of delegation, which has recently been agreed. The LGB came into being 12 months ago. Prior to that time, and from April 2016 when the school became an academy, the trustees provided all the school's governance functions.
- The board of trustees possesses considerable expertise. It provides good support and strong challenge to leaders, regularly checking on the school's performance. In contrast, the LGB is still developing. It currently comprises the SHINE Academies' chief executive officer (CEO), the school's headteacher, a trustee and five other governors. Were it not supplemented by SHINE Academies' employees, the LGB would lack the expertise to carry out its delegated functions. Leaders, trustees and governors are aware of this fact and are seeking to expand the LGB and increase its expertise so that it can be properly separated from the board of trustees.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All staff understand that keeping pupils safe is their first priority. Consequently, there is

a strong culture of care, support and safeguarding in the school. All pupils who spoke to inspectors said they feel safe and well cared for in school. All parents who spoke with inspectors and almost all who responded to Parent View said their children feel safe and that the school cares for them very well.

- The leadership of safeguarding is meticulous. Policies and procedures are clear. They are well understood and used by all staff. Leaders provide regular training for staff in many aspects of safeguarding, including potential dangers from people with extreme views. Consequently, staff are alert to the full range of signs that pupils might need some extra help. Staff diligently pass on to leaders any concerns they have about pupils. Leaders involve outside agencies quickly and appropriately. They ensure that pupils who need help receive appropriate support in a timely manner.
- Records relating to child protection are detailed and very well organised. SHINE Academies' staff regularly check the school's safeguarding procedures and records to assure trustees that arrangements are effective.
- Leaders work very closely with parents to ensure that pupils are safe and well supported. They provide parents with helpful information about online safety. They provide individual support with parenting should parents want it and they point parents to external support services when that is more appropriate. Several parents told inspectors how helpful the school's support had been for them and their children.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching has improved considerably over the last two years. It is now consistently effective across the school. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan activities which are usually very well matched to pupils' abilities and needs. Consequently, pupils enjoy learning and they make good progress.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are excellent. Teachers know pupils very well. Pupils trust their teachers and teaching assistants. As a result, pupils are confident and happy to try difficult tasks or contribute answers in class, secure in the knowledge that they have their teacher's support.
- Pupils work well with each other and independently when required to do so. Teachers and teaching assistants are quick to step in to give support or advice when pupils need extra help, but this is often not necessary. Pupils work hard in lessons and little time is wasted because pupils are quick to settle and get on with tasks.
- Mathematics is taught well in all years. Teachers focus appropriately on developing pupils' basic skills in arithmetic. They also routinely expect pupils to reason and explain their thinking when solving problems. Consequently, pupils develop a secure understanding of the concepts they are studying. Although some older pupils still have gaps in their mathematical knowledge as a result of past ineffective teaching, good teaching is now seeing pupils' knowledge increase and gaps being filled.
- Leaders and teachers' efforts to promote reading and a love of reading are proving successful. Teachers and teaching assistants teach phonics well. Pupils read regularly, and most do so with increasing fluency. Those who find reading difficult are very well supported and are making rapid progress. Pupils are beginning to make good use of the newly refurbished library and many talk enthusiastically about the books they are

reading.

- The teaching of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is effective. Teachers carefully plan activities which meet these pupils' needs well. Teaching assistants provide good support in lessons and extra help at other times when pupils need it.
- Most pupils write confidently and with enthusiasm. However, some pupils, particularly in key stage 2, do not consistently use correct grammar, punctuation and spelling. Teachers do not always address this issue as well as they could. For example, inspectors found several examples of pupils repeatedly misspelling key topic-specific words in their books because earlier errors had not been spotted and addressed.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' conduct and the amount and quality of work they produce in class. Pupils rise to these high expectations. However, at times, the work that teachers set does not challenge the most able pupils sufficiently. For example, inspectors observed children in the early years, who were confident with numbers up to 20, being limited to working with numbers up to five. Similarly, in topic work, most-able pupils in key stage 2, who were capable of writing independently and at length, were only expected to provide brief responses using unnecessary sentence starters.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The wide range of opportunities which the school provides, and which pupils enthusiastically embrace, contribute exceptionally well to their personal development. During their time in the school, pupils become confident and articulate learners. They demonstrate excellent attitudes to learning, and caring and compassionate attitudes to others. They are kind and respectful to other pupils, including those who are different from them in some way.
- Many pupils take on leadership roles in school. These include being head girl, head boy, prefects, house captains, sports leaders and members of the school council. Pupils must put themselves forward for these roles and are then subject to a pupil vote. In their time at school, pupils become confident young people who understand what it means to be a responsible member of society.
- Staff provide excellent care for pupils and their families, especially those who need additional support. One parent who spoke with inspectors described the school as 'her extended family'. Staff provide parents with support in many areas, including accessing external services, learning English and improving their parenting skills. Extra help for pupils who need it is equally well targeted. This wraparound care helps pupils to feel safe and secure.
- Pupils feel very safe and well cared for in school. All pupils who spoke with inspectors confirmed this. One told inspectors that 'teachers here really look after you'. Bullying is very rare and pupils trust staff to deal with any that does happen. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe. For example, they know about the risks which the internet can pose and how to protect themselves from those risks.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. It has improved considerably since the school became an academy.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and at other times of the day. They are polite and courteous to each other and to adults. They play sensibly at breaktime and lunchtime. The school is calm and orderly throughout the day.
- Staff manage behaviour well, including supporting pupils who need to improve their behaviour. This extra help often extends to supporting parents too. Consequently, disruptive behaviour in school is very rare. Indeed, low-level disruption in classes occurs only occasionally, and is limited to those rare times when teaching fails to interest or engage pupils.
- Attendance, although improving, remains below the national average for primary schools. The great majority of pupils attend very well, but some do not attend regularly enough. Leaders have put into place a number of strategies to address this issue and there are early signs of further improvement this year.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' progress is good throughout key stage 2 in all subjects. Their attainment by the end of Year 6, especially in reading and mathematics, has been below average in recent years. This is because these pupils were not taught well before the school became an academy. Their attainment in writing is stronger because leaders' actions to improve writing have had a more rapid impact than those in reading and mathematics. However, attainment in grammar, punctuation and spelling remains a little below the national figure.
- Gaps in knowledge remain for pupils in Year 6 and, to a lesser degree, in Year 5. This is particularly the case in pupils' basic mathematical skills and in their use of correct grammar, punctuation and spelling. Strong teaching is now seeing this picture improve rapidly.
- Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2 because of consistently good teaching. As a result, attainment by the end of key stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics is close to national averages. Effective teaching of phonics has led to improving results in the Year 1 phonics screening check, which are now slightly above the national figure.
- Many children join the school in Nursery or Reception with starting points well below those typical for their age. They make strong progress and, consequently, outcomes by the end of Reception are similar to those seen nationally.
- Disadvantaged pupils make similar good progress to other children in the school. They now benefit from good teaching and well-focused extra help when they need it.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make slightly better progress than their peers. Teachers plan well for their needs and teaching assistants provide good extra support in lessons and at other times.
- Some of the most able pupils do not make as much progress as they could. This is evident in published outcomes data and in the school's own assessment information.

Early years provision

Good

- The relatively new leadership of the early years is proving effective. Leaders regularly check on children's progress and ensure that teachers' assessments are accurate. They have provided high-quality training for teachers and teaching assistants in several areas, including teaching phonics and providing extra support in developing children's language. Leaders modify the curriculum in light of children's particular needs. For example, there is currently a greater focus on number work because teachers' initial assessments suggested that this was a weak area.
- Teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes is good. Teachers and teaching assistants provide an appropriate balance of direct teaching and child-initiated activities. The learning environment is attractive and stimulating. Activities are generally well planned to meet children's needs, although occasionally the most able children could be challenged more and so make stronger progress.
- Disadvantaged children make similar progress to other children. Leaders now use the pupil premium to provide extra help when it is needed. They also use it to fund visits and trips away from school.
- Outcomes are improving as a result of better teaching. Many children join the Nursery or Reception with starting points well below those typical for their age. By the end of the Reception Year, outcomes are now similar to those seen nationally. This represents good progress. Consequently, most children are well prepared for the move to Year 1. Those who do not achieve a good level of development by the end of Reception are well supported when they start key stage 1.
- Children behave well. They enjoy their learning and are confident and enthusiastic. They share equipment and take turns sensibly. Most are independent and confident but are equally happy working with peers.
- In common with the rest of the school, safeguarding arrangements are highly effective in the early years. All staff recognise that children's safety is of paramount importance. Children feel safe and are safe in school. They are very well cared for.
- Parents are becoming increasingly involved in their children's education. Staff have arranged workshops in which parents learn how to support their children's learning at home. Staff also send learning materials home and provide extra help for parents who speak English as an additional language.
- Leaders have made several changes to early years provision, for example to the curriculum, to the outdoor space and to their use of the pupil premium. However, they have not fully evaluated the impact of these changes. So, although the overall impact is positive, leaders are not clear about which changes have been most successful and which have not and therefore might need to be amended.

School details

Unique reference number	142765
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	10053543

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	346
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Chris Tagg
Headteacher	Natalie Boys
Telephone number	01902 558 077
Website	www.lodgefarmprimary.co.uk
Email address	postbox@lodgefarmprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Lodge Farm is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- It converted to be an academy, sponsored by Northwood Park Educational Trust, in April 2016. Northwood Park Educational Trust changed its name to SHINE Academies in May 2018.
- According to its scheme of delegation, SHINE Academies' board of trustees has responsibility for the school's ethos, values and strategic direction. The school's LGB has responsibility for day-to-day matters, including standards, the curriculum and admissions. SHINE Academies' CEO sits on the school's LGB.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is much higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is well above average.
- An average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in lessons and some of these observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors paid particular attention to the work in pupils' books to make judgements about pupils' progress. They carried out a detailed scrutiny of books belonging to pupils in key stage 2.
- Inspectors talked with many pupils about their learning and their attitudes to, and opinions about, school. They held meetings with three groups of pupils. Inspectors observed pupils at breaktime and lunchtime and as they moved around the school.
- Inspectors visited an assembly.
- A wide range of documents was scrutinised, including information relating to governance, attendance, behaviour, safeguarding and pupils' progress.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, middle leaders and teachers. A meeting was held with four members of the board of trustees, including the trust's CEO. The trust's company secretary was also present. A separate meeting was held with four members of the LGB, including its chair.
- Inspectors took account of parents' views by considering 24 responses to Parent View, including seven free-text comments. They also spoke with several parents.
- Inspectors took account of 32 responses received on Ofsted's staff inspection questionnaire.

Inspection team

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Heather Phillips	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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