

The West Grantham Academy St John's

Trent Road, Grantham, Lincolnshire NG31 7XQ

Inspection dates

7–8 February 2017

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

- The school's safeguarding arrangements are inadequate. Leaders and managers do not take the actions necessary to ensure that pupils at risk of harm are identified and protected.
- Bullying is commonplace. Pupils do not have confidence that the teachers or other adults will protect them from being bullied.
- Pupils' behaviour is inadequate. Older pupils are not considerate of others when they play games in the playground. Their rough play results in too many accidents.
- Leaders have not ensured that the curriculum fosters pupils' understanding of diversity. Some pupils do not treat others who are different from them kindly. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is inadequate.
- The additional funding that the school receives to support disadvantaged pupils is used poorly.
- Pupils' attendance is too low. Too many are regularly absent and many arrive late.
- Leaders have an overly optimistic view of the school. Their self-evaluation is inaccurate.
- The provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is inadequate. Leaders have not ensured that pupils in need of extra support are quickly identified and provided for appropriately.
- Teaching does not meet the needs of different groups of pupils well enough, including the most able pupils and those who need help to catch up. Poor use is made of classroom assistants to support effective learning.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve and how they should behave are not high enough.
- Standards by the end of key stage 2 are too low in English and maths. Too many pupils are not well prepared for secondary school.
- The governance of the school is inadequate. Governors and the academy trust have overseen a sharp decline in the school's effectiveness.
- Leadership of teaching is weak. It has not been effective in raising teachers' expectations to improve outcomes.

The school has the following strengths

- After a period of turbulence, the acting headteacher has brought stability to the school.
- Outcomes in the early years are improving, with the proportion of children achieving a good level of development above average.
- Leaders ensure that all necessary checks on staff are carried out. This aspect of safeguarding is led well.
- The teaching of mathematics is improving.

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?

- Tackle weaknesses in the school's arrangements to protect pupils and keep them safe urgently, by:
 - ensuring that the leaders responsible for this aspect of the school's work have the necessary knowledge, skills and understanding to carry out their roles effectively
 - ensuring that records of concerns about pupils' well-being are detailed, thorough and properly maintained, so that leaders can be certain that appropriate action is taken to protect the pupils at risk of harm
 - ensuring that school leaders inform the appropriate agencies when pupils who are at risk are identified and that they devise clear systems to make sure that concerns are acted on quickly and effectively
 - tackling aggressive and overly boisterous behaviour and the high incidence of bullying effectively, so that pupils feel safe and protected when they are at school
 - ensuring that the curriculum adheres to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 by promoting tolerance towards people with protected characteristics
 - ensuring that governors maintain proper oversight of the effectiveness of the school's arrangements to safeguard children from harm and to promote tolerance towards others.
- Strengthen all aspects of leadership, including governance, by:
 - ensuring that leaders at all levels have the knowledge, skills and understanding to carry out their roles effectively
 - ensuring that roles, responsibilities and lines of accountability are clear, so that leaders, staff and governors understand precisely who is responsible for what
 - increasing the accuracy of leaders' evaluation of teaching
 - ensuring that rigorous systems are in place to inform the school's own self-evaluation and future school improvement planning.
- Improve outcomes rapidly for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged, by:
 - ensuring that the additional funding provided to support pupils who have additional needs is allocated to those for whom it is intended, including children who are looked after

- ensuring that the leaders responsible have the knowledge, understanding, skills and authority to carry out their roles effectively
 - strengthening the school's systems for identifying pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, so that they can quickly be given the support that they need
 - tracking the impact of additional spending rigorously, so that leaders have a strong understanding of the difference it is making to pupils' achievement and so that further action can be taken if achievement remains low
 - increasing the impact of teaching assistants in lessons, so that they consistently make a demonstrable contribution to pupils' achievement.
- Improve pupils' attendance, particularly the pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and reduce the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school.
 - Ensure that leaders tackle lateness more effectively, so that pupils routinely arrive to school on time.
 - Improve the quality of teaching and thereby improve outcomes for all groups of pupils, including the most able pupils, by:
 - holding teachers to account more effectively for the quality of their teaching and the achievement of the different groups of pupils they teach
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can do and how pupils should behave
 - improving teachers' skills in adapting learning to meet the needs of different groups of pupils, including least-able pupils, disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and most-able pupils
 - strengthening transition arrangements between the early years and key stage 1, so that the gains children make in the early years are not lost in Year 1
 - equipping teachers with the skills necessary to make effective use of classroom assistants and ensuring that they do so consistently.

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.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Since the last inspection, the school's effectiveness has declined sharply. Poor leadership has resulted in standards that are consistently too low and a climate in which pupils accept bullying and inconsiderate behaviour to be the norm.
- Although leaders, governors and trustees are beginning to get a grip on the school's weaknesses, almost all of the improvements that they are trying to secure are in the very early stages. Governors and trustees have failed to recognise the seriousness of the school's weaknesses, including with regard to safeguarding. Their view of the school's effectiveness is overly optimistic.
- The school remains heavily dependent on external support from outside the trust. This support, and that provided by the trust, have not proved to be rapid or effective enough in ensuring that pupils are safe, behave well and achieve as well as they should.
- The leadership of teaching is ineffective. Leaders' analysis of teaching quality is not searching enough. Their evaluations of teaching are not informed by sharp analysis of the impact of teaching on pupils' progress.
- Teachers report that, until the acting headteacher was appointed, no performance management arrangements were in place. This has been remedied, but the targets now set for staff are not sufficiently focused on achieving good outcomes for pupils. As a result, the school's arrangements for staff appraisal remain weak.
- The leadership of provision for disadvantaged pupils is weak. The school received £254,000 last year to help to promote the achievement of this group of pupils. Leaders did not use the money effectively. Leaders do not monitor the impact of this additional funding closely enough to ensure that it is making a difference. They have not ensured that the money is spent on the pupils for whom it is intended.
- The school's provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is similarly weak. Leaders know that some pupils who need extra support have not been identified quickly enough in order that they can get the additional funding for the support they need. Leaders do not ensure that the support provided by classroom assistants is effective.
- Leaders have failed to establish high enough expectations with regard to pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school. Pupils' unsafe play results in a high frequency of accidents. The high incidence of exclusions reflects the poor day-to-day management of pupils' behaviour and the lack of provision for those who have additional needs with regards to behaviour.
- The physical education (PE) and sport premium is not spent effectively. It has had little impact in raising participation rates or improving pupils' progress in PE.
- Leaders have not ensured that the school meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. They do not promote tolerance towards people with protected characteristics effectively, as is required by law.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is inadequate. Not all pupils treat others kindly. Pupils reported that it is not safe to be different at this school, as pupils who are different are picked on. Although the school's attractive displays promote respect and good behaviour, too many pupils do not exhibit these values in their conduct towards others.
- Pupils' understanding of fundamental British values is weak. In discussions, pupils' understanding of faiths other than Christianity was limited. Pupils' understanding of and tolerance towards those who are different from themselves are poor.
- Lines of accountability for the staff are not sufficiently clear. This seriously undermines the effectiveness of the school's leadership because leaders' and governors' understanding of who precisely is responsible for what is vague.
- Leaders have not ensured that the curriculum meets the needs of different groups of pupils, including the most able pupils and those who need to catch up. As a result, standards are too low and some of the least able pupils are unable to access learning.
- The new leader responsible for managing the curriculum has crafted an appropriate action plan to promote learning across the wider curriculum. It is too early, however, to know whether the actions taken are making a difference to the quality of pupils' learning because no monitoring has taken place in subjects other than mathematics and English.
- Training for staff has improved the teaching of mathematics. The impact of this training is increasingly evident in pupils' work.
- Newly qualified teachers are positive about the programmes of support that they receive and they can identify how this has improved their teaching, for example, in science and in the teaching of grammar. Nevertheless, inspectors strongly recommend that the school does not appoint newly qualified teachers at this time.
- The acting headteacher has brought stability to the school. He is trusted by staff and parents and is honest about the school's weaknesses.

Governance of the school

- The governance of the school is inadequate.
- Governors and trustees have overseen a sharp decline in the school's effectiveness and have failed to ensure that pupils are safe. Governors have not been sufficiently diligent in monitoring the actions leaders are taking to tackle bullying and to improve pupils' behaviour. They have not ensured that the leaders responsible for safeguarding pupils' welfare have the necessary knowledge, skills and understanding to carry out their roles effectively.
- Governors have secured a wide range of support for the school, including from another academy trust. This has not proved sufficient in arresting the decline in the quality of education since the last inspection.
- The external monitoring that governors have commissioned has not identified accurately enough the significant weaknesses identified by inspectors.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- Pupils do not feel safe and leaders do not ensure that they are safe, including the pupils whose circumstances make them more vulnerable to harm.
- Pupils and parents told inspectors that bullying is common. They have little confidence in the school's ability to tackle bullying. One pupil reported that, when she was bullied, she just 'went and hid'. Others told inspectors that pupils who are different are bullied at the school. Some of them have done their best to protect their friends in the absence of appropriate support from staff.
- The school's arrangements to protect vulnerable pupils are poor and put the pupils' welfare at risk. Systems for recording and reporting any concerns about pupils are neither robust nor rigorous, nor effective. Inspectors identified incidents where concerns raised by staff were not reported to social care as they should have been.
- Leaders and governors have failed to ensure that the behaviour policy is applied consistently and effectively. Consequently, staff allow too much rough play in the playground. This leads to a high incidence of accidents.
- Conversely, the checks made on staff to ensure they present no risk to children are rigorous and the single central register of staff is maintained carefully and accurately.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Teaching is not matched well enough to pupils' needs to ensure that they make the progress that they should. This includes teaching for the most able pupils, those who need to catch up, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and disadvantaged pupils.
- Teachers are not held sufficiently to account for the achievement of different groups of pupils, including those for whom additional funding is provided.
- Where teaching does not meet pupils' needs well enough, pupils' behaviour declines, with some pupils distracting others. This inhibits their own and other pupils' progress.
- Leaders recognise, rightly, that poor teaching over time has left some pupils unable to access the curriculum.
- Teachers do not routinely make effective use of the additional adult support in lessons to ensure that it makes a difference to pupils' learning.
- The most able pupils are not challenged well enough. For example, the most able pupils in Year 3 read books that are too easy for them. The most able pupils in Years 5 and 6 said that the work is regularly too easy. Inspectors' scrutiny of pupils' work and their observations of teaching confirmed that their views are accurate.
- Lesson time is not used productively, particularly at the beginning of the day, when pupils' poor levels of punctuality lead to a slow start.

- Teachers' use of assessment is not strong enough to secure rapid gains in learning. For example, teaching in Year 1 does not build sufficiently well on pupils' prior learning in the early years. While pupils' handwriting improves, their attainment regresses in spelling, punctuation and grammar. They are expected to write less in Year 1 than they are in the early years.
- Where teaching is effective, teachers make sure that activities are matched well to pupils' needs and that work is challenging enough, for example in Year 4 mathematics.
- Pupils' work in books is often neatly presented. Some pupils say that they value the feedback they receive from teachers. Their books show how they have corrected their work following advice from their teachers.
- The teaching of mathematics is increasingly effective, as a result of the training staff have received. Nevertheless, the most able mathematicians in some year groups are not routinely challenged well enough.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- Pupils do not feel safe at school because of the regular incidents of bullying. They have come to accept bullying as something they have to put up with.
- Some pupils lack tolerance towards pupils who are different, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils commonly reported how pupils who are different are bullied. They perceive that bullies are too often let off for their unkind behaviour.
- Pupils are not taught to adhere to the school's values well enough. For example, when a child in the early years fell off his bike, another child laughed. This behaviour was not challenged by the adults present.
- Pupils are not well enough aware of how to stay safe online or of other potential risks to their safety.
- Pupils have not been made aware of their responsibility to behave kindly towards those with protected characteristics, as set out in the Equality Act 2010. For example, in discussions with inspectors, older pupils displayed shock and amusement that a family could have two mums rather than a mum and a dad.
- Pupils displayed good manners towards inspectors and were keen to tell them about their school.
- Pupils like the house system and enjoy receiving points for their house.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- Some pupils, especially boys, do not have due regard for the safety of others outside at playtime and lunchtime. This results in pupils getting hurt frequently.

- Staff do not intervene when they should to stop the pupils behaving so roughly. Inspectors observed staff standing by as a group of boys were play-fighting, when they should have intervened to prevent any potential injuries. Their expectations of how pupils should conduct themselves are far too low.
- Pupils are not sensitive to other's needs as they move around the school. At the end of playtime, one pupil approached an inspector for protection from the pushing that was taking place.
- The school's poor day-to-day management of pupils' behaviour results in problems escalating and too many pupils being excluded.
- Pupils lack the self-discipline necessary to manage their own learning and behaviour. When teachers work with individual pupils, for example, other pupils lose concentration and begin to mess about.
- Pupils' attendance is too low and persistent absenteeism is too high. This is particularly the case for disadvantaged pupils.
- Too many pupils are late for school. Leaders have adapted the curriculum by putting on sessions to promote early reading skills later in the day, so that latecomers will not miss them. This reflects poorly on their effectiveness in tackling poor punctuality in the first place.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Standards of attainment by the end of key stage 2 have been consistently low since the last inspection. As a result, too many pupils leave the school ill equipped to access the secondary school curriculum.
- Disadvantaged pupils consistently make less progress than other pupils do nationally, particularly in reading and writing. In mathematics, where progress overall is stronger, disadvantaged pupils still lag behind others.
- Poor teaching over time results in lower attaining pupils lacking the basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics necessary to access the curriculum.
- The school's poor provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and for lower attaining pupils means that those who fall behind do not catch up. None of these pupils in key stage 1 attained the expected standard in 2016 and school data shows that only 11% are on course to meet age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Progress in key stage 1 was particularly weak last year and too many pupils did not build on the gains that they made in early years. The work in pupils' books shows that this continues to be the case, particularly in writing.
- Pupils' attainment in phonics is poor. This is particularly the case for disadvantaged pupils. The school's current assessment information suggests that little improvement in the standard of pupils' phonics skills is occurring this year, compared with 2015.
- The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, do not achieve well enough because work is not routinely challenging enough, including in mathematics.

- Progress in key stage 2 improved last year, having previously been exceptionally poor. Nevertheless, pupils did not make the progress needed to make up for the poor teaching they had received over time. This is why standards remained low.
- A small group of disadvantaged pupils who have received extra support in mathematics are making better progress than before.

Early years provision

Inadequate

- Although children leave the Reception Year with levels of skills that mean they are ready to start Year 1, early years provision is inadequate because of the school's poor arrangements for safeguarding children from harm.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently good enough across the Reception and Nursery classes.
- The curriculum does not routinely provide opportunities for adults to assess the children accurately.
- Adults do not make a consistently strong contribution to children's learning. Opportunities are sometimes missed for them to enhance children's learning through discussion, because the staff are not informed by accurate assessment of the next steps for children's learning.
- The impact of additional early years funding on disadvantaged pupils is not monitored well enough. As a result, school leaders do not know if, or how, it is making a difference to outcomes for these children.
- Assessment information is not used well enough in Nursery to inform planning.
- Inconsistent management of children's learning sometimes leads to them becoming distracted. Some silly behaviour was observed which was not tackled by staff.
- In Nursery, when the teacher takes the time to demonstrate an activity well, then children engage well. In one Reception class and in Nursery, the children played well together.
- The early years leader has an accurate understanding of some of the key strengths and weaknesses of the provision. The improved focus brought by the leader has resulted in an increase in the proportion of children achieving a good level of development. She has not had enough opportunities, however, to observe other staff in the provision to ensure that they are maximising children's achievements.

School details

Unique reference number	136478
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10023269

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	Academy
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	359
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Mr Chris Robinson
Acting Headteacher	Mr Ian Woolerton
Telephone number	01476 405200
Website	www.wgacademiustrust.org.uk
Email address	stjohns@wgacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	14–15 May 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of information on its website.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish on their website about their use of the pupil premium, the impact of the PE and sport premium and provision for pupils who have special educational needs/and or disabilities.
- The primary school is larger than the average-sized primary school and operates on a split site.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is low.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is high.
- Children in Nursery attend on a part-time basis.

- All other pupils are taught in single-age classes.
- The school is part of the West Grantham Academies Trust and was so at the last inspection.
- The acting headteacher has been in post since March 2016, having previously been the deputy headteacher in the school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 14 lessons across all of the year groups.
- The lead inspector visited lessons accompanied by the headteacher.
- A wide range of documents was scrutinised, including records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance, safeguarding procedures, accidents and the school's self-evaluation.
- The inspectors examined the school's system for tracking progress and also the records of the checks on the quality of teaching and learning.
- The inspectors talked to individual pupils about the school and their work and listened to some pupils reading.
- The inspectors completed a scrutiny of pupils' work with the acting headteacher and other senior staff.
- The inspectors also looked at samples of pupils' work across a range of subjects and classes.
- The inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body and board of trustees. They also met with a small group of staff, including newly qualified teachers. Meetings were also held with middle leaders.
- The views of parents were taken into account, including through conversations with parents on the playground at the beginning of the school day. Inspectors considered the 13 responses to the Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, and the views of eight members of staff who completed the online survey.

Inspection team

Donna Chambers, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Alexandra Burton	Ofsted Inspector
Caroline Evans	Ofsted Inspector
Tracey Ydlibi	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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