

# Inspection of Waterside Academy

Rowans, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire AL7 1NZ

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Inspection dates: 15 and 16 June 2022

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| <b>Overall effectiveness</b> | <b>Good</b>  |
| The quality of education     | <b>Good</b>  |
| Behaviour and attitudes      | <b>Good</b>  |
| Personal development         | <b>Good</b>  |
| Leadership and management    | <b>Good</b>  |
| Early years provision        | <b>Good</b>  |
| Previous inspection grade    | Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils learn in a calm, orderly environment where relationships are valued and respectful. They know about the 'Golden rules' that remind them to be kind and considerate and to work hard. Pupils enjoy being at school and treasure the friendships they make. They have positive relationships with each other and the adults.

Adults have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. As a result, pupils listen carefully to their teachers and become independent learners. Pupils are encouraged to use the three 'Bs before the boss' to seek support from friends or to use class resources before asking the teacher.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. If pupils do not behave as well as expected, they are supported to improve and be back on track quickly. Pupils feel confident to raise concerns and that the adults are there to help and support them. They understand that bullying can occur but know that adults deal with it should it happen. Pupils feel safe.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

Leaders have developed a broad curriculum that supports teachers to know what to teach and when, including in the early years. Leaders have selected the important knowledge they want pupils to learn so that it builds and helps pupils to learn well over time. Leaders support teachers with the resources, materials and training they need. Teachers have strong subject knowledge of the subjects they teach. However, at times, some teachers do not carefully follow leaders' curriculum plans. As a result of this, some pupils do not learn exactly what leaders intend.

Leaders have prioritised reading. Teachers adopt a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics. Pupils begin to learn to read as soon as they start school. They introduce new sounds and revise previous learning until it is secure in pupils' memory. Pupils apply this knowledge and so learn to read fluently. Leaders check how well pupils read. Children who fall behind receive support to catch up. Pupils can name favourite authors and the books they are currently reading in school. They demonstrate a love of reading.

In most subjects, teachers help pupils to remember what they learn by carefully repeating new knowledge and rehearsing what they have learned before. They are then able to apply knowledge independently. However, some teachers in some subjects do not always regularly check what pupils know and can do. As a result, pupils develop gaps in their learning and continue to make the same mistakes or misunderstand ideas.

In the early years, adults have very high expectations of children. As a result, children in the Nursery and Reception classes listen attentively to adults and maintain interest for sustained periods in their learning. Parents are very happy with how well their children learn during their time in the early years. They say their children have flourished.

Leaders carefully identify the needs of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They provide teachers with the precise strategies to support and ensure that pupils with SEND learn well. Teachers adapt their teaching so that pupils with SEND access the curriculum well.

Pupils work well together and behave well. They share equipment and resources and confidently talk about their learning. They try hard and persist when things are difficult. This is because teachers have helped them to work well independently.

Leaders have implemented an effective personal development programme for pupils. This focuses on developing school values. Pupils learn about a range of religions and cultures. They are clear of the importance of respecting differences between people and 'standing up' for others. Pupils receive a range of support with their emotional and mental health. They enjoy sporting extra-curricular activities and take part in competitions that support the development of their physical health.

Staff enjoy working at the school and feel supported by leaders in managing their workload. They acknowledge that leaders are considerate of their well-being and provide them with the training they need to continually improve.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All necessary pre-employment checks are carried out and recorded appropriately on the single central record. This record is monitored by leaders and governors.

Leaders and staff are suitably trained to safeguard pupils. They have effective communication systems to ensure that pupils stay safe. Staff report concerns swiftly and leaders respond effectively. Leaders make timely referrals to a range of outside providers.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe when working online. The school's personal, social, health and economic curriculum (PSHE) and the computing curriculum ensure that pupils are aware of risks and to speak with an adult if they have concerns.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have put in place clear curriculum plans for all subjects. However, in a few subjects, some teachers deviate from these plans. Pupils then do not learn the intended curriculum, and some have a weaker understanding in some subjects than others. Leaders should monitor teaching carefully across all subjects, supporting teachers to use curriculum plans to good effect. This is so that all pupils develop a strong understanding of key concepts and vocabulary.
- Teachers do not consistently check what pupils know and are able to do in all subjects. Some pupils continue to misunderstand and do not learn as well as they could. Leaders should provide further support and guidance to teachers so that they can accurately identify what pupils can and cannot do and then plan to address gaps in all subjects.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

## School details

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| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 145257   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Hertfordshire  |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10227576   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary  |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Academy  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 3 to 11  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 183  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | Board of trustees  |
| <b>Chair of trust</b>                      | Patrick McAteer  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Tobias Mills-Bishop  |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.waterside.herts.sch.uk">www.waterside.herts.sch.uk</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>         | Not previously inspected   |

## Information about this school

- The school runs a breakfast club for its pupils
- The school has partnerships to support a small number of pupils who need full-time alternative provision.
- The school became part of the Agora Learning Partnership in January 2018

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, science and art. For each deep dive, inspectors considered the design of the curriculum, spoke with leaders, visited lessons, scrutinised pupils' books or listened to children reading, and spoke with teachers and pupils.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans for music and Spanish.

- Inspectors spoke with the chief executive of the trust, those responsible for governance including trustees and local governors, leaders, and those with responsibility for SEND and the early years.
- To inspect safeguarding, meetings were held with the designated safeguarding lead, teachers and pupils. The inspectors scrutinised the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks.
- The lead inspector also spoke with the leaders of the alternative provision used by the school.
- The inspectors observed and spoke with pupils, including at break times. No pupils completed the survey provided for them.
- The inspectors gathered parents' views. The 44 responses and 30 free-text responses submitted to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, were reviewed.
- The inspectors also gathered staff views. The inspectors took account of the 19 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

### **Inspection team**

Debbie Rogan, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Jess Pearce

Ofsted Inspector

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