

Woolpit Primary Academy

Heath Road, Woolpit, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP30 9RU

Inspection dates

13–14 November 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of teaching and learning varies across the school. This has resulted in pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, making progress that is not good enough in reading, writing, mathematics and a range of other subjects.
- Teachers give pupils too few opportunities to develop reasoning and problem-solving skills in mathematics. In writing, teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to write at length.
- Phonics teaching requires improvement and, as a result, too many pupils fail to develop secure early reading skills. The school is changing the way it teaches phonics. However, it is too soon to determine the success of these changes.
- Over the last two years, too few pupils have achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- Assessment information is inaccurate. Therefore, teachers do not consistently set work that challenges pupils.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can learn. As a result, they do not consistently set work that is matched closely to pupils' abilities.
- Leaders have not been precise in how they are going to measure the impact of changes they have introduced. They are unsure of the impact of some of their work.

The school has the following strengths

- Since her appointment, the headteacher has worked quickly to set high expectations for pupils' behaviour. She has established an inclusive, nurturing culture that is shared by pupils, parents, carers and staff.
- Leaders have swiftly gained the support of parents, who value the positive changes that have been introduced. One parent commented, 'The school has improved no end since the new headteacher has been in post.'
- Leaders correctly identify and work to remove the barriers to learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). As a result, pupils with SEND make good progress from their starting points.
- Children in early years make good progress and are well prepared for Year 1.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They are polite, proud of their school, and talk positively about the recent improvements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that pupils make good or better progress across the curriculum by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - using accurate assessment information to ensure that learning activities are sufficiently challenging and matched closely to the needs of pupils
 - ensuring that mathematics activities enable pupils to develop their knowledge and skills in reasoning and problem-solving
 - providing increased opportunities for pupils to write more fluently and at greater length across the curriculum.
- Continue to develop the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that development plans are tightly focused on how actions will raise standards and how the impact of these actions will be measured.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders have worked hard to make sure that every pupil at Woolpit is valued. They have developed a school culture that is positive. As a result, pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning have been transformed. Pupils are now ready to learn when they come into class.

Leaders have created a culture of identifying and breaking down the barriers to learning. A strong focus on working with parents has resulted in additional provision, such as the Reading Café, breaking down the barriers between home and school. Parents are positive about the school. 92% of those who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, agree that the school is well led and managed. One parent said, 'Under the leadership of the headteacher the school has improved greatly.'
- The school uses additional funding well for pupils with SEND. These pupils make good progress from their starting points. Leaders consistently remove barriers to learning.
- Additional funding is used to ensure that there are experienced staff and resources to support disadvantaged pupils. This has improved and quickened their progress, both academically and in terms of their personal and social development. However, in line with other pupils in the school, disadvantaged pupils still do not make as much progress across the curriculum as they should.
- Leaders ensure that funding for physical education and sport is spent appropriately. It has been used to help pupils access more sporting opportunities. More pupils are now entering more external competitions and representing their school.
- Leaders have a good understanding of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. This is enhanced by their effective work with advisers appointed by the trust. As a result, the staff training they deliver is focused on the right things, such as improving the teaching of mathematics and writing.
- Staff value the support that leaders give them. All those who responded to Ofsted's survey of their views said that they are well supported in their roles and in their personal well-being. They are proud to work in a school that 'has improved greatly over the last year'.
- The curriculum is designed to follow pupils' interests. It has a good range of subjects and activities. The curriculum is effective at supporting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, providing a range of sporting, musical and acting opportunities that broaden their horizons.
- Pupils have a range of opportunities to develop their understanding of fundamental British values. Leaders link these to the school values for living; everyone has a voice, we give each other respect, we are free to make choices.
- Leaders' accurate view of the school enables them to correctly identify the priorities that require improvement. However, school plans are not clear about how leaders will know when their actions have been successful. Consequently, leaders are unclear about the impact of some of their work. Some of the actions they have taken have not had the desired impact.

Governance of the school

- The governors and the trust board provide the school with good support and take decisive action where necessary.
- Governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and development needs. They know how well pupils are doing and now rightly have a focus on ensuring that rates of progress and levels of attainment improve.
- The legal duties relating to safeguarding are clearly understood by the governing body. Governors regularly check safeguarding records and ensure that staff are recruited with careful consideration.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a culture of safeguarding at the school. Safeguarding systems are in place and fully understood. All staff are regularly trained in how to keep children safe. They diligently implement and follow the school's safeguarding procedures. Leaders' records are detailed, clear and up to date. Any accidents or behavioural incidents are carefully recorded and followed up promptly. The designated safeguarding leads acts swiftly in response to concerns about pupils' safety and monitors pupils to ensure that they are well looked after.
- Pupils are kept safe on site. Levels of staff supervision are appropriate to minimise any risk. Detailed risk assessments are in place to ensure that pupils are looked after and kept safe.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet. They feel very safe at school because they trust the adults working with them to help them deal with any problems.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teachers do not give pupils sufficient time to practise the skills that they have been taught. Low-level disruption occurs when pupils are slow to start their work.
- Generally, teachers do not use assessment information as well as they could to plan learning that consistently meets the needs of all groups of pupils. Teachers frequently have low expectations of what the pupils can achieve. This limits the progress pupils make.
- Pupils do not always have the resources they need to support them in their work. This means that pupils are not provided with the support they need to improve their knowledge and skills.
- The teaching of writing requires improvement. Pupils are given insufficient time to develop the skills they have been taught. They do not have enough opportunities to apply their knowledge by writing at length for sustained periods of time. A new system of teaching writing has recently been introduced but this has not had sufficient time to

demonstrate an improvement in pupils' writing.

- Similarly, the teaching of mathematics is not good enough. Pupils are not routinely taught to solve mathematical problems. There are insufficient opportunities for them to practise mathematical reasoning. Sometimes, teachers do not use what they know pupils can already do to move their learning on effectively.
- Teachers' do not have high enough expectations for the presentation of pupils' work in books. Work is often poorly presented or unfinished and demonstrates that teachers have not fostered pupils' pride in their work.
- The teaching of phonics and early reading skills, while developing, is not good enough. As a result, pupils make slow progress. Too few pupils achieve the expected phonics standard at the end of Year 1. Leaders have recently been proactive in their efforts to foster a love of reading. They have introduced schemes to encourage pupils to read. The pupils inspectors spoke with were enthusiastic about reading, and said that they enjoyed a wide range of books to choose from.
- Some teaching is more effective. Some teachers model the work they require from pupils well. Some ask probing questions that deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- Most teachers have built productive relationships with pupils. As a result, pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning and enjoy coming to school. One Year 6 child said, 'Teachers are encouraging. They want us to work hard and not give up.'
- Teaching assistants typically provide effective support. This is largely because they understand the needs of the pupils they work with. Teaching assistants lead a range of catch-up sessions and teach small groups of pupils. Many of these sessions are beginning to be more successful in closing the gaps in pupils' learning. This is particularly so for the pupils with SEND.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. All staff take the time to get to know children and pupils well. As a result, they are effective at providing for their individual needs.
- Leaders have established a nurture room which is managed by a specifically trained member of staff. They use this room successfully to enable pupils to explore their feelings, calm down and to return to class ready to learn.
- Pupils have ample opportunities to develop responsibility in a number of roles across the school. Once a week, assembly is led by the Year 6 pupils in their house groups. This puts the pupils in charge of promoting the nurturing culture that is present within the school. During the week of the inspection, Year 6 pupils led a discussion on what was good about their school, and how they show kindness to each other. Pupils quickly identified the nurture room as being the best thing about the school.
- Pupils show a good understanding of bullying, including cyber bullying, and said that it is now occurring less often than in the past. They have confidence in the staff to deal

quickly and decisively with any inappropriate behaviour that occurs.

- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe online. They recently delivered a helpful presentation to parents explaining how to be safe when using the internet.
- The school keeps good lines of communication open with alternative education providers. This enables them to check on the behaviour, attendance and welfare of pupils that these providers teach on behalf of the school. Leaders work well with these providers to secure an effective education for these pupils.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Behaviour across the school has improved significantly since the appointment of the headteacher. Nearly all pupils behave well both in lessons and around the school. Pupils, parents and staff confirm that while behaviour was previously a problem, leaders have worked successfully to improve this aspect of provision.
- During the inspection, pupils were observed playing together amicably. A Year 3 pupil said, 'Those with no one to play with are included in games.' They are well looked after during these times.
- Pupils spoken with during the inspection were pleased with the new behaviour policy. They said that incidents of bad behaviour are now less frequent because they understand the rules: 'Ready, Respectful, Safe'.
- Pupils' attendance has improved this year and the rate of persistent absence has fallen. This is because improving the attendance of pupils is a high priority. Leaders now reward good attendance and actively work with parents to follow up absenteeism. Parents are well supported and have confidence in the school. The improvement in attendance is particularly notable for disadvantaged pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2018, Year 6 pupils made slow progress in reading, writing and mathematics from their starting points. They did not attain high enough standards.
- In the 2018 end of key stage 1 national assessments, a lower proportion of pupils than seen nationally attained the expected or better standards in reading, writing and mathematics. The attainment of most current key stage 1 pupils, while improving, is still not as high as it should be.
- In the 2018 Year 1 phonics screening check, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard was below the national average. Recent changes to the teaching of phonics have not had sufficient time to demonstrate an impact on improving these outcomes for the current Year 1 pupils.
- Leaders do not precisely monitor the progress that all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, make. They do not consistently help them to catch up. As a result, too few pupils make as much progress as they should.
- Pupils with SEND are now making good progress from their starting points. This is because pupils respond well to the support they receive in class, in small groups, or on

a one-to-one basis. The additional funding for pupils with SEND is being appropriately used to improve these pupils' outcomes.

Early years provision

Good

- Early years provision enables children to make good progress from their individual starting points. By the time they finish Reception, children are confident learners and are well prepared for their learning in key stage 1.
- Leaders know the strengths and areas for improvement well. This has resulted in ongoing improvements, including to the outside provision through weekly 'wellie walks' and the introduction of finger exercises to develop muscles to support the children when writing.
- Children in early years are making good progress in developing their phonics knowledge. This is because teachers have strong subject knowledge. They use this to develop pupils' early reading skills in focused phonics lessons and during pupil-led activities. Inspectors saw a range of examples of pupils using their phonics knowledge to accurately write words such as when a child correctly wrote the word 'cat' after hearing it in a story.
- The learning environment is stimulating and exciting for children. Both the indoor and outdoor learning spaces provide opportunities for pupils to improve their skills in all areas of the curriculum. For example, children outside were cooperating and talking to each other to share instructions while building a house for the three little pigs. This helped their early language development.
- The early years curriculum is thoughtfully planned. It builds on the developmental needs of the children. During a role play activity, for instance, inspectors saw an adult modelling language associated with a hospital and putting a bandage on a patient. The children were then enthusiastically able to take on this activity for themselves and use proficiently the language modelled by the adult.
- Leaders use the interests of the children to develop engaging activities. An example seen during the inspection was the making of binoculars to look at birds. This followed adults' discovery that a child enjoyed using binoculars.
- Children in the early years are able to sustain concentration when performing tasks for extended periods of time. They are able to select an activity and work cooperatively with their peers, sharing resources and taking turns.
- Children are looked after well in the early years. Relationships between adults and children are strong and founded on mutual respect. The secure safeguarding arrangements that are in place in the rest of the school are also present in the early years.
- The transition into the early years is effective because parents are involved well, visiting the school and meeting the teacher. This successful partnership ensures that children start school confidently and feel happy and secure.
- Parents do not have the opportunity to contribute to their child's assessment after they have started in the early years. Therefore, they are not fully included in developing a

full picture of each child's interest and stage of development.

School details

Unique reference number	142566
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10053516

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	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	161
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Gary McDonald
Headteacher	Jen Carlyle
Telephone number	01359 240625
Website	www.woolpitprimary.net
Email address	admin@woolpitprimary.net
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Woolpit Primary Academy converted to become an academy on 1 January 2016. It is a member of Thedwastre Education Trust. The trust provides half-termly visits from an education consultant to support the identification of the improvements that are required. The day-to-day running of the school is delegated to the local governing body, which reports to the trust board.
- The alternative providers that the school currently works with are First Base and Include.
- The current headteacher took up post on 1 September 2017, following a period when the school had been led by a number of acting headteachers.
- Woolpit Primary Academy is a smaller than average primary school. Apart from Years 3 and 4, where there are two mixed classes, there is one class in each year group from Reception to Year 6.
- Almost all pupils are of White British origin and almost all speak English as their first

language.

- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is slightly lower than the national average.
- The school provides care for pupils through a breakfast club.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited all classes, sometimes accompanied by the headteacher. The headteacher also joined inspectors to scrutinise a wide range of pupils' books.
- The lead inspector met with the trust's chief executive officer and held a meeting with members of the local governing body.
- Inspectors met with the leaders responsible for safeguarding, curriculum, pupil premium, special educational needs, and with the mathematics and English subject leaders.
- Inspectors observed other aspects of the school's work such as a whole-school assembly, house group assembly and the breakfast club provision.
- Inspectors spoke with parents at the start of the school day and took account of 36 responses to the Ofsted free-text system as well as the 52 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors took account of the 19 responses to Ofsted's electronic staff survey and spoke with a cross-section of staff to discuss their views of the school.
- Inspectors examined a wide range of documents, including school improvement plans and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding. They reviewed information about pupils' progress, teachers' performance and the trust's review of the school. They reviewed the contents of the school's website.

Inspection team

John Crane, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Pauline MacMillan

Ofsted Inspector

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