

West Wycombe Combined School

Church Lane, West Wycombe, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire HP14 3AH

Inspection dates	14–15 January 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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders including governors are not carrying out their statutory duties effectively. Systems to monitor and evaluate the performance of staff do not meet requirements.
- Leaders do not evaluate the quality of school performance in a regular and timely manner. Consequently, the decline in school performance has not been addressed.
- Teachers, including those at an early stage of their career, receive little guidance on how to improve their skills. Consequently, the quality of teaching is weak and not improving quickly enough. Staff morale is low.
- Many pupils do not achieve the standards expected for their age in writing or mathematics.
- Standards in writing across the school are low. Pupils' presentation is poor and there are too few opportunities to write for a range of purposes.
- The most-able pupils do not achieve high standards in reading and writing.
- Safeguarding is ineffective. Staff have not received appropriate training.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability do not make the progress they are capable of. Plans to support these pupils' progress are underdeveloped.
- Some groups of pupils do not attend school regularly enough. Rates of persistent absence are high especially for disadvantaged pupils.
- Fifty per cent of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, would not recommend the school. Many respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the information they receive about how well their child is learning, the breadth of the curriculum and the quality of homework.
- Pupils and parents say there is bullying and that not all staff are effective at handling concerns.
- Children in early years do not make good progress in developing their skills, knowledge and understanding. Many start Year 1 underprepared for the challenges ahead.
- Disadvantaged pupils are not catching up quickly enough. Additional funding is not used well.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils behave well and are mostly attentive in lessons.
- Most parents say their child is happy at school.
- The mathematics leader and the early years leader have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in their respective areas. They have a good understanding of what needs to improve.

Full report

In accordance with 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 the impact of leadership and management to ensure that:
 - school performance is kept under regular review and information used to inform school improvement plans
 - teachers receive timely feedback on how to improve their skills, including those who are newly qualified
 - parental engagement and satisfaction levels improve
 - sports funding is used to increase competitive opportunities for pupils and increase rates of participation
 - the use of additional funding, including that intended to support disadvantaged pupils, is used appropriately and gaps between these pupils' attainment and others nationally begin to close
 - the curriculum is covered in full in all age groups, and includes opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding
 - pupils who have special educational needs or disability receive appropriate support and make good progress
 - equality of opportunity exists throughout the school and all pupils have an equal chance of success
 - all groups of pupils attend school regularly.
- Improve the impact of governance to ensure that:
 - safeguarding procedures are urgently reviewed and policy and practice meet statutory requirements, including in the early years
 - staff receive appropriate training, including in 'Prevent', to protect pupils from the dangers of extremism and radicalisation
 - systems to keep teachers' performance and pay under review are implemented urgently
 - governors provide greater challenge to school leaders for school performance
 - governors receive appropriate training to develop their effectiveness.
- Improve pupils' behaviour and ensure that all incidents of bullying are dealt with effectively.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning in order to accelerate pupils' progress, including in early years, by ensuring that:
 - staff receive appropriate training, including in the teaching of phonics to develop their skills, receive regular reviews of their performance and are set appropriate targets
 - teachers plan activities in lessons that cater well for all pupils of all abilities and are pitched to take account of pupils' needs including for pupils who have special educational needs or disability and the most able
 - pupils receive regular feedback so that their misconceptions are swiftly addressed, and the most-able pupils are challenged and achieve higher standards in reading and writing.

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 improved.

The school should not appoint newly qualified teachers.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is inadequate

- Leaders have not addressed falling standards with enough urgency or precision. High staff turbulence including high absence rates, low morale and a lack of appropriate systems further compound the situation. Leaders do not ensure full coverage of the curriculum, monitor the quality of teaching regularly or review progress made by pupils. Standards have declined significantly. Approximately half of the parents who responded to Parent View would not recommend the school.
- Leaders' evaluations of school performance are not focused on improving teaching and learning. School improvement planning is not rooted in improving outcomes for pupils. Actions to improve the school are not addressed with vigour and consequently standards continue to slide. Work to address areas identified as needing improvement at the last inspection has not been sufficient. Many staff who responded to Ofsted's staff survey say that the school has not improved since the previous inspection and some say it is worse.
- Leaders gather information about pupils' progress on a termly basis. However, there are no systems in place to check the accuracy of this information. Information about pupils' progress in many instances is overly generous and does not match the work in pupils' books. Leaders do not monitor the quality of teaching on a regular basis. Checks are sporadic and findings are not shared widely. As a result, leaders are uncertain as to how well pupils are learning.
- Sports funding is used to employ additional coaches to deliver physical education lessons alongside school staff. However, leaders have not monitored the quality or impact of this initiative. It is unclear what difference this is making to raising rates of pupils' participation or developing teachers' skills and expertise. Pupils feel the range of additional activities on offer is too narrow and lacks appeal, especially for girls. Equally, there are too few opportunities for pupils to engage in competitive sport, including events with other local schools.
- A culture of inequality of opportunity exists. Leaders have failed to implement appropriate policies and procedures to manage the performance of staff, including those who have qualified very recently. Teachers do not have regular reviews and are unaware of what they need to do to improve. Equally, they are unclear how their performance is evaluated or how pay decisions are reached. Job descriptions are not up to date, including those of teaching assistants.
- Pupils do not cover the full range of subjects. Staff display high levels of uncertainty as to what should be delivered and when. Pupils' books show limited coverage of some subjects, like science, history and geography. Aside from English and mathematics, there are no established leadership arrangements for overseeing the quality of the curriculum. Standards in many subjects are low and, consequently, pupils are not accessing a broad and balanced curriculum.
- There are other weaknesses in the curriculum including the development of pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural understanding. Although the school displays agreed values such as respect, kindness and honesty, pupils' understanding of how these apply to their day-to-day lives is limited. Pupils' knowledge of other faiths varies from class to class. It is weakest where religious education lessons are not delivered routinely.
- There are no detailed plans for the use or evaluation of the impact of pupil premium funding. Funding is used for general staffing costs and not directly targeted to where it is needed most. Disadvantaged pupils are not supported well and gaps between their attainment and other pupils nationally are not closing quickly enough. There is no clear impact on accelerating pupils' progress where pupils have fallen behind, such as in Key Stage 1 or early years. Leaders have not evaluated the impact of previous years' additional funding.
- The leadership of special educational needs over time is a particularly weak aspect. There is little analysis of how well pupils who have special educational needs or disability are learning. Leaders do not monitor or evaluate this aspect of the school sufficiently well. As a result, weaknesses in teaching that have a direct impact on the progress of pupils who have special educational needs or disability remain unchallenged.
- Newly qualified teachers do not receive sufficient guidance on how to develop their skills and expertise. Formal feedback at the end of each term is not completed and so teachers do not know what it is they need to improve. Opportunities to attend training to support the development of teachers' skills and expertise are not commonplace.

- Some groups, including boys, pupils who have special educational needs or disability and disadvantaged pupils, have made insufficient progress. Not all pupils have an equal chance of success as leaders have not addressed the full range of learning needs adequately within the school.
- The Buckinghamshire Learning Trust has recently identified some shortcomings with the quality of provision, including some relating to keeping pupils safe. However, although helpfully putting together a plan with the headteacher to address issues, no dates for completion of actions have been agreed. Consequently, many issues have not been addressed. Furthermore, discussions between officers and leaders are limited because of the doubts about the validity of pupils' progress information. As a result, support for leaders is inadequate.
- Some parents are dissatisfied with standards at the school. At the last inspection, leaders were asked to improve parental engagement. Some parents note the 'divide' between school and home, with some expressing concern that, for example, there is no active parent-teacher association. A large majority disagree that the school is well led and managed.
- The assistant headteachers oversee mathematics and early years respectively. Both have a good understanding of what needs to improve and have forged well-judged plans to address these aspects. It is too early to see impact.
- **The governance of the school**
 - In recent times, there have been a number of changes to the governing body and most governors are relatively new or new to role, including the chair. Governors have not monitored or challenged school performance closely. They have not received sufficient training to be fully effective. Governors do not keep school performance under scrutiny and, as a result, governors are not fully aware of the extent of improvement required. They do not receive the information they need in order to provide challenge to school leaders.
 - Governors do not fulfil statutory duties effectively, such as the regular review of school policies and procedures. Decisions relating to teachers' performance and pay are not taken robustly or in a timely manner. Required policies, such as the school's complaints procedure, are not kept under regular review. Parents expressed dissatisfaction with levels of communication, particularly when a concern is raised.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective. The implementation of the school's policy is weak with many staff not completing statutory training. Some safeguarding qualifications are outdated. Policies and procedures are not regularly updated to meet statutory requirements. For example, not all staff have received the government's 'Prevent' training. Many do not know which signs to watch out for when protecting pupils from the dangers of extremism and radicalisation. Risk assessments are out of date and an accident in recent times resulted in injury to a staff member. Potential risks to adults' and pupils' safety are not managed well.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inadequate

- The quality of teaching has not improved since the previous inspection. Frequent changes in staffing mean that some classes have had several changes of teacher since the start of the academic year. For example, in the autumn term, pupils in Year 1 had four different teachers, including temporary staff. In other classes, new teachers are still getting to know pupils' learning needs. As a result, activities are not adapted appropriately to cater for pupils' differing abilities and many pupils make slow progress.
- Leaders' newly established expectations for providing feedback to pupils about their work and how to improve it are not working. Pupils' misconceptions are not routinely recognised and tackled. When this is the case, pupils' progress slows.
- Teachers' planning is variable. In recent times, there has been a high degree of uncertainty as to how the curriculum is organised. There are few resources to support teachers with planning activities.
- Teachers' skills and expertise are often limited. Teachers do not always exemplify or model how pupils can achieve high standards. For example, in a writing lesson, pupils confidently retrieved facts and figures to support writing a biography, but were less clear as to the skills they would need to write a highly engaging text.
- Assessment information is not used well. Teachers do not cater sufficiently well for the most-able pupils. Tasks are not challenging enough.

- Activities often lack appeal. Classroom learning environments are not used well. Although most are reasonably orderly, pupils rarely refer to classroom displays that are designed to support learning.
- The teaching of mathematics is weak. Teaching does not cater well for pupils of differing ability levels. Teachers do not know pupils well enough and expectations are often too low. Although some teachers correctly identify pupils' misconceptions, little is done to address them and thus develop pupils' conceptual understanding. Misunderstandings persist and pupils make slow progress in the acquisition of mathematical skills and understanding.
- Some teachers have not received appropriate training to teach phonics effectively, including in early years. Lower-attaining and pupils who have special educational needs or disability do not have the early reading skills to decode text successfully.
- A high proportion of parents who responded to Parent View expressed dissatisfaction with homework, the progress their child is making, the information they receive and the quality of teaching and learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not attend regularly enough. Many have high rates of persistent absence.
- Pupils do not always follow school guidelines. For example, although the staff car park is out of bounds, some pupils regularly enter this area. Measures to segregate the playground from the car park are inadequate and risks are not satisfactorily minimised.
- Pupils learn how to stay safe online. During a Year 6 computing lesson, pupils were able to use the internet responsibly to research facts about famous people.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- Many pupils note that learning time is disrupted regularly by the poor behaviour of one or two. Pupils say that these regular interruptions are 'annoying' when they trying to concentrate.
- A very large majority of pupils say that bullying exists in school. Older pupils say that poor behaviour has lessened over time, but not to the point of eradication. In Ofsted's pupil survey, high proportions noted that teachers do not always sort things out satisfactorily.
- The school has introduced a new system to support pupils who are experiencing difficulties. The 'ready to learn' station is having minimal impact as adults are not always available to support pupils when needed. Pupils say that if there is no one to talk to they go outside and sort things out for themselves.
- Work in books is untidy and much incomplete. Work in topic books is intermittent and some classes do not cover the full range of curriculum subjects. Many pupils do not observe notices such as 'Do not enter' rigorously. This is because leaders have not established a culture of high expectations.

Outcomes for pupils are inadequate

- Standards at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 are low and declining. Many pupils, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language, do not achieve the standards expected for their age in writing and mathematics. Progress is slow and hindered by high levels of staff turbulence across the school.
- Disadvantaged pupils are not catching up quickly enough. Pupils who fall behind, especially in early years and Key Stage 1, are not supported well enough to make rapid progress. Gaps between their attainment and that of other pupils nationally are not closing. Leaders do not make enough use of additional funding to ensure that disadvantaged pupils are supported to overcome any barriers to learning well.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability do not make good progress. Pupils with high-level needs often cannot access tasks, as activities are not appropriately adapted to meet their needs. Leaders have not shared widely enough the recommendations of external agencies, such as educational psychologists. As a result, teachers and teaching assistants do not know what they need to do to make the curriculum accessible and engaging to these pupils so they make good progress.

- Pupils achieve lower standards and make slower progress in writing than in other subjects, particularly boys. Pupils are unclear how to improve their efforts and what they need to do next to achieve success. Some pupils do not have regular enough opportunities to write for a range of purposes, and pupils' presentation and handwriting skills are poor.
- Children in early years are not making the progress they are capable of in reading, writing or number skills acquisition. Activities lack challenge and lack appeal. Children are not encouraged to take the next steps to develop their knowledge more rapidly enough. Many start Year 1 underprepared for the challenges ahead.
- Few pupils make good progress and few achieve the higher levels particularly in reading and writing. Tasks often lack challenge and pupils say work is sometimes too easy. When teachers' expectations are too low, progress slows.
- A number of parents who spoke to inspectors expressed concern about the progress their child is making. Many report they do not receive adequate information from the school.
- Standards in reading at the end of Key Stage 1 and in the Year 1 phonics check are broadly average. Average- and higher-ability pupils have the skills they need to confidently decode new words and read more challenging texts.

The early years provision is inadequate

- Risk assessments are inadequate. Assessments are outdated and do not relate to the current class. It is unclear how routines and expectations are adapted to the needs of the children to ensure that risks are minimised and safety is of high priority.
- The learning environment does not capture children's interests. Many children do not retain interest and wander from one activity to another.
- Adults have not had sufficient training and, as a result, their skills and expertise are underdeveloped. Learning records lack detail, focusing on what children have done rather than how their skills and understanding are developing. Some aspects of the curriculum, such as number, are not covered in sufficient depth.
- Lack of staff training is particularly noticeable in the teaching of phonics, where sessions lack clarity and intent. Teaching does not encourage the acquisition or understanding of more complex sounds and blends, when children have already mastered initial sounds. As a result, activities do not build on what children already know and can do. Progress for many in early reading skills is slow.
- The early years leader is starting to evaluate the quality of the provision. Up until recently there has been no secure appraisal of teaching and learning. That said, the leader has a clear understanding of which aspects need to improve and is beginning to address shortcomings. It is too soon to see impact.
- Planning is weak and there are insufficient opportunities for children to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in different aspects. For example, number development is particularly weak.
- Last year, some children started school with skills and understanding below those typical for their age. Some made good progress and achieved well. However, disadvantaged children, pupils who have special educational needs or disability and girls all made slower progress and were therefore less well prepared for Year 1 than their peers.
- Partnership between home and school is weak. Parents are not confident they receive enough information about how well their child is learning.

School details

Unique reference number	110236
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10000517

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	201
Appropriate authority	the governing body
Chair	Mr Alan Hart
Headteacher	Mrs Alison Cobb
Telephone number	01494 523318
Website	www.westwycombe.bucks.sch.uk
Email address	admin@westwycombe.bucks.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	February 2012

Information about this school

- West Wycombe Combined School is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The early years provision comprises one Reception class. Children attend full time.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language are above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils in local authority care and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is below average.
- In September 2015, seven new teachers joined. Two teachers left after the first half term. Two new teachers joined in January 2016. The headteacher has been in post since the previous inspection.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons or parts of lessons, seven of which were visited jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors heard some Year 3 pupils reading and discussed their reading progress with them. A meeting was held with a group of pupils in Key Stage 2.
- Inspectors considered 45 responses to Parent View, 18 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and 39 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, both assistant headteachers, class teachers, teaching assistants and the Chair of the Governing Body.
- A meeting took place with a representative from the Buckinghamshire Learning Trust.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors observed pupils at playtimes.
- Inspectors looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information on pupils' current progress, teachers' planning, records of leaders' checks on the quality of teaching, records of behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to keeping pupils safe.

Inspection team

Elizabeth Farr, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Anthony Linnett	Ofsted Inspector
Darren Aisthorpe	Ofsted Inspector

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