

# Woodlands Academy of Learning

Bloxwich Road North, Short Heath, Walsall, WV12 5PR

**Inspection dates** 18–19 April 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- A wide range of memorable events excite and enthuse pupils about their learning and they are proud to talk about their work.
- Pupils' achievement across the school is good, especially in reading and mathematics, because they are taught well.
- Attainment in reading and mathematics is average at the end of Year 6.
- Teaching is good with some examples of outstanding practice, particularly in small group work when tasks are specifically planned to meet pupils' needs.
- Adults give strong support to developing pupils' personal, social and emotional well-being so that pupils are able to concentrate and make good progress in their work.
- Pupils behave well and feel safe. There are strong relationships between all in the school. Pupils are quick to help and encourage each other.
- Leaders have a strong drive to further improve teaching and pupils' achievement. This is effectively shared among staff because of the strong staff teams who take responsibility for different areas of the school's work.
- Governors have an accurate view of how well the school is doing and are regularly involved in reviews that evaluate the work of the school.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Attainment in writing is not yet as strong as in reading and mathematics.
- More-able pupils and disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are not always able to work in the way most suited to the way they learn and as a result they do not always make the best possible progress.
- Teachers do not always make effective use of written feedback to give clear guidance about how pupils can further improve their work.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage do not always have enough opportunities to make use of the exciting areas inside and outside to explore and initiate their own learning.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 21 lessons and part-lessons. They were accompanied by the headteacher or deputy headteacher in four of the observations.
- Meetings were held with staff, members of the governing body and with pupils from Years 3 to 6.
- The inspectors heard pupils read from Years 1 and 3 to 6.
- Inspectors looked at the school's development plans and monitoring files, the headteacher's leadership files, arrangements for performance management of staff, and minutes of meetings of the governing body. They also looked at the school's records of pupils' progress and scrutinised work in pupils' books.
- There were 17 responses to the on-line parent questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors also held informal discussions with parents and carers at the start of the school day.

## Inspection team

Jenny Batelen, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Kate Robertson

Additional Inspector

Jan Bird

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average sized primary school with 14 classes, which converted to become an academy in July 2012.
- When its predecessor school, Woodlands Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted in 2010, it was judged to be good.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in the 52-place Nursery and two Reception classes.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average. These include pupils with complex learning needs, behavioural, social and emotional needs and medical needs.
- Most pupils are White British. A small proportion of pupils come from a wide range of other minority ethnic backgrounds. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority and the children from service families) is above average. There are no children who are looked after by the local authority or pupils from service families currently at the school.

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

- Improve teaching so more is outstanding by:
  - ensuring that written feedback clearly indicates what pupils must do to improve their work and teachers give them time in lessons to respond to this
  - creating more opportunities for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to explore the inside and outside areas in order to learn through following their own interests.
- Raise achievement in English and mathematics, particularly in writing, by:
  - increasing the opportunities for more-able pupils to tackle open-ended writing tasks
  - providing disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs with more varied tasks in whole-class lessons that more closely meet their specific needs.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start in Nursery with basic skills that are below those typical for their age. They make good progress throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage because staff understand the learning needs of young children.
- All pupils, including those from a range of backgrounds, make good progress throughout the school in reading, writing and mathematics and reach average standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. However, attainment in writing is lower than in reading and mathematics due to pupils' low starting points in this area. Sometimes, pupils, particularly the more able, are limited by the tasks they are given and so are not able to fully develop their skills.
- Constant use of subject specific language in mathematics ensures that pupils have the basic understanding to help them tackle the problems they are set. The weekly session when mathematics is closely linked to the learning unit excites and motivates pupils. This was very apparent when Year 3 pupils explored and created symmetrical patterns linked to their learning about the Aztecs.
- Skilled teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 provides pupils with the skills to read unfamiliar words and to use this knowledge when writing. Pupils enjoy reading a range of books and are encouraged to gain familiarity with a different author in each year group.
- Pupils who speak little or no English are helped to acquire the basic literacy skills in order to access the full curriculum. Parents and carers spoke of how the school supported their children in the early days at school to help them settle. The constant use of partner talk enables these pupils to develop their communication skills further.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are clearly identified and their needs are suitably assessed and planned for. Small group work and individual targeted work are effective in helping these pupils make good progress in reading and mathematics, especially as their different ways of learning are met through a range of activities. Sometimes, in whole-class sessions, these particular styles of learning are not effectively planned for and their progress is not as rapid.
- All pupils who benefit from the pupil premium make similar progress to their peers. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 are currently two terms behind other pupils in English and mathematics. The school has good evidence that some of these pupils are now making more rapid progress, particularly in reading, so that the gap between their attainment and that of their classmates is beginning to close. The funding is used for extra staff to provide pastoral support and small group work, training for support staff and for ensuring that these pupils participate in all school activities, thus ensuring equality of opportunity for all.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Lessons are planned to make sure that pupils make good progress and build on what they have previously learnt. Teachers help pupils to articulate what they already know, to share this with their classmates and then to build on this knowledge as they tackle tasks with new learning. Most pupils are clear about the levels they are working at, the progress they are making and what they need to do to reach the next level.
- Skilled questioning by all adults helps pupils to deepen their thinking about what they are learning and helps them to understand their work so that they are not reliant on the adults when they work by themselves or in groups.
- Teachers are quick to react to any misconceptions and share these with the class and with groups so that pupils can correct their work and move learning on, rather than keep repeating mistakes.

- Feedback on completed work celebrates success and gives guidance as to how it can be further improved. However, sometimes, written feedback is not clear enough about how pupils can improve their work and teachers do not always allocate time for pupils to respond to the feedback and make corrections or respond to a further challenge.
- Small group work to support pupils who find learning difficult is clearly planned to meet the specific needs of these pupils. The range of activities keeps pupils interested and on task. This was clearly demonstrated in a Year 6 mathematics group when quick and active questioning put the learning in context. Tasks were planned to suit the way pupils learn and as a result pupils made excellent progress in understanding number facts using factors and square numbers while others could sort and identify odd and even numbers.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have a range of exciting opportunities to explore and develop their own learning, both inside and outside, through adult-led activities and those they choose for themselves. Their interest and enthusiasm for learning about different types of dance were shown when children in the Reception class chose to explore the music of '*Swan Lake*'. One group developed a dance, accompanied rhythmically on the drum, while another group chose to build the stage and investigated the problems of gaps in the staging. However, there are some sessions which are led completely by adults and there are not always enough opportunities for children to select activities for themselves.
- Parents and carers value the opportunities they are given to understand how their children are taught so that they are able to help them at home.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Pupils' behaviour is typically good. They are polite, well mannered and pleased to talk about their school with visitors.
- Clear behaviour management strategies and effective, consistent behaviour support mean that those who find it difficult to manage their feelings are helped to get on well with others. The school has clear evidence of improvements in behaviour for these pupils over time. There have been three fixed-term exclusions since the academy opened, with no repetition of these for the pupils involved.
- Pupils are keen to learn, ask questions and make good progress in their lessons. They appreciate help from their teachers, commenting that 'teachers give you clues to help you'. Very occasionally, when adults do not ensure that pupils are fully engaged in discussions, pupils lose focus.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They have a clear understanding of how to keep themselves safe, such as in the event of fire, when using the road and also when using modern technologies. They report that there is very little bullying of any kind and that incidents are effectively dealt with by the adults in school. They are confident that adults will help them if they have any worries or concerns. They value the school 'worry box' that can help them express concerns that they might not want to openly talk about.
- The school works very closely with families who find it difficult to make sure their children have good attendance and has clear examples of improvements that have been made.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The headteacher, well supported by the deputy headteacher, gives clear direction and ambition to the school. Careful monitoring of pupils' progress and the requirement for each teacher to account for the progress made by the pupils in their class or group ensure that there are improvements in learning for groups and individuals so that there is no discrimination against any group or individual.
- Well-planned support and training have ensured that the quality of teaching has improved and has led to improvements in pupils' achievement, particularly in reading. This demonstrates the

school's capacity to improve further.

- Staff work closely together, in teams that support different areas of the school's priorities. This means that there is a shared understanding and responsibility for the delivery of plans for improvement.
- Teachers are very clear about their responsibility for pupils' achievement and understand how this links to progression up the pay spine.
- The academy has strong links with specialist support services so that they are able to give the best possible support to the pupils. The links with local schools and the school's internal transition programme ensure that pupils transfer smoothly to the next stage of learning.
- The subjects studied are exciting because of the 'Big Bang' starters and 'Fabulous Finish' finales. Visits and visitors further enhance the learning. Special 'Explore and Discovery' weeks respond to pupils' needs and interests. As a result, there is a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This was clearly demonstrated through the activity during Holy Week when pupils initiated their own version of the washing of feet and so were able to deepen their understanding of the story. Pupils enjoy fund raising and have a good understanding of how the money raised is used to help others, both in the United Kingdom and around the world.
- Safeguarding requirements meet statutory requirements and parents and carers are confident that their children are kept safe in school.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Members of the governing body involve themselves in the review of the school's work, so that they have a good understanding of the priorities for the school. Governors understand data and now ask more pertinent questions and challenge the school leadership regarding standards pupils reach compared with the national average. Governors know about the quality of teaching and the impact of this on pupils' progress. They understand and check the process of setting targets for teachers and make sure that increases in pay and promotion are justified by pupils' progress and achievement. Governors know how the pupil premium is used and how this is beginning to make a difference for these pupils.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	138343
<b>Local authority</b>	Walsall
<b>Inspection number</b>	411700

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Academy converter
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	425
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Roger Butt
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jane Arnstein
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01922 710613
<b>Fax number</b>	01922 496892
<b>Email address</b>	postbox@woodlands.walsall.sch.uk



Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)  
[Store St](#)  
[Manchester](#)  
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2013