

The Weald CofE Primary School

Newdigate Road, Beare Green, Dorking, Surrey RH5 4QW

Inspection dates

31 October–1 November 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Instability in leadership and staffing has limited the development of the academy. Capacity to make the many necessary changes is insecure. This jeopardises building on any improvements made to the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes.
- The trust has not acted quickly enough in the past to improve the school. It has been slow to recognise the level of support required.
- The trust, the interim academy board (IAB) and school leaders have not yet secured the full confidence of staff, parents and carers.
- Pupils in key stage 2, including those from vulnerable groups, do not make good progress in writing.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are often too low. As a result, teaching does not meet pupils' needs, particularly those of the most able, as well as it should.
- Curriculum plans do not support good learning. Pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in science, humanities and music are under-developed as a result.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) does not meet their needs sufficiently well.
- Overall, pupils do not come to school regularly enough. Leaders have not acted sufficiently quickly where attendance needs to improve.
- Children currently in early years are not given enough effective opportunities to develop their interests and extend their learning.
- Approaches to assessment do not assist some teachers to gain a clear picture of gaps in pupils' learning. Consequently, some teachers' planning does not routinely help pupils to catch up successfully.

The school has the following strengths

- The recently appointed executive headteacher and head of school have a clear vision for development.
- Where teaching is stronger, pupils benefit from high-quality learning experiences.
- The teaching of reading and phonics in Reception Year and key stage 1 is effective.
- Pupils are keen to uphold the school's values. They are polite and show respect for each other and for staff.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Rapidly improve the quality of leadership and governance, including in the early years, by ensuring that:
 - a sustainable and effective leadership and teaching structure is in place
 - leaders' roles and responsibilities are clear so that leaders' work impacts rapidly and securely on pupils' outcomes
 - effective monitoring of teaching and analysis of pupils' progress and attainment takes place to improve teaching and thereby raise standards further
 - there is effective work with pupils and families to improve attendance rates and reduce persistent absence
 - the school's curriculum engages pupils in a well-thought-through range of learning across all subjects
 - the trust and the IAB further strengthen the effectiveness of the support and challenge they give to leaders
 - the trust, the IAB and school leaders secure the confidence of staff, parents and carers.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, make good progress in all aspects of learning by ensuring that:
 - teachers have consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve in a wide range of subjects, particularly in writing
 - pupils with SEND are provided with consistently effective additional support to enable them to make at least good progress from their starting points
 - the most able pupils are routinely challenged to enable them to make rapid progress, gain a deeper understanding and attain highly
 - teachers' assessments of pupils' learning are reliably accurate, and this information is used to identify and address gaps in pupils' learning effectively and set work that is well matched to pupils' abilities.
- Enhance provision and the quality of learning in the early years by:
 - providing a suitable range of experiences that challenge and develop children's learning.

An external review of the use of pupil premium funding should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Since joining the trust, the school has undergone a period of instability, with many leaders and staff leaving. Following the departure of the previous headteacher, the current executive headteacher took up her role in June 2018. She was joined by the head of school in September 2018. They are pragmatic and candid about the many challenges they face to make necessary and sustainable improvements. Their work is hampered by a lack of middle leadership within the school and the many ongoing staff changes.
- While senior leaders' strategic plans contain a vision for improvement, they lack a sharp focus on how to bring about that improvement. As a result, standards are not rising consistently and indeed are at risk of declining. Improvements have slowed over the last year because of the lack of leadership capacity to make the many changes needed.
- Earlier this year, the trust rightly identified that the pace of school improvement was too slow. However, it has not, over time, provided the high level of support needed to stabilise the school and ensure that changes are made with the necessary urgency. While the trust's support is now beginning to intensify, clear and substantial impact of this support is not yet evident.
- The IAB, recently appointed by the trust, brings a relevant range of skills and experience. However, it is too early to see the impact of its work. It is working closely with the executive headteacher and the head of school to identify the school's strengths and weaknesses, but no clear strategy for improvement is currently in place. Nonetheless, the IAB has the skills needed and demonstrates a strong determination to improve provision for all pupils at the Weald.
- The school suffers from very high staff turnover. As a result, this has caused pupils, parents and remaining staff to feel unsettled. In recent years, many senior leaders and middle leaders have left or plan to leave the school. There is too little subject or phase leadership to inspire and drive the improvement required.
- Some staff do not have a clear understanding of the school's priorities and feel the recent lack of leadership keenly. They acknowledge that the executive headteacher and the head of school are beginning to bring some stability, but some longer-standing staff remain sceptical about the school's future.
- A significant number of parents voiced dissatisfaction to the inspectors regarding a host of issues. These included the trust's level of communication, changes in leadership, teaching arrangements and the slow rate of improvement throughout the school. This indicates parents' lack of confidence in the wider leadership of the school.
- Leaders' oversight of the curriculum is weak. They have failed to ensure that the taught curriculum is suitably broad and well organised, for example in modern foreign languages and religious education. As a result, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is not reliably developed. Leaders acknowledge that this aspect of pupils' development remains inconsistent.
- The leadership of the provision for pupils with SEND is weak. The trust sensibly

commissioned an external review last year which identified some urgent actions to improve provision for this group of pupils. The impact of the recommendations from this review have yet to be seen. Leaders do not oversee provision for these pupils sufficiently to ensure that they receive the additional support they require. However, the head of school has made this a priority.

- Leaders are uncertain how pupil premium funding impacts on pupils' progress. They are not collating and interpreting assessment information effectively to evaluate the impact of support provided. Consequently, leaders are not clear how well these pupils are progressing.
- Additional sports funding is used well. Pupils enjoy their participation in competitive sports and tournaments with other schools as well as clubs offered at school. Pupils make good use of the football area and school grounds.
- Leaders provide pupils with interesting experiences that support their wider learning. Pupils say that they enjoy residential trips, educational visits to build on their learning, regular visitors and dressing-up days. For example, Year 6 recently visited Dover Castle to support their history topic. During the inspection, Year 3 pupils dressed up as Egyptians, signifying parents' commitment to supporting their children's learning.

Governance of the school

- Governance has gone through a period of uncertainty and change. The previous local governing board was disbanded by the trust at the end of the summer term and a new IAB was set up in September 2018. This board is made up of members of the trust and headteachers, some of whom are local.
- The IAB is beginning to get to grips with its roles and responsibilities. Members of the board are working closely with the trust and school leaders to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the school and prioritise actions. They meet regularly and demonstrate a strong determination for school improvement. At the time of this inspection, members of the board did not have a clear strategy for improvement in place. They do not have a securely accurate overview of the school's priorities.
- The school's finances have not been managed well. For example, last year, funding was invested in a programme to help improve pupils' writing, but this has had little impact on pupils' outcomes. A high level of the school's resources has been spent on agency staff. As a result, the school finds itself with a challenging financial deficit.

Safeguarding

- Arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Clearly, leaders prioritise and place importance on this aspect of the school's work.
- Effective systems are in place for recording concerns and tracking the progress of any referrals made to the local authority. Ambitious plans are in place for this to be further enhanced; for example, by moving to a more efficient method for recording relevant information.
- Leaders ensure that staff are properly trained in all areas of safeguarding. Weekly newsletters to staff include safeguarding updates to ensure that staff remain well

informed.

- Staff are highly caring and put children first. Pupils feel safe in school and can confidently explain what they need to do in the event of a fire or an emergency. They trust that staff will help them if they are in need. Most parents agree.
- The school's e-safety guidelines are clear. Pupils say that they know how to use the internet safely and are clear on how to report anything that is troubling them.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is variable. Pupils do not experience a consistently effective approach to teaching, across the school or within year groups and classes. This is exacerbated by high staff turnover.
- Some teachers challenge the most able pupils effectively. This is particularly evident in mathematics where some pupils confidently apply their knowledge to problem-solving. However, this remains too inconsistent across the school. Senior leaders and the trust have recently put in place training for staff to raise expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Teachers' assessment information about pupils' progress is inaccurate. With so many temporary and new staff at the school, assessment practices are currently insecure. Leaders have recently implemented whole-school assessment procedures, which aim to provide a better idea of pupils' starting points and track their progress. However, it is too early to see whether this is effective.
- The learning experiences for pupils with SEND are inconsistent and are not monitored well enough by leaders. However, some effective support from teaching assistants enables pupils who require extra help to make better progress. For example, inspectors observed a group of pupils being guided to learn how to tell the time.
- Where teaching is most effective, teachers use well-planned questions to deepen pupils' thinking and high-quality texts to develop their language and comprehension skills. Inspectors observed older pupils highly engaged in memorising and performing poetry linked to their topic about the Second World War.
- The teaching of early reading is effective. Most pupils use their phonics knowledge successfully to segment and blend words when they read. However, because of inconsistent expectations and the lack of a whole-school approach to reading, some pupils do not read widely or often, and not enough read for pleasure. The school's library is an attractive and valuable resource, which pupils value greatly. They say that they would like more opportunities to visit it.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Teachers expect too little of pupils and this means that they are not as motivated as they could be. There are times when pupils do not routinely show a love of learning, with some pupils losing focus easily.
- Pupils speak openly and maturely about the many changes of teacher they have and how they must adapt, explaining to inspectors that, 'Teachers have different viewpoints, so we start something, then we have to stop that and do what the next teacher wants.' Nonetheless, pupils feel that staff are caring and supportive, saying 'Teachers do what's best for us.'
- Some parents feel that the continual changes to staffing are having an adverse impact on the well-being of their children. For example, one parent said that her child is unable to remember the name of her teacher as she has had so many this academic year. Many parents are understandably concerned about the high degree of uncertainty that surrounds the school.
- Pupils have a strong understanding of the school's Christian values of love, respect, responsibility, trust and forgiveness. Pupils are clear that these values, reinforced through assemblies, for example, support the positive behaviours and attitudes expected in school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Most pupils are keen to learn and are respectful to their teachers and each other. However, in some classes, particularly where teaching is less effective, pupils behave in ways which can be distracting to others. Sometimes this behaviour goes unchecked by teachers.
- Pupils behave well around the school. They line up calmly and there is a sense of order throughout. Pupils dress smartly, rising to leaders' higher expectations for uniform, many proudly wearing their new school shoes. Most parents stated that they feel the school makes sure that pupils are well behaved.
- Pupils play well together and look after each other. Girls and boys enjoy playing football at break and lunchtimes. Older pupils show kindness and compassion to younger pupils, helping them when they fall over for example.
- Overall attendance last year declined from the previous year, including that of pupils with SEND, and is below the national average. Persistent absence is above that seen nationally and rising. Leaders have not analysed and tracked attendance patterns effectively and recognise that there is more work needed to ensure that pupils attend school regularly.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 2, while improving, has previously been persistently below national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. Progress in reading and mathematics is improving and provisional information for 2018 shows that this is just below the national average. Progress in writing is weaker but also shows signs of improvement. The progress of current pupils, while not inadequate, is too variable.
- Outcomes for pupils at the end of key stage 1, in reading, writing and mathematics, have declined over time. However, provisional performance information for 2018 indicates improvement, bringing them in line with or above national averages reported in 2017.
- Pupils' phonics skills are better than in the past. There was a significant improvement in the proportion meeting the phonics check standard from 2016 to 2017, which has been maintained. In 2018, outcomes were the highest for three years and are above the national average set for 2017. Younger pupils use their phonics knowledge well to tackle unfamiliar words.
- The attainment and progress of the most able pupils has been too low for the last three years. Too few of the most able pupils achieve at the higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2. Work in pupils' books, over time, shows that teachers do not consistently provide higher-ability pupils with enough challenge to enable them to reach a greater depth of understanding.
- Attainment in writing has been well below the national average at the end of key stage 2 for the last three years and dipped further in 2018. Teachers do not pay enough attention to pupils' handwriting, grammar and punctuation. Work in pupils' books demonstrates that pupils do not consistently have the opportunity to write extensively across a broad range of subjects.
- Outcomes for the small number of disadvantaged pupils are lower than those of others nationally in writing and mathematics. Although this group of pupils receives strong support for their well-being, their academic progress is variable. Leaders do not analyse their progress with enough precision to make sure that they receive the support they need.
- Pupils with SEND make weaker progress overall from their starting points than other pupils. Some pupils, where they receive strong support with their learning, do make better progress. However, this is variable. Leaders do not have a clear picture of the progress that this group is making.
- Outcomes in key stage 1 assessments are stronger than in key stage 2. Nevertheless, work in current pupils' books and observations of learning show that pupils' progress overall is not consistently strong. Leaders recognise that further work is required to ensure that pupils make stronger progress in all year groups.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- In the past, the leadership of early years has resulted in a steady rise in the proportion of children achieving a good level of development. Provisional results for 2018 show that the proportion of pupils achieving a good level of development is above the national average set in 2017. However, this trend is not set to continue this year.
- Children evidently enter the school with skills below those expected for their age. Monitoring and tracking last year indicated that children made good progress from their starting points. This is not the case for current children, whose progress is more variable. Leaders are not tracking or monitoring children's development. As a result, they are unclear about the progress being made.
- The small number of pupils entering Reception this year has meant that they are sometimes in class with part of the Year 1 cohort and sometimes taught separately. As a class, children mix and play happily with each other.
- The teaching of early reading is effective. Adults model how to use the sounds that letters represent to read and write words. Children are given opportunities to write and confidently test out writing on their whiteboards. However, adults do not always pay close attention to how children hold their pens or pencils in order to develop their writing skills effectively.
- Children's learning is not extended or developed consistently well. Adults do not use what they know about children's learning to plan suitably engaging activities, inside and outside the classroom. For example, children built a sandcastle, but adults did not challenge or skilfully encourage the children to develop their thinking or consider the activity more deeply. As a result, children quickly lost interest.
- Relationships between adults and children are warm and caring. Adults give close attention to children's well-being and children are happy and settled.
- Adults show high regard for children's health and safety. Children are successfully adapting to new routines and learning to be independent, and they follow instructions from adults sensibly. Parents, overall, feel their children have adjusted well to school life.

School details

Unique reference number	142083
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10046635

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	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	254
Appropriate authority	The board of trustees
Chair	Yvonne McLeod
Executive headteacher	Kate Redman
Telephone number	01306 711 719
Website	www.wealdprimaryschool.co.uk
Email address	info@wealdprimaryschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The Weald CofE Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school joined The Good Shepherd Trust in September 2015.
- The previous local governing body was disbanded in the summer term and an interim academy board (IAB) put in place from September 2018. The IAB is made up of trust members and headteachers, some of whom are local.
- From June 2018, the school is being overseen by an executive headteacher, who is also headteacher of another school in the trust. In September 2018, a head of school joined the school.
- The early years provision consists of a mixed Reception and Year 1 class.
- The school is not currently full. Eight children started in Reception this year.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average.
- The number of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding is below the national

average.

- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is much lower than the national average.
- A Section 48 inspection was carried out in May 2017.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 22 lessons and attended an assembly. On most, but not all, occasions they were accompanied by the executive headteacher or the head of school.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher and the head of school to discuss the school's self-evaluation and development priorities.
- The lead inspector met with four members of the interim academy board, the chief executive officer of the Good Shepherd Trust and the director of schools for the trust.
- Parents' views were considered through face-to-face informal discussions and the 68 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including 60 free-text comments. The lead inspector spoke to one parent on the telephone at their request.
- Inspectors took account of the 16 survey responses submitted by staff and met with a group of six staff to hear their views.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils informally and met with a group of pupils from Year 2 to Year 6.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read, looked at work in pupils' books and discussed pupils' progress and attainment with leaders.
- Inspectors checked records and documentation relating to safeguarding, behaviour, attendance and monitoring and improvement.
- Inspectors reviewed the checks made on staff about their suitability to work with children.

Inspection team

Frances Nation, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Claire Martin-O'Donoghue	Ofsted Inspector
Kusum Trikha	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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