

Wayland Junior Academy Watton

Brandon Road, Watton, Thetford, Norfolk IP25 6AL

Inspection dates

26–27 January 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
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

- Despite their efforts, the principal and governors have been unable to secure a substantive leadership team that can give the school the focus that it requires to improve rapidly.
- The high turnover of staff, and fragility of the temporary arrangements in place, have led to discontinuity in pupils' learning.
- There is too much inconsistency in the quality of teaching across the school. Pupils do not achieve as well as they could in some classes.
- The middle leadership team is not fully effective. It is not established enough to take a full part in leading improvements within the school.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not achieve as well as they should compared to other pupils. This is because, until recently, suitable support has not been in place to meet their needs.
- Many pupils have gaps in their learning and this is slowing down the speed of progress that they need to make in order to catch up. Therefore, by the time pupils reach Year 6, they are not fully prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Expectations of what the most able pupils can, and should, achieve are too low. Work is too easy for them. Consequently, they do not achieve the high standards they should.
- Although the trust is providing effective support to further develop the governors' effectiveness, this is in its early stages and governors do not yet fully challenge leaders robustly about the work of the school, including pupils' performance.

The school has the following strengths

- Senior leaders have high expectations and are ambitious for the school. Their strong determination is now starting to make a positive difference to pupils' achievement.
- Teaching assistants work effectively with teachers in supporting pupils to access their work.
- Pupils are polite and courteous around the school. They take good care of each other.
- Pupils, staff and parents say that pupils feel safe in school. The pastoral support provided to vulnerable pupils is a strength of the school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - increasing the capacity of the leadership team to accelerate the impact of the improvements already made
 - ensuring middle leaders have a greater influence on improving teaching, learning and assessment and, consequently, pupil outcomes
 - continuing to increase the effectiveness of the academy council’s ability to challenge the school’s performance rigorously so that leaders are held appropriately to account for the work of the school.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - making sure that consistently good teaching is sustained across the school to accelerate progress, and secure better achievement for all pupils
 - ensuring that all pupils make rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics in order to catch up so that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Improve outcomes by:
 - embedding the now effective support for disadvantaged pupils so that their achievement compares well to that of other pupils nationally
 - ensuring that the most able pupils are better challenged to achieve the higher standard of which they are capable.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders have faced numerous recruitment challenges. The many staff changes have been a barrier to improvement. Teaching is not improving quickly to ensure pupils achieve well enough.
- Leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well. However, the capacity to bring about rapid and sustained improvement is limited, as the principal and deputy principal are trying to undertake too many roles of responsibility. The middle leadership team is not sufficiently developed to share some of the workload. The middle leaders are not able to lead improvements effectively within their areas of responsibility.
- The leadership team have introduced several initiatives to improve the quality of teaching; however, they do not always ensure that these are being adhered to by all teachers. Consequently, the impact of these teaching approaches on pupils' progress is not as effective as it could be.
- Leaders are taking robust action to improve the least effective teaching in the school. They have established a monitoring and evaluation system that includes observations of teaching, analysis of pupils' progress data, and scrutiny of teachers' planning. As a result, teachers are held to account for the progress pupils make and there are regular reviews of teachers' performance. Teachers new to the profession are well supported through an effective mentoring system.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. It meets statutory requirements and provides pupils with a wide range of opportunities to increase their experiences beyond the local community. For example, through an e-learning resource, pupils are able to link with other classes from around the world. Additionally, the planned programme of visits helps to extend pupils' learning. For example, Year 6 pupils visit Norwich City College to raise their awareness of further education opportunities and the world of work.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to support pupils academically and socially. The pastoral leader and inclusion manager are effective in coordinating and providing appropriate individualised support for disadvantaged pupils. Disadvantaged pupils are now making better progress and their attainment is similar to that of other pupils in the school, but not yet to that of other pupils nationally.
- Leaders have made good use of the additional sports funding. Training has been provided to support teachers in building their confidence and skills to teach physical and sporting activities. Opportunities have been organised for pupils to take part in competitive sports both within school and against pupils from other local schools. Pupils also enjoyed a visit from a para-Olympian athlete. An increasing number of pupils now regularly take part in sporting activities, and understand the benefit of sport for their health and personal development.
- Funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well spent. Leaders regularly monitor the support provided for these pupils, and adapt interventions as appropriate. Consequently pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well.

- The school's specialist resource base is well led and managed. The provision for the pupils who attend the base is good, and current assessment information shows that they make rapid progress from their individual starting points.
- Parents are largely supportive of the school, and most share the view of one parent who told inspectors that 'it's a lot better now'. However, there are some parents who have concerns about the high turnover of staff, and inconsistency in the quality of teaching across the school.
- The trust has provided external support for the school from experienced and effective leaders. These practitioners have helped the school to identify areas for improvement, and given opportunities for the teachers to work closely with colleagues from other schools. This has improved both the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes.

Governance of the school

- Following training from the trust, the academy council has a better understanding of its roles and responsibilities, and is now more effective in challenging and supporting leaders. Governors are increasing their knowledge about pupils' outcomes, and the need for pupils to make rapid progress.
- Governors' understanding of the work of the school is improving because they regularly visit to review all aspects of the school, conduct audits, and complete reports. However, their reporting does not always analyse the impact of strategies clearly enough in order to determine the next steps for improvement.
- Although governors do ask some challenging questions, they still rely too heavily on the principal to evaluate the work of the school, and develop improvement plans. Governors do not yet play a full role in determining the strategic direction of the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have worked hard to create a strong culture of safeguarding within the school. All members of staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in protecting pupils.
- Since taking up the post in September 2016, the pastoral leader has further strengthened safeguarding arrangements and procedures within the school. She is the first point of contact if staff have any concerns about pupils' welfare or well-being, and, along with the inclusion manager, works closely with pupils and their families to provide support and advice. The pastoral leader has ensured that all staff receive up-to-date training on matters related to safeguarding, including their responsibilities in protecting pupils from the threat of radicalisation or extremism.
- Links with outside agencies are good and record-keeping is detailed and thorough. As a result of the effective arrangements that the school has in place, the most vulnerable pupils in school are well cared for, and this supports them in achieving the best they can.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because there is too much variability and it is not consistently good across the school. Pupils make uneven progress and do not achieve as well as they could from their starting points.
- Not all teachers have sufficiently high expectations of what pupils can, and should, achieve. Where this is the case, teachers set work that is not sufficiently well matched to the varying abilities of the pupils in the class. This is particularly the case for the most able pupils, who are too often set work that is not sufficiently challenging.
- Leaders have introduced strategies for teaching the core skills in reading, writing and mathematics across the school. However, these strategies are not embedded in all classes because leaders are not monitoring closely enough to check that all teachers are adopting them. These activities are interesting and enjoyable for the pupils, who engage in them very well, for example the 'maths meetings' challenges and the 'guided literacy box'.
- The pupils use successful strategies to decode unfamiliar words. They were able to speak at length about their reading books and read with enthusiasm, demonstrating a love for reading.
- When teachers make learning over time interesting and challenging, expectations of what should and can be achieved by pupils are clear, and activities are accurately tailored to the range of abilities within the classes and pupils' progress is rapid.
- Evidence gathered during the inspection, including through the scrutiny of pupils' work in books, demonstrates that there is consistently strong teaching over time in Year 6 and an increasing number of year groups across the school.
- Teaching assistants work effectively alongside teachers and provide good support to individuals and small groups of pupils. For example, teaching assistants use signing successfully with pupils who speak English as an additional language, to enhance their learning. Teaching assistants' work contributes effectively to the increasing progress that pupils make when in their care.
- The quality of teaching at the specialist resource base is good. The pupils who attend the base make rapid progress because the teaching is highly personalised, and based on their individual needs.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school provides a good level of care for its pupils. Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school. They say that bullying is rare and any problems are dealt with straight away by the adults in the school.

- Pupils also say that they would have someone to turn to in school if they had any worries or concerns at all. Pupils spoke highly of the pastoral support available in the school.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. For example, the curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to learn how to stay safe when using the internet.
- Pupils say that they like their teachers and value the support provided by the teaching assistants. One pupil said, 'This school is getting better because teachers explain things better.'
- Pupils are confident and polite towards each other. They enjoy learning and are proud of the school, and the part they play in its improvement. Pupils are friendly and they value each other's differences. In a whole-school assembly pupils enjoyed and celebrated the achievements of other pupils.
- Pupils are able to talk confidently about the school's 'respect code', and told inspectors that the behaviour in the school is improving because pupils follow the code well.
- Pupils are encouraged to be active members of the school community by taking on additional roles and responsibilities. For example, they can apply to be 'golden guardians' who look after other pupils and help to develop positive friendships with each other.
- Pupils who attend the specialist resource base are cared for well. They enjoy learning because the work their teachers plan for them is relevant and engaging.
- The majority of parents who responded to Parent View agree that their children are happy and safe at school. One parent summed up the views of many by saying 'the teachers care about the pupils'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- In some lessons pupils lose concentration when working, and are restless while the teacher talks. This low-level disruptive behaviour detracts from the learning. On these occasions, some pupils do not respond quickly enough to instructions from the teachers. Not all pupils have positive attitudes to learning, and a minority do not have sufficient pride in the presentation of their work. Consequently, some pupils do not try their best and achieve as well as they could.
- Pupils generally conduct themselves well in, and around, school. They are friendly and polite to visitors. They are considerate of others and take care of school property.
- Pupils play cooperatively during well-supervised breaktimes, because interesting play equipment is always available, even during shorter breaks.
- The school has rigorous and successful systems in place to reduce absence. Attendance is in line with the national average and improving. The inclusion manager works closely with parents, and takes effective steps to secure better attendance, particularly for pupils whose attendance has previously been below that which is expected.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes require improvement as pupils do not make good progress across all year groups. Consequently, for some pupils there are gaps in their learning. These gaps then have to be addressed as pupils move into a different year group, before they can progress on to the level of expectation appropriate for their age and ability.
- Not enough pupils are making rapid progress to be ready for the next stage of their education. The inconsistencies in outcomes are reducing, and the achievement of current pupils is improving.
- Outcomes for the most able pupils across the school are not sufficiently high. Too many of the most able pupils undertake work that is not sufficiently demanding. Their progress is not as rapid as it could be. This was reflected in the key stage 2 national tests in 2016 where the proportion of most-able pupils working at the higher standard was below the national average in reading and mathematics and the proportion of such pupils working at greater depth was below average in writing.
- The achievement of disadvantaged pupils from their starting points is improving because they are well supported. Outcomes for these pupils have improved from 2016 and they are now making better progress. The school has sensibly used pupil premium funding to ensure that pupils are physically and emotionally ready to learn. For example, staff provide breakfast in the morning for some pupils, and targeted additional support that is well matched to the different needs of the pupils. However, despite an improving picture, disadvantaged pupils still need to continue to catch up with other pupils nationally.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities generally make at least expected progress from their starting points. Their specific needs are identified and met through appropriate support. However, on occasions, effective help is not always continued into the whole-class lessons so their progress is not always as good as it could be.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make similar progress to their English-speaking peers. This is because teachers and teaching assistants are well trained by specialist support provided by the local authority to help pupils develop their English language skills.
- The pupils who receive support from the school's specialist resource base make rapid progress, particularly in reading and mathematics. This is because their additional needs are accurately identified on entry to the base, and pupils are given access to a highly personalised and engaging curriculum.

School details

Unique reference number	140680
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10023347

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	251
Appropriate authority	The academy trust
Chair	Carl Evans
Principal	Nicola Kaye
Telephone number	01953 881387
Website	www.wjaw.org.uk
Email address	office@wjaw.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- This is an average-sized junior school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is in line with the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is in line with the national average.
- A very small proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive part-time support in the school's specialist resource base for learning and cognition, situated at the Wayland Academy. This is managed by the junior academy and funded by the local authority.
- The school did not meet the floor standards in 2016. These are the minimum expectations, set by the government, for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in every class and attended a whole-school assembly. Several of the observations were carried out jointly with the senior leadership team.
- A wide range of pupils' workbooks were looked at by inspectors throughout the inspection.
- An inspector visited the specialist resource base.
- Inspectors held meetings with the principal, deputy principal, subject leaders, the pastoral leader, the special educational needs coordinator, the teacher at the specialist resource base, the newly qualified teacher, two governors, including the chair of the academy council, and the chief executive officer of the trust.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils informally in classes and around the school at break and lunchtimes to seek their views about the school.
- Inspectors met with several groups of pupils more formally to discuss many aspects of school life.
- Inspectors heard some pupils in Years 3 and 6 read. Inspectors talked to pupils about their reading habits and looked at their reading records.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's website and a range of school documents including: assessment information; minutes from governors' meetings; the school's own evaluation; improvement plans; and records about behaviour, safeguarding children and attendance.
- Inspectors considered the 25 free texts from parents and 28 responses made by parents to the Ofsted online Parent View questionnaire. They also considered the responses of the school's own parent questionnaires. Inspectors spoke to some parents before school at the beginning of the inspection, and during the inspection. Additionally, inspectors looked at the 26 views expressed by members of staff in response to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

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