

White's Wood Academy

White's Wood Lane, Gainsborough, Lincolnshire DN21 1TJ

Inspection dates

6–7 November 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	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The pace of improvement in some areas has not been rapid enough. Pupils' attainment and progress, particularly in reading, have been too low for too long.
- The trust and the local governing board have not been as effective as they should be in holding leaders to account.
- Leaders do not check carefully enough that their initiatives to improve the school are applied consistently.
- Leaders' plans for improvement are not linked closely enough to pupils' attainment and progress to help drive more rapid improvement.
- Middle leaders are not as effective as they could be in driving improvements.
- Leaders and those responsible do not carefully enough plan how they will use the pupil premium. They cannot be sure the funding is having the maximum impact.
- Teachers sometimes do not match work well to pupils' needs or have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Teachers do not check carefully enough that pupils are secure with phonics and early reading skills.
- Teachers do not consistently expect pupils to use accurate grammar, punctuation and spelling in their writing. Pupils are not taught to edit and improve their work.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and senior leaders are creating a positive culture of improvement. Leaders are bringing about improvements in the quality of teaching.
- Pupils' progress, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics, is improving.
- Relationships are positive. The headteacher and other staff are creating an ethos of respect and a positive place to work and learn.
- Staff ensure that pupils have a positive attitude to reading.
- Staff ensure that pupils behave well. They use a consistent approach to managing behaviour.
- Leaders and staff effectively develop pupils' personal development.
- Teachers are often skilled in using questioning to check how well pupils are learning and to extend their learning.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Leaders and those responsible for governance bring about more rapid improvement by ensuring that:
 - all staff apply their whole-school initiatives
 - improvement plans are more sharply linked to pupils' attainment and progress to better hold staff to account
 - they plan carefully the use of the pupil premium and check that it has the maximum impact on improving disadvantaged pupils' progress and attainment
 - they further develop the expertise of middle leaders so they have a greater impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning to improve pupils' attainment and progress in their areas of responsibility.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to increase pupils' progress and attainment, including that of disadvantaged and the most able pupils, by ensuring that all teachers:
 - have high expectations of the quality of pupils' work
 - use information about pupils' learning to match work well to pupils' needs
 - teach pupils effectively the phonics and early reading skills they need to be successful readers
 - teach pupils to use accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation in their writing in different subjects
 - teach pupils the knowledge and skills they need to be able to effectively edit and improve their writing.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management should be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The headteacher and other senior leaders are establishing a culture of higher expectations. The school is improving in all aspects of its work. Leaders and other staff are building a cohesive school 'team', committed to enabling pupils to achieve their potential. However, the pace of some improvements has not been rapid enough. Standards in some areas have been too low over time.
- Leaders identify a period of turbulence in the recent past for both the school and the trust. External support from the trust has supported the establishment of a school senior leadership team. Staff and leaders say morale has improved significantly. The headteacher is creating an aspirational culture. However, in the past, support from the trust has not been as effective as it could be in holding leaders to account to improve weaker areas.
- Leaders are accurate in their evaluation of the school's performance and the priorities they identify for improvement. However, their analysis, including the attainment and progress of disadvantaged and most-able pupils, for example, is not sharp enough. Their plans for improvement do not set focused, measurable targets to help hold staff to account and drive more rapid improvements.
- Leaders' actions are improving the quality of teaching. They provide effective training and support for staff. The impact of staff training to improve the teaching of reading and the use of questioning skills, for example, is evident. Where teaching is weaker, leaders provide effective focused support. Leaders have not, however, checked carefully enough to ensure that actions and whole-school initiatives are applied by all staff. Leaders have not ensured that the quality of teaching and so the progress of pupils are consistent.
- Leaders have ensured that the school has a broad and balanced curriculum. Staff promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education well. Pupils learn about different religions. The curriculum is supplemented by a range of enrichment activities and external visitors. During the inspection, for example, a visitor helped pupils in Year 6 to better understand Islamic faith and culture.
- Senior leaders are providing effective support for middle leaders. Middle leaders are increasingly effective in leading staff training and working with external consultants to improve the quality of teaching. This is particularly effective in mathematics and reading. Middle leaders speak positively about the support and professional respect they are given by senior leaders. They are developing their expertise in analysing and using information about pupils' progress and learning to guide their priorities for improvement. However, they are not fully effective in ensuring that their plans and actions are directly linked to pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher is committed to working with other schools and partners. Leaders welcome peer review work with other schools. Leaders are working to improve partnership with parents and carers. The 'aspiration afternoons' and well-attended junk-modelling workshops enabled parents to share their children's work. Parents are actively encouraged to support their children's reading at home. Leaders are

establishing closer links with partner schools to enable more effective transitions.

- Leaders have established a schedule of actions to check standards over the school year. The headteacher and assistant headteacher have also recently strengthened the systems and processes for the management of the performance of staff. Targets set are now more focused on improving pupils' progress, including that of disadvantaged pupils.
- The additional funding for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is used effectively. The trust coordinator for provision for pupils with SEND has ensured that interventions are based carefully on pupils' needs. Staff have received relevant training, for example to support dyslexic pupils and pupils who have emotional needs. Pupils with SEND make generally good progress.
- Leaders use the additional funding for physical education (PE) and sports well to support improvements in the quality of teaching. The school is part of a local PE cluster group of schools. Leaders provide an increasing range of sporting opportunities for pupils, including swimming, football and cross-country running. They are determined to 'get children active'. Increasing proportions of pupils engage in physical activity, including inter-school events.
- Very nearly all parents who spoke with inspectors were happy with all aspects of the school's work. They say staff are friendly and their children enjoy school.

Governance of the school

- Those responsible for governance are not as effective as they could be in holding leaders to account for the school's performance. They have presided over a period in which standards have been too low for too long. They have not ensured that plans for improvements are sharp enough to enable them to hold leaders to account.
- Those responsible for governance do not hold leaders to account effectively for the impact of the pupil premium. They cannot be sure that the funding is having the maximum impact on improving pupils' outcomes.
- The local governing board and board of trustees say they are now better placed and have greater capacity to support and challenge the school. Recently, the governing board, together with the board of trustees and the executive headteacher, has been more effective. Members of the governing board have scrutinised leaders' and teachers' salary progression in relation to the school's performance. They regularly visit the school to review various aspects of the school's performance so they better understand the impact of leaders and other staff.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There is a strong culture of safeguarding shared by all staff. Staff promote a culture and ethos of mutual respect.
- All staff receive regular training, for example to be aware of the government's 'Prevent' duty. Staff know the procedures for recording concerns about pupils' safety or welfare.
- Leaders carefully record all concerns brought to their attention and detail the actions they take. They have recently improved their systems further, to make this process

even more effective. They are tenacious in securing the involvement of external agencies where this is relevant and carefully following up actions.

- The members of staff who oversee the different aspects of safeguarding work closely together. They meet regularly to share information so that pupils and families receive any support they need.
- Pupils say they know what to do if they have a worry. They are confident that staff will respond to any concerns they may have. Pupils say they are safe, and are taught how to keep themselves safe, for example in terms of road safety or when online. Parents who spoke with inspectors are confident that the school keeps their children safe.
- Leaders carefully record all recruitment checks for staff working with pupils. Members of the governing board visit the school to check that the school meets safeguarding requirements.
- Bullying is rare and staff take rapid action where concerns are raised. The very large majority of parents who spoke with inspectors said staff are open, friendly and welcoming, and deal rapidly with any issues raised.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent. Teachers sometimes do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. They do not ensure that pupils make the progress and produce the quality of work of which they are capable.
- Teachers have received training to improve their skills in checking pupils' progress and attainment. Sometimes, however, teachers do not ensure that work is matched well to pupils' needs or appropriately challenging. Some pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and the most and the least able, do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- The teaching of reading, particularly comprehension skills, is improving. Pupils' attitudes to reading are improving. One pupil said, 'Reading is important. It's a life skill.' A parent told an inspector, 'My son now loves reading. He's asking me to buy books. It's encouragement from his teacher.' However, teachers do not carefully check and ensure that all pupils are secure in their early reading and phonics skills. This slows pupils' progress.
- Pupils' progress in writing is improving. In some classes, teachers teach pupils to use accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation, practise spelling rules and patterns and explore and use different sentence structures. They provide clear sequences of lessons in which pupils improve their writing skills. However, this is not the case in all classes. Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of the quality of pupils' writing. Pupils are given too few opportunities to edit and improve their own work.
- Teachers are improving their expertise in the teaching of mathematics. Teachers often make effective use of visual imagery and apparatus and encourage pupils to record in a variety of ways. In many classes, pupils have frequent opportunities to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills. Again, however, this is not consistent.
- In some classes, teachers apply the school's marking policy well and this helps pupils

to make progress. Teachers generally encourage pupils to present their work well. Leaders and staff have agreed consistent guidelines and expectations. However, these aspects are not applied equally well by staff.

- Pupils respect their teachers and relationships are positive. One pupil said 'Teachers are kind and supportive. They help you if you don't get something.' Pupils have generally positive attitudes to learning and apply themselves to all that is asked of them. Occasionally, however, some pupils lose focus.
- Teachers say they value the guidance they receive from leaders to improve their practice. Newly qualified teachers who spoke with inspectors commented positively on the support they receive. Many school initiatives are improving the quality of teaching.
- Teachers are often skilled in using their secure subject knowledge to question pupils, to check understanding or push pupils' thinking. Teachers expect pupils to be able to explain their thinking and justify their opinions. Where this is most effective, pupils make good progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders and staff are committed to helping pupils to be aspirational in their outlook. They encourage pupils to look ahead to the future. A writing display, for example, featured pupils' responses to, 'What I aspire to be in the future.'
- Pupils enjoy the roles of responsibility which the school provides, including the school council, junior road safety officers and other roles. The 'mini-police' role, for example, helps pupils to be aware of, and develop responsible attitudes to, local safeguarding issues as well as aspects such as internet safety.
- Leaders and staff promote the school values well. Pupils understand these and can link them to the fundamental British values. Pupils are encouraged to reflect. One school topic display included a child's question 'Why do we have wars?' A pupil told an inspector that it was important to learn about history because, 'You can make good decisions in the future.' In an assembly exploring family relationships and care, pupils were attentive and mature. They were responsive to the teacher's thoughtful questioning and keen to contribute their ideas and opinions.
- Staff develop pupils' awareness of the importance of healthy lifestyles well.
- Pupils cooperate well and share equipment sensibly. They play well together at playtimes.
- In some lessons, some pupils' attitudes to learning are not as positive as they could be. They sometimes lose focus, particularly if work is not well matched to their needs.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Staff have a consistent approach to the management of behaviour. Routines are well established. Pupils understand how they are expected

to behave and are encouraged to make responsible choices. Pupils respond quickly to instructions or when teachers ask for their attention.

- Pupils behave well at all times of the school day, including breaktimes, lunchtimes, in school corridors or on the playground.
- Staff provide effective support for pupils who find behaving well more difficult, or who have specific needs. Support plans are put into place which help pupils to improve their behaviour. Staff deal sensitively with behavioural issues.
- Overall attendance, and the attendance of disadvantaged pupils, is improving. Persistent absence reduced slightly at the end of the 2018 academic year. Leaders, with the support of the trust attendance and healthcare officer, take all reasonable steps to emphasise the importance of attendance to parents. However, attendance is still below the national average and this is a continuing area of focus.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Published information shows that pupils' attainment and progress in some subjects and for some groups of pupils have been too low for too long. Pupils' attainment in reading has been well below the national averages for three years. At the end of 2018, pupils' attainment in reading and writing was lower than in 2017. Too few pupils achieved the higher levels. The attainment of disadvantaged pupils was well below that of pupils nationally. Too many pupils, particularly in reading, were not well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils' work shows that, overall, improving teaching is enabling pupils to make better progress. Where teaching is strongest, pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics and in other subjects. However, this is not consistent. In some classes, too many pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and the most able, do not make the progress they should.
- Leaders and staff have focused on improving standards in reading. Recently, the progress of many pupils is improving rapidly. As a result of improved teaching, pupils, including the most able, are taught to understand and comprehend texts well. However, poor phonic and early reading skills mean that lower-attaining pupils are not catching up with their peers.
- The quality of many pupils' writing is sometimes let down by poor spelling, grammar and punctuation. Pupils are not taught well enough how to improve their work.
- Standards are improving strongly in mathematics. Pupils are taught to understand, fluently, the main ideas in mathematics. However, sometimes the most able pupils are not encouraged to move on to more challenging work quickly enough.

School details

Unique reference number	139361
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10053351

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	216
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Caroline Jackson
Headteacher	Chris Fitzpatrick
Telephone number	01427 613097
Website	www.talloaksacademy.co.uk
Email address	enquiries@talloaksacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The headteacher was appointed to his post in December 2016. A second assistant headteacher was appointed in September 2018.
- In 2013, the school joined the Tall Oaks Academy Trust. The trust was created in the same year.
- The chair of the local governing board is also the interim chair of the board of trustees. The executive headteacher, who is also a member of the board of trustees, oversees the three schools currently in the trust.
- When its predecessor school, The White's Wood Lane Community Junior School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- White's Wood Academy is smaller than an average-sized primary school. The school is currently organised into eight classes.

- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, and of pupils who speak English as an additional language, are below those seen nationally.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 17 lessons. Many lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher and assistant headteacher. During these visits, the inspectors looked at pupils' work and spoke with them to evaluate the quality of their learning. The inspectors scrutinised pupils' work with leaders. The inspectors listened to pupils read and met pupils informally as well as meeting with groups of pupils.
- A range of documents were scrutinised, relating to safeguarding; behaviour; attendance; the quality of teaching, learning and assessment; pupils' attainment and progress; and staff performance. The inspectors looked at plans for improvement as well as leaders' evaluation of the school's performance. The inspectors also considered the range and quality of information provided on the school's website.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the assistant headteachers, middle leaders, the trust's coordinator for the provision for pupils with SEND, the trust's attendance and healthcare officer, the business manager for the trust, and the school's safeguarding and welfare officer. The inspectors met with the chair of the governing board, who is also the interim chair of the board of trustees, and the executive headteacher of the trust. Discussions explored a wide range of subjects, including safeguarding arrangements.
- The inspectors spoke with parents informally at the start of the school day and account was taken of the school's own surveys of parents' views. There were no additional responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.

Inspection team

John Lawson, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Steven Barnes	Ofsted Inspector
Heather Hawkes	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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