

# Exeter – A Learning Community Academy

Brayford Avenue, Corby, Northamptonshire NN18 8DL

## Inspection dates

15–16 November 2016

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Early years provision	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an inadequate school

- Leaders and governors do not have an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching and learning. Their actions to improve these, since the previous inspection, have been unsuccessful.
- The reports given by leaders to governors are too positive about the quality of teaching and learning. These reports do not give sufficient weight to the very disappointing outcomes of pupils at key stage 2. Governors do not challenge these reports with sufficient rigour.
- Since the previous inspection, many pupils who have left the school at the end of Year 6 have been poorly prepared for learning at their secondary schools. Their achievement in reading and mathematics has been particularly weak.
- The progress of pupils currently in the school is inadequate. Teaching, learning and assessment are inadequate and so pupils underachieve in subjects across the curriculum.
- The most able pupils are often set work that is too easy for them. They do not reach the high standards that they are capable of achieving.
- Tasks set for pupils in subjects other than English and mathematics lack challenge and do not build on earlier learning to develop subject-specific skills.
- Leaders do not check carefully how well disadvantaged pupils are doing. The pupil premium is not used effectively to help disadvantaged pupils to make better progress.
- Subject leaders do not have a good enough knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects to be able to bring about improvement.
- Provision in the early years is inadequate. Weak teaching in the Reception classes means that many children start Year 1 without the skills expected for their age.
- The rates of absence and persistent absence are much higher than the national averages.

### The school has the following strengths

- The children in the Nursery receive a good start to their education and make good progress.
- Pupils enjoy the wide range of sports clubs.
- Pupils say they enjoy school and take their roles of responsibility seriously.
- The school works well with other agencies to keep the pupils safe.

## Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

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

- Improve leadership and management urgently, so that:
  - leaders identify the reasons why pupils are underachieving and so can take the right actions to ensure that the pupils make better progress
  - subject leaders have the knowledge and the opportunities necessary to bring about better teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility
  - pupils enjoy a broad curriculum and their skills and knowledge in every subject grow as they move through the school
  - leaders provide accurate reports to governors about the school's performance
  - governors have the skills and confidence to hold leaders to account and to bring about school improvement
  - pupil premium funding is used effectively
  - the school's website meets requirements.
- Improve outcomes for all pupils and raise the quality of teaching and learning by:
  - using information about the pupils' performance and the quality of teaching to provide effective training where it is required, particularly in the teaching of mathematics and reading
  - ensuring that the most able pupils receive work that is challenging and enables them to attain high standards
  - ensuring that teachers use lesson time efficiently and give pupils work that enables them to make at least good progress in all subjects
  - giving pupils plenty of opportunities to use and to develop their writing skills throughout the curriculum.
- Improve the quality of teaching and leadership in the early years by:
  - ensuring that leaders responsible for the early years make regular and robust checks on the quality of teaching and assessment in the Reception classes
  - ensuring that all necessary training is provided to secure better provision in the Reception classes
  - sharing the good practice evident in the Nursery.
- Improve pupils' personal development, welfare and behaviour by reducing the rates of absence and persistent absence.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be further improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Inadequate

- Leaders have not dealt with the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. All areas of the school's performance have declined and are now inadequate.
- Leaders collect plenty of information about the pupils' performance. However, this information is not accurate. Leaders and governors believed that pupils would achieve much more successfully in Year 6 assessments, in 2016, than they did.
- Leaders do not look closely at the information that they gather about pupils' progress. As a result, neither they, nor staff, nor governors know precisely how different groups of pupils are performing. This means, for example, that the difficulties met in reading by pupils who speak English as an additional language are not being addressed in lessons or in improvement planning.
- When leaders have checked the quality of teaching and of pupils' work in books, they do not pinpoint the specific features of practice that are leading to underachievement. As a result, leaders do not provide training that is targeted accurately to meet the precise needs of staff.
- School leaders do not provide candid and accurate reports on pupils' progress when reporting to governors. For example, a report on pupils' performance in mathematics noted that the vast majority of pupils had made expected progress against the school's own assessment framework. There was no mention of the fact that pupils' progress in national tests had been in the bottom 10% for the second year running.
- Leadership of English is similarly weak. A 'position statement' to governors at the beginning of this school year about reading did not highlight the poor progress made by pupils throughout key stage 2. Instead, it focused on improved outcomes in Year 1 phonics scores and Year 2 assessments. Important areas of weakness are being ignored instead of being addressed.
- Leaders have not given enough attention to ensuring that teaching meets the individual needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The special educational needs coordinator does not check on how well daily teaching is helping the pupils to overcome the barriers that they experience to making good progress.
- Middle leaders have had very limited opportunities to bring about improvement in the areas for which they have responsibility. They have not ensured the quality of the assessments that teachers make about pupils' progress and standards in these areas. Consequently, the school has no secure understanding of the quality of teaching and learning across the curriculum.
- The management of the staff's performance has not improved the quality of teaching or of leadership. Occasionally, the failure to meet targets has led to staff not moving up the salary pay scale. However, there is no evidence that the school's approach is successfully motivating or supporting staff.

- Leaders cannot provide a clear explanation for the decisions that they make about the use of the pupil premium. They do not analyse the impact of the spending on the progress of disadvantaged pupils. The issues that are causing this group to underachieve are not being tackled.
- The physical education (PE) and sports premium has been used effectively and successfully to increase opportunities for pupils to take part in competitive sports and a range of extra-curricular sports clubs.
- The curriculum is narrow and many subjects are poorly planned. Pupils' skills and knowledge in a range of subjects are not developed carefully as the pupils move through the school. As a result, pupils' spiritual and cultural development are weak.
- Displays around the school celebrate British values. Pupils can explain the importance of tolerance and respect. Older pupils can give thoughtful accounts of what life might be like in countries that do not hold similar values.
- Parents who spoke to inspectors and the seven who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were generally positive about the school. Where they had concerns, these were related to incidents of bullying or poor behaviour.
- Newly qualified teachers should not be appointed to work in the school. The leadership and teaching are not strong enough to ensure that they would be supported well while the school is dealing with the many areas of weakness identified in this report.
- The school has been heavily dependent on support from Woodnewton Academy Trust since the previous inspection. However, despite some recent signs of a positive impact on outcomes in the early years and key stage 1, this support has not been effective. Actions taken in response to the school being below floor standards in 2015 have not improved leadership and management, teaching, attendance or achievement.

## **Governance**

- Governors have not been effective in holding leaders to account.
- The school was slow to organise the review of governance requested at the time of the previous inspection. The review was eventually carried out and points for improvement identified. However, governors have not responded to these successfully. They did not ensure that the school's leaders took the actions required to bring about the urgently needed improvements.
- Governors have not ensured that the school's self-evaluation and improvement-planning documents provide a realistic account of the school's performance and a clear strategy for addressing weaknesses.
- Governors have not fulfilled their responsibilities regarding the publication on the school's website of information about the use of pupil premium funding or the school's curriculum.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

- The safeguarding of pupils who are potentially at risk of harm because of the problems that they face outside school is strong. The designated safeguarding lead has a good understanding of the local issues that may put pupils at risk. She has effective links with a range of agencies that work together to protect pupils. These links enable her to work successfully to ensure the well-being of pupils. She is a determined safeguarding lead. For example, when she judges that the local agencies are not responding quickly, or decisively enough to protect pupils, she challenges their practice and doggedly pushes for appropriate action.
- The trust's commitment to keeping pupils safe is reflected in the range of expertise and innovative provision that is available within the school to support the pupils' physical and mental well-being. There is a caring culture throughout the school and pupils are confident to share worries or problems with staff. Staff keep a close eye on the pupils and report promptly any concerns that arise. Careful records are kept of all referrals of concern made by staff.

### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

### Inadequate

- Teaching fails to ensure that pupils achieve as well as they should, particularly in reading and mathematics. School leaders recognise that pupils in some classes experience poor teaching day in, day out.
- The most able pupils are not suitably stretched. They are not encouraged to read challenging books. They repeat learning regularly that they have mastered already and they are set work that is too easy for them. Last year, no pupils achieved a high standard in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching regularly fails to help pupils who are struggling to understand the skills or ideas that are being taught. Teachers do not check closely that all pupils are following their lesson introductions. As a result, many pupils are set tasks to complete in lessons that they do not understand.
- In many classes, teachers do not help pupils to become confident readers or foster a love of books. For example, some hesitant readers in key stage 1 had not been heard reading by an adult often enough to help them to improve. Higher up the school, disadvantaged pupils who are capable readers are not challenged about their preference to pick short story books with simple plots. Very few of the most able disadvantaged pupils achieve high standards in reading at the end of key stage 1 or key stage 2.
- Pupils' books show that a lack of challenge and low expectations are typical features of teaching. In some classes, no science or religious education work has been recorded. Where work is recorded in these subjects, it is clear that all pupils complete the same tasks and that the level of challenge for many is insufficient.
- Time is wasted in lessons. For example, in mathematics lessons, pupils spend too much time cutting and pasting worksheets into their workbooks, or practising over and over again number facts that many pupils already know. In an English lesson, pupils showed admirable patience as the teacher directed a lengthy series of questions at individual pupils that were of little value or interest to the majority of the class.

- Writing is not taught well. The staff's expectations are low and, typically, pupils record their ideas on worksheets that do not give them enough opportunities to practise their skills, or build up their stamina for writing. When pupils do write lengthy pieces, they do not use punctuation and grammar accurately enough and often their spelling is weak.
- In some subjects, teachers do not provide resources that would help the pupils to master the skills that they want them to gain. For example, when teaching pupils about the 24-hour clock, pupils did not have the opportunity to see a working 24-hour clock. This was the first lesson on this topic and the lack of an effective visual aid slowed down learning.
- There are pockets of effective practice. Where learning is most effective, pupils are fully engaged and interested in the tasks provided. In some classes, the staff question the pupils skilfully to deepen pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. The sensitive responses of some teachers to help pupils who are struggling encourage those pupils to have a go without fear of failure.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Inadequate

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. This is because, even though the vast majority of pupils are confident and friendly in lessons and around the school, they are less assured when asked about their learning and how they could do better.
- A weakness in the promotion of pupils' spiritual and cultural development is their limited knowledge and appreciation of different types of music and art. A school assembly about ancient Greece showed that, in some classes, pupils do learn in depth about a topic, but generally the curriculum is narrow and does not fire the pupils' imaginations or broaden their horizons.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe. They said that the school responds quickly to deal with any online bullying or incidents of bullying at school. The school's values highlight the importance of respect and tolerance, and pupils can explain how these help prevent racism or homophobic name-calling.
- Pupils who have medical needs are cared for well. A few parents took the opportunity to speak with inspectors and commented on the support and help staff had given to help them cope with difficult circumstances.
- Pupils take pride in the jobs that they do to help the school to run smoothly. These include taking care of the school environment, anti-bullying projects and contributing to the school council. Pupils pointed to the introduction of a lunchtime club and the school tuck shop as evidence that their views are taken seriously.
- Right from the Nursery, pupils benefit from effective support if they have emotional or behavioural difficulties. The school provided striking examples of how the school's work in these areas, for example through its nurture provision, has enabled individual pupils to settle and to enjoy learning and playing with their classmates.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.

- Since the previous full inspection, rates of absence and persistent absence have been high. The progress of disadvantaged pupils, in particular, is suffering because of the number of days they have off school. The systems now put in place by the attendance officer are much more rigorous and are bringing some, but not enough, improvement.
- Although there are two breakfast clubs, too many pupils arrive late to school.
- Pupils said that, occasionally, fights do take place at playtimes, but generally everyone gets along well and that the different ethnic groups mix and play together happily. Pupils like to be helpful and make visitors to the school feel very welcome with their friendly greetings and confident personalities.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Inadequate

- In both 2015 and 2016, pupils' progress through key stage 2 in reading and in mathematics was significantly below average. This slow progress, from below-average starting points, meant that many of the pupils who left the school at the end of Year 6 were not properly prepared for their secondary schools.
- The school's assessments of pupils currently in key stage 2 show that the pupils' progress was also inadequate at the end of the last school year. For example, fewer than one third of the pupils who are currently in Years 4 and 5 made expected progress in reading. The attainment of the pupils in these year groups is very low in reading and in writing.
- Attainment in mathematics is also low. In Years 3, 4 and 5, more than half of the pupils had not acquired the mathematical skills and knowledge expected for their ages when they were assessed in the summer term.
- The school does not use its pupil premium funding effectively or check carefully on how well disadvantaged pupils are learning. The pupils' reading, writing and mathematics skills, across key stage 2, are well below those of other pupils nationally.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make slower progress in reading than in other subjects. They can read quite fluently, but their understanding of what a text means, or why a writer chose a particular phrase, is relatively weak. Teaching does not deal with this issue because teachers are unaware of the problem.
- The most able pupils make inadequate progress in reading. They are not heard to read regularly at school, or encouraged to experience a wide range of challenging texts. These weaknesses in provision have a particularly negative impact on the progress of the most able disadvantaged pupils.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make inadequate progress. Teaching does not take into account their particular needs and so they do not make progress as well as pupils from the same starting points do nationally.
- Pupils' achievement in key stage 1 was much more positive in 2016 than in previous years. Pupils made good progress in reading, writing and mathematics from their starting points at the end of the Reception Year. Effective support from the academy trust resulted in their attainment at the end of Year 2 being in line with the national averages.

- There was a big improvement in the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check. The trust focused its support in this area and pupils' attainment was above the national average.

### Early years provision

### Inadequate

- The previous inspection judged the early years provision to be good. The quality of provision has declined since then and it is now inadequate. The provision in the Nursery is much stronger than the provision in the Reception classes.
- In 2016, the proportion of children attaining a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year improved significantly, but was still well below the national average. Children, particularly boys and disadvantaged children, were not as well prepared for Year 1.
- Children begin Nursery with skills below those that are typical for their age. Staff are well trained in providing support to develop the children's speech, language and understanding skills, which are particularly low on entry. The effective practice in the Nursery is leading to children entering the Reception classes with higher skills across the areas of learning than in the past.
- Progress slows in the Reception classes because teaching is much weaker. The activities set for children are not challenging, nor sufficiently interesting to promote good learning. Children show little enthusiasm or enjoyment while they are working. Resources are of poor quality and there is little in the classroom environment to excite the children or to stimulate their imaginations.
- In 2014 and 2015, fewer than a third of disadvantaged children achieved a good level of development. The school was unable to provide inspectors with information about this group's performance in 2016 assessments at the end of the Reception Year. This is an example of inadequate leadership.
- The breadth of the curriculum in the Reception classes is narrow and is not promoting creativity or good personal and social development. The very limited range of things to choose from during activity time does not inspire the children and some children get restless because they are bored.
- Procedures and routines for keeping children safe are in place. The staff work well with external agencies whose role it is to support children in their early development. Parents who spoke with inspectors agreed that their children are safe and cared for well.
- Children generally play alongside one another happily and are beginning to learn to take turns and to take into account the thoughts and feelings of others.
- Opportunities to promote good personal development are missed in the Reception classes. For example, children do not routinely help to put out equipment, or to tidy up after activities. On occasions, sessions end quite chaotically.

- The provision for the two-year-olds in the Nursery is more effective. Staff have strong relationships with parents and know the needs and personalities of the individual children. Outcomes at the end of the Nursery show good progress from children's starting points. Parents who spoke with inspectors agreed that their children are safe and cared for well.

## School details

Unique reference number	139119
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10019574

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	2–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	613
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Jezamin Lindsay
Headteacher	Helen Johnson
Telephone number	01536 204 765
Website	<a href="http://www.exeter.schools.uk.com">www.exeter.schools.uk.com</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:head@exeter-pri.northants-ecl.gov.uk">head@exeter-pri.northants-ecl.gov.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	25–26 November 2014

## Information about this school

- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about the pupil premium and the school curriculum.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the use of the pupil premium funding or the school's curriculum on its website.
- The school is part of the Woodnewton Academy Trust. It joined the trust on 1 January 2013.
- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The school has Nursery provision for two-year-old children.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. A quarter are from other White backgrounds and over a third speak English as an additional language.

- The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is above average.
- The school runs two breakfast clubs and an after-school club.
- The school did not meet the government's floor standards for 2015, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited all classes to observe teaching. Some of these visits took place with school leaders.
- Inspectors asked pupils about their learning and what it is like to be a pupil at the school.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' workbooks and heard pupils reading.
- Inspectors took account of seven responses to the Parent View and had brief discussions with parents at the beginning of the school day.
- Three responses to the staff questionnaire were received and analysed. There were no responses to the pupils' online questionnaire.
- Discussions took place with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, teachers, members of the governing body, and the executive principal of the Woodnewton Academy Trust.
- Documents were analysed, including the school's self-evaluation statement, school development plan, minutes of governing body meetings and information about pupils' achievement.
- Records relating to attendance and safeguarding were scrutinised.

## Inspection team

Anthony O'Malley, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
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Ann Glynne-Jones	Ofsted Inspector
Fiona Parr	Ofsted Inspector

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