

Woodvale Primary Academy

Crestwood Road, Lings Way, Northampton, NN3 8JJ

Inspection dates 8–9 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Good 2
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Early years provision	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Since the academy opened, senior leaders have set high expectations for pupils' work and behaviour. Careful checking and targeted support have secured good teaching, and together these are accelerating the rate of pupils' progress.
- The trust's support for the academy is highly effective, particularly in providing links with other academies. These broaden pupils' experiences, provide staff training, and allow academic standards to be checked.
- Pupils achieve standards in reading, writing and mathematics which are approaching those of most eleven year olds nationally by the time they leave the academy. This represents good progress from often low starting points.
- Pupils feel safe in the academy, and bullying is rare. Staff deal with it firmly when it occurs.
- Pupils' attitudes are unfailingly positive, and they take a pride in their work. Their behaviour in lessons is good, and they conduct themselves sensibly outside the classroom.
- Leaders give thoughtful consideration to learners' progress and experiences in planning the curriculum. Teamwork and tolerance of others' cultures and traditions are promoted strongly.
- Teachers structure lessons carefully to build on what pupils already know, and provide a good level of challenge, especially for more able pupils.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is good: children make rapid progress, and on average leave with expected levels of development. This stage also establishes the productive links with parents which have a noticeably positive impact on pupils' learning.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers' marking sometimes does not show children clearly how to improve their work.
- Work for less able pupils does not always enable them to make fast enough progress.
- Although the academy has invested heavily in classroom support staff, their deployment does not always have a strong impact on pupils' progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 23 lessons taught by 14 different teachers; three of these were seen jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors also watched small groups of children working, visited an assembly, and observed children’s conduct at break and lunchtime.
- Discussions were held with the Principal, other leaders, class teachers, and two representatives of the Greenwood Dale Foundation Trust, the academy’s sponsor.
- Inspectors met with three groups of pupils, two selected at random, and spoke with many others informally, particularly in class. Inspectors listened to pupils reading.
- Pupils’ books were examined in lessons, and inspectors also looked at work in greater depth, including some from the previous academic year.
- During the inspection, inspectors looked at a wide range of documents, both on paper and online. These included: development plans and their evaluations; records of how leaders check on teaching; documents which demonstrated how the trust oversees the work of the academy; case studies; policies; safeguarding records; teachers’ plans; and academy publicity and newsletters.
- Too few parents completed the online survey, Parent View, for their responses to be taken into account. However, inspectors considered the views of parents they spoke to at the start of the day. They also considered 41 responses to the questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

Martin Spoor, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
John Greevy	Additional Inspector
Elaine Williams	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary academy, with part-time nursery provision for pre-school children.
- Woodvale Primary Academy opened on 1 February 2013, sponsored by the Greenwood Dale Foundation Trust. The Principal is also Principal of another nearby academy within the same trust. A head of school has been appointed to manage day-to-day running.
- The proportion of pupils who come from White British heritage is broadly average, with other pupils coming from a large number of different ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and eligible for the pupil premium is well above the national average.
- On the most recent data available, the proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average. No pupils have education, health and care plans.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of pupils by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teachers apply the academy's marking policy effectively, so that marking always leads to prompt improvements in pupils' work.
- Accelerate the progress of less able pupils, especially in Key Stage 1, by:
 - setting appropriately demanding work for them in all lessons
 - providing more training for support staff, and deploying them more effectively.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The Principal and the head of school have set and maintained high expectations for pupils' behaviour, and created a culture in which learning is highly valued. Teachers understand that they are accountable for pupils' progress, and their work is carefully monitored. Leaders have built a community in which pupils and staff are keen to develop their skills. As a result, academic standards are rising significantly.
- Membership of the trust provides the staff with important opportunities that have helped them to learn from best practice in other academies, to discuss initiatives and to check on the accuracy of assessments.
- Other leaders in the school share the commitment of senior staff, and play a significant part in enhancing the quality of teaching. Subject leaders are given the opportunity to lead on the development of their subjects. They exercise their responsibilities with enthusiasm and sound judgement. Those leaders new to the academy, including the leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage, have made a good start.
- The academy's self-evaluation is accurate and constitutes a secure basis for improvement. The current development plan is comprehensive and includes clear indications of how leaders and governors will know that each priority has been successful.
- Pupils enjoy their learning partly because the curriculum provides carefully planned practical and enriching experiences which provide the stimulus for the study which follows. Literacy is given good emphasis through a range of subjects. Any changes are carefully managed in the planning, for instance, in mathematics. The academy is successful in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development, and explicitly promotes British values while celebrating other cultures and traditions.
- Funding to support disadvantaged pupils is used effectively on strategies to help pupils and their families with specific barriers to learning. The impact of the spending is checked very thoroughly by leaders and the trust, to ensure its most effective use.
- The additional primary school sports funding has been used to provide swimming and gymnastics lessons, focused staff training, sports clubs and inter-academy sports competitions. Pupils have responded with great enthusiasm; many take part. Pupils say how much they enjoy the clubs and competitions especially for the opportunity to work in teams and develop confidence.
- Pupils' progress is tracked regularly, and teachers' assessments are checked by other staff in the school and externally. These assessments form the basis of a wide range of interventions to support pupils at risk of falling behind. Progress is reported to parents three times a year, and next steps are clearly identified. The academy is currently developing its preferred approach to assessment in response to national changes regarding National Curriculum levels.
- The academy's arrangements for safeguarding meet all statutory requirements, and staff show tenacity and skill in securing the cooperation of other agencies to help vulnerable children.
- Leaders set precise targets for staff, and evaluate teachers' performance effectively. They use the results to make decisions about pay rises and promotion. Where a need is identified, the training provided for teachers is precisely matched to requirements, and staff, including teachers at an early stage of their careers, report that this has brought enormous benefits. However, training for teaching assistants is not so effective in ensuring they are used to support pupils' learning and help them make progress.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The trust provides good governance. It ensures effective support and challenge and good management of finance and human resources.
 - The trust monitors the work of the academy rigorously, scrutinising all available information, so that it knows about pupils' progress, the impact of the expenditure of the pupil premium, and the quality of teaching. The trust board makes sure that it knows how good teachers are being rewarded and how any underperformance is being tackled. It assures that decisions on the pay of senior leaders and other

staff are securely based on pupils' progress. Trustees well understand the need to support the academy in providing experiences which prepare youngsters for life in modern British society, and to that end promote links with other academies in the trust which have a different social composition.

- The trust reviews the safeguarding policy and its implementation annually to ensure all requirements are met.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. From the early years and throughout the academy, their attitudes towards their work are consistently positive. In lessons they collaborate willingly and effectively, reflecting the academy's explicit moral and social teaching. They care greatly about their progress, and this is shown in the presentation of their work. Pupils respond promptly to staff requests and low-level disruption is very rare. Where there are pupils with special behavioural needs, others are not distracted. Occasionally, when the pace of learning flags, some inattention creeps in.
- The academy records behavioural incidents carefully. There have been very few incidents of a racist nature, and the academy has ensured that the perpetrators have learnt from their mistakes. The academy has not excluded a pupil permanently, and the rate of fixed term exclusion is low, reflecting the academy's measured and proportionate approach. The academy works intensively with pupils who arrive with challenging behaviour, and succeeds in changing their attitudes to learning.
- Behaviour at break and lunchtime is sensible and considerate, encouraged by effective supervision and the provision of sports equipment such as bats, balls and hoops. Pupils from different ethnic backgrounds play happily together. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage fully respect the academy environment, which is well-designed and a colourful celebration of their achievements. Older pupils wear their uniforms with pride and understand how it links them to other academies in the trust.
- The academy promotes attendance through a reward scheme for pupils and parents, and through rigorous monitoring of those whose attendance slips. Specialist staff have been recruited to work with the most reluctant families. As a result, attendance has improved considerably, and is now average.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils are very positive about how happy and safe they feel, and parents who stated an opinion agree. A check of records shows that staff liaise very effectively with other agencies to protect children, and build strong relationships with parents. The risks presented by the construction site adjacent to the academy have been well managed.
- Pupils report that bullying is very rare. They have complete confidence in the staff to resolve any problems, although some older pupils think a few incidents may go unreported. They know about different types of bullying, and the academy provides regular information about how to keep safe, including internet safety.

The quality of teaching is good

- Since the academy opened, thorough monitoring and the provision of training precisely tailored to individual teachers' needs has improved teaching and ensured that it helps all groups of pupils to make good progress. Pupils say that lessons are fun, while allowing them to learn new skills and develop their understanding.
- Teachers have strong relationships with their pupils, and know individuals' strengths and weaknesses. Pupils understand what is expected of them. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour effectively. Planning builds carefully on what pupils already know, and work is adapted for different groups of pupils. Work for more able pupils provides suitable challenge.
- Pupils make slower progress when work is not explained sufficiently clearly or the work does not maintain their interest. Books show that, occasionally, the work expected of less able pupils, especially in Key Stage 1, is insufficient for them to make gains in knowledge and understanding.

- Teachers' good subject knowledge enables pupils to learn and use subject-specific terms readily. Homework is well-chosen to support what is learned in class.
- Teachers plan work carefully for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and for pupils for whom English is an additional language. Resources such as counting blocks are used effectively to help pupils make good progress.
- Teaching assistants work effectively with pupils in lessons and with small groups of pupils, including those who need considerable support. However, too often additional adults in the classroom do not understand their role fully. This means that there is a lack of challenge to some pupils, slowing down their progress.
- Marking sometimes leads to prompt improvement and follows the academy's policy. However, this is not consistent, and in some books, the marking was insufficient to help pupils improve.

The achievement of pupils is good

- On entry to the academy, a majority of the children have fewer skills and abilities than is typical for their age. Good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage enables them to catch up rapidly, so that they enter Key Stage 1 broadly in line with national expectations. These higher standards are evident throughout the academy, so that, in general, attainment at the end of each key stage is now broadly in line with the national average. This represents good progress overall.
- Attainment and progress in mathematics fell in 2014, but data presented by the academy, along with inspection evidence, show that from their starting points when the academy opened, pupils have made good progress in mathematics as well as reading and writing.
- Disadvantaged pupils end Year 6 approximately three terms behind other pupils nationally in reading and in writing and nearly four terms behind in mathematics. Their rates of progress are, overall, above those of other pupils nationally and improving further, so they are closing the gap with all pupils nationally. They make similar progress to other pupils within the academy, and leave Year 6 with their writing on a par with their peers, but two terms behind in reading and three in mathematics.
- The most able pupils make good progress, repeatedly shown in the work checked by inspectors and the growing proportion of pupils attaining the top levels. They respond well to the special tasks often set by teachers.
- Progress data for the relatively small number of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is rather uneven, reflecting their varying needs. Nevertheless, individualised data scrutinised by inspectors show that most make good progress against their individual targets.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language often enter the academy with spoken English considerably below age-related expectations, but make progress throughout the key stages slightly above that of other pupils.
- Pupils are highly enthusiastic about their reading, and the academy promotes reading at home very successfully using books and online resources. Pupils successfully adopt the phonic strategies they have learnt to help them read more challenging texts.

The early years provision is good

- The early years area is well resourced and carefully planned, and children are well taught. As a result, children make at least good progress from starting points that are, on average, below age-related expectations. Children of all abilities achieve well. In 2014, the proportion of pupils who attained a good level of development was slightly above the national average, and significantly higher than the proportion in 2013. Improved progress was particularly seen in mathematics.
- Teachers assess children's progress accurately, and check their judgments with colleagues and with the local authority. Outcomes are used to adapt learning for individuals and groups, for example to prioritise

the development of fine motor control for a group of boys. Progress is accurately and attractively recorded in children's 'learning journeys'.

- The setting provides a safe environment, and children settle quickly on arrival. Staff know the children well, and adapt learning to meet their individual needs. Clear routines have been established, and as a result, pupils work happily and behave well.
- Links with parents are strong. Informal discussions take place daily, and home link books emphasise the contribution that parents make to their children's development.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led, and new leaders have fitted quickly into the team. Leaders make sure that successful strategies are shared within the staff team, evaluating progress and planning for the future. Arrangements for welcoming children from a variety of homes and settings are well planned and tailored to the needs of individual children, so that they find starting easy.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	139112
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	447834

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	450
Appropriate authority	Greenwood Dale Foundation Trust
Chair	Lynda Valentine
Principal	Erica Holt
Head of School	Janet Pallister
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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