

The West Grantham Academy St John's

Trent Road, Grantham, Lincolnshire NG31 7XQ

Inspection dates

11–12 July 2019

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Early years provision	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders have not acted with sufficient urgency to improve the quality of the teaching and learning since the previous inspection.
- Trustees have not ensured that there has been consistently stable and strong leadership in place. The West Grantham Academies Trust (the trust) is over-reliant on external support.
- Leaders over time have not held staff to account for the progress of pupils. Recent actions taken by the current leadership team have not had sufficient impact.
- Safeguarding is ineffective. Leaders have not ensured that there are systems in place to check rigorously the safety of all pupils.
- Leaders have not addressed all the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. For example, too many pupils continue to be persistently late for school.
- Trustees and leaders cannot account for all of the spending of the pupil premium and the primary physical education (PE) and sports premium. Leaders do not monitor the impact of support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- Teachers' subject knowledge is poor. They do not check what pupils already know to inform their planning of what pupils need to learn next.
- Teachers' expectations are too low. They do not consistently address misconceptions or provide sufficient challenge for the most able. Too many pupils are disengaged and disrupt the learning of others.
- Leaders have revised the systems in place to improve behaviour. Nevertheless, not all parents and carers have confidence that bullying is dealt with effectively.
- Pupils' attainment and progress have declined since the previous inspection. Too few pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
- The curriculum does not provide sufficient breadth for pupils to understand life in modern Britain.
- Early years is inadequate. Leaders have not ensured that disadvantaged children receive the support that they need. Checks have not taken place to ensure the safety of children.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils know how to stay healthy and understand the importance of regular exercise.
- The early years classrooms provide a bright and stimulating environment for the children.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management so that:
 - trustees ensure that there is a sustainable and strong leadership team that can rapidly improve the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school
 - trustees and senior leaders immediately put systems in place to ensure the safety of all pupils, including those off site, and that these systems are being used consistently
 - senior and middle leaders effectively and systematically address poor-quality teaching and learning
 - senior leaders use the additional funding for pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils appropriately so that they make at least good progress
 - senior leaders use the additional primary PE and sports funding to benefit all pupils
 - senior and middle leaders ensure that the curriculum enables pupils to develop knowledge, skills and understanding in a wide variety of subjects and prepares them well for life in British society
 - senior leaders analyse incidents of poor pupil behaviour and take effective action to eradicate disruptive and poor behaviour
 - trustees monitor and challenge the work of school leaders closely and accurately, holding them to account for the rapid improvements needed.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, and thereby outcomes for pupils, by ensuring that:
 - teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - teachers have strong subject knowledge so that they can plan learning to build systematically on what pupils already know and can do
 - teachers identify pupils who are not achieving the standards of which they are capable and use assessment information to plan next steps in learning
 - teachers identify and tackle misconceptions promptly, so that pupils understand how to improve their work
 - teaching meets the needs of pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils so that these pupils make progress that is at least good from their starting points
 - teachers set work that challenges pupils, particularly the most able pupils
 - teachers ensure that pupils learn a range of reading strategies for tackling unfamiliar words and that pupils' reading books are well matched to their abilities.

- Improve pupils' personal development, welfare and behaviour by:
 - improving the punctuality of pupils
 - further improving the attendance of all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND
 - further developing pupils' understanding of what bullying is and securing parental confidence in the way that the school addresses this
 - ensuring that all pupils are engaged in learning and do not disrupt others' learning.
- Improve the early years by ensuring that:
 - leaders check that staff are undertaking regular and appropriate risk assessments
 - leaders monitor the progress that children are making and ensure that additional funding is being used appropriately to increase the progress of disadvantaged pupils in particular
 - leaders involve parents more positively as partners in their children's learning and parents contribute to assessments of their children's learning.

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

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

It is recommended that the school does not appoint newly qualified teachers.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Leaders have lacked urgency in addressing the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Leaders have not improved the quality of teaching and learning rapidly enough. They have been too slow to hold teachers to account for the progress of pupils. Leaders have not established a culture of high aspirations.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been several changes in senior leadership and many changes of headteacher. The school has lacked a consistent and coherent vision for improvement.
- The trust has not ensured that there has been a consistently strong leadership team in place. It has presided over a period of further decline.
- Leaders have not improved teachers' subject knowledge well enough. They have not ensured that all leaders and teachers have the skills that they need to undertake their roles effectively.
- The interim associate headteacher has established more stability in the leadership team. She has begun to establish appropriate expectations of teachers and hold them to account. With the leadership team, she has raised expectations of pupils' behaviour and developed a more consistent approach to addressing incidents of poor behaviour. However, it is too early to see the impact of these actions.
- Leaders are beginning to develop a more consistent approach to assessment. However, this information is not being used to track pupils' progress from their starting points.
- Leaders have not ensured that the needs of pupils with SEND are well met. They have not checked on the quality of support that pupils with SEND receive or the progress that they are making.
- Leaders cannot account for all of the additional funding that the school receives for disadvantaged pupils. Trustees are not aware of how this funding is used and do not hold leaders to account for its allocation or its impact.
- Leaders have not provided a broad curriculum that develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world around them well enough. It does not enable pupils to develop an appreciation of life in modern Britain. For example, pupils have little understanding of what democracy is or how it relates to the running of the country.
- Leaders have not ensured that the primary PE and sports funding has been used to benefit all pupils at the school. There are increased opportunities for some pupils to become involved in sport, and leaders have established links with community groups. Leaders' evaluations have directed additional support to some pupils to encourage them to develop more positive attitudes towards exercise and to raise attainment for pupils who cannot yet swim 25 metres. However, some planned improvements have not taken place because the funding has not been used appropriately.
- Leaders have ensured that there are opportunities for pupils' spiritual development and there are places for reflection around the school. However, pupils' understanding of faiths other than Christianity is not strong, and pupils have few opportunities to learn about other religions and cultures.

Governance of the school

- The trustees have not discharged their statutory duties effectively. They do not hold leaders to account for the improvement of the school. Trustees have not ensured that safeguarding is effective. They have not developed robust systems to ensure that pupils are safe or that follow up on pupil absences.
- Trustees cannot account for how additional funding is used. They have not checked how the funding is spent and whether it is making a difference to disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND.
- Trustees do not meet regularly and so do not have a current or accurate understanding of the school. They are too reliant on the external support provided by another trust.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- Leaders cannot explain discrepancies in pupils' attendance records. They do not check the attendance of pupils attending alternative provision and do not communicate well enough with this setting.
- Leaders have not ensured that systems in place to check the safety of the outdoor area in early years are being used. Their risk assessments are not updated promptly to reflect the changes to the environment.
- Leaders have not acted with urgency to address the gaps that they have identified in their safeguarding systems. They have not established rigorous registration and monitoring procedures at breakfast club.
- Leaders have ensured that staff know what to do if they have a concern about a pupil. Leaders have developed strong working partnerships with external agencies.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate. Teachers do not have consistently high expectations of what pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, can achieve.
- During the past year, there have been many changes to the teaching staff. This turbulence has affected the consistency and quality of teaching and learning.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is weak. They do not consistently plan a coherent sequence of lessons which build on pupils' prior learning. Teaching does not enable pupils to make the necessary progress to be prepared for the next stage in their learning. Teachers do not provide consistent challenge for the most able pupils.
- Teachers do not always make sure that pupils understand what they need to do. Pupils sometimes cannot complete tasks because they have not understood the purpose well enough or because teachers' explanations were limited. Teachers' questioning does not develop pupils' understanding and thinking.
- Too often teachers do not check that pupils can read the books they have chosen. Tasks set do not build pupils' comprehension of texts well enough. Leaders have not ensured that there is a consistent approach to the teaching of reading.

- Not all pupils know how to improve their work. Teachers do not identify consistently gaps in pupils' learning or address promptly their misconceptions. For example, pupils repeat the same spelling mistakes, inaccurate punctuation and grammatical errors when they redraft work.
- Teachers do not identify pupils who are falling behind. Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, receive insufficient support to catch up with their peers.
- There is inconstancy in the ways in which teachers plan for pupils with SEND. They do not plan work that is well matched to pupils' needs or the recommendations in pupils' support plans. However, some adults provide effective support for pupils with SEND.
- Teachers plan activities which enable pupils to encounter different topics across the curriculum. However, these do not systematically build or increase pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- In some phonics lessons, teachers use their knowledge of what pupils already know to plan effective learning. In these lessons, sounds are modelled well and routines for learning are well established.
- Some teaching in mathematics offers opportunities for pupils to solve problems and begin to give reasons for their answers. There is a consistent approach to the teaching of mathematics across the school. In some classes, pupils' fluency is increasing and they can use a range of strategies to work out an answer. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to work independently.
- Teachers set homework, and pupils feel that this is helpful for them as they get ready for secondary school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- Leaders have not ensured that there are suitable checks in place so that pupils are kept safe all the time.
- Teachers have not ensured that all pupils demonstrate positive attitudes towards their learning. Too few pupils take pride in the quality of work and too many do not treat their workbooks with respect.
- Leaders have not ensured that pupils understand what is meant by bullying. They have not gained full parental confidence in the way they deal with bullying.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and that there is always an adult to speak to if things go wrong. They learn about stranger danger and how to stay safe online.
- Pupils who spoke with inspectors said they enjoy the activities on the playground at lunchtime. They can explain how to stay healthy and the importance of exercise.
- Pupils understand that differences are acceptable and appreciate that everyone should be treated equally and with respect.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- Leaders have not improved pupils' attendance sufficiently. The persistent absence of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those with SEND, remains high. Too many pupils arrive late for school. While the attendance of pupils has increased, it remains below the national average, including the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND.
- Too often, pupils are inattentive and do not take part in their lessons. Some talk over the teacher and other pupils when they are speaking. This disrupts learning for others.
- Leaders do not analyse and evaluate records of poor behaviour incidents sufficiently to identify patterns of poor behaviour which could then be better addressed. The proportion of fixed-term exclusions has increased.
- Most pupils conduct themselves well around the school building. Those who spoke with inspectors felt that behaviour has improved recently.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Outcomes for pupils are poor. The progress of pupils has declined since the previous inspection. Few pupils attain the expected or higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2.
- Not all pupils who reach a good level of development by the end of the early years build on this in Year 1. Too few pupils reach the expected standard in reading and writing by the end of key stage 1.
- Provisional assessment information for the current Year 1 indicates that the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening check has declined from 2018. Disadvantaged pupils do not make the progress that they should in gaining a secure knowledge of the sounds that letters make.
- Pupils lack frequent opportunities to read the books that they are given. They do not read fluently and their comprehension of what they are reading is poor. Pupils lack strategies so that they can read unfamiliar words with confidence.
- Scrutiny of pupils' books indicates that progress in writing is inconsistent across the school. Pupils' writing in subjects other than English is limited.
- The school's own assessment information and scrutiny of pupils' workbooks indicate that there is a wide gap between the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils and that of their peers. In some year groups, this gap is widening.
- In Year 2 and Year 6, pupils make stronger progress in mathematics than they do in other subjects. However, there is insufficient challenge in mathematics, and the most able pupils do not always make the progress of which they are capable.
- Pupils with SEND make limited progress. Scrutiny of pupils' workbooks and observations in lessons indicate that pupils with SEND do not undertake work which helps them to build upon prior learning and prepares them for their next steps in learning.
- Pupils make limited progress in subjects other than English and mathematics. Pupils lack opportunities to develop skills and understanding across a range of subjects.

Early years provision

Inadequate

- Leaders have not ensured that there is a culture of safeguarding in the early years. Leaders have not insisted that staff make the checks that are expected of them to ensure that children are safe.
- Leaders have not ensured that disadvantaged children receive the support they need to make the best possible progress. Provisional assessment information and scrutiny of children's learning journeys indicate that few disadvantaged children made the progress of which they are capable.
- Not all children are well prepared for Year 1. Records are kept of children's learning, but leaders do not use these effectively to check that children are making the progress they should.
- Teachers plan some activities that are engaging, and children generally play well and cooperate with each other. For example, children worked together to keep a ball on the top of a parachute. However, teaching does not sufficiently develop children's concentration and perseverance.
- Leaders have not ensured that all parents contribute to the initial assessments of what their children know and can do. However, staff visit all children and families before they start school and organise a popular 'teddy bears' picnic' to enable parents to get to know the staff. Parents who spoke with inspectors felt that their children have settled well.
- Teachers plan tasks which develop what the children learned previously but do not consistently address errors and misconceptions. For example, children enjoyed working out which three-dimensional shape was being described in riddles by the teacher. However, some children did not understand the difference between two- and three-dimensional shapes when they were looking for examples of these in the outdoor area.
- Topics such as 'people who help us' are enhanced by visitors from a range of occupations. Children enjoy asking questions and finding out more about what nurses, police officers and the Royal National Lifeboat Institution do.
- The classroom environments are bright and engaging. Children can access equipment easily, and some routines are well established.
- Leaders are developing links with external agencies. Children with additional needs are beginning to get the support that they need.

School details

Unique reference number	136478
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10087317

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	324
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Emma Austen
Associate Headteacher	Sharron Close
Telephone number	01476 405200
Website	www.wgacademiustrust.org.uk
Email address	stjohns@wgacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 8 February 2017

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The interim associate headteacher was appointed from February 2019. There have been several changes to the leadership team during the current school year.
- The current board of directors of the West Grantham Academies Trust has three members. They perform the functions of the local governing board in addition to being trustees. The acting chair took up her post at the end of January 2019.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average.
- The school is supported by leaders and officers from the Archway Learning Trust.
- The school works with Springwell Alternative Academy, Grantham.
- The school is a Church of England voluntary academy. It underwent a denominational inspection under section 48 during June 2016.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed learning in all key stages. Some of these observations were undertaken jointly with the deputy headteacher. Inspectors heard some pupils from key stages 1 and 2 read and spoke with groups of pupils.
- Inspectors spoke with leaders in the school and scrutinised the school's assessment information.
- Inspectors spoke with parents at the start of the school day and took account of the comments expressed through the free-text service of Parent View.
- Inspectors spoke with staff. They observed behaviour throughout the school day in lessons, at playtime and when pupils were moving around the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the principal of Springwell Alternative Academy.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents which the school provided, such as minutes of the trust meetings and development plan. The lead inspector spoke with the acting chair of the West Grantham Academies Trust and one other director. She also spoke with officers from the Archway Learning Trust.

Inspection team

Hazel Henson, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Deborah Mosley	Her Majesty's Inspector
Paul Heery	Ofsted Inspector
Peter Stonier	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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