

Watling Park School

Pavilion Way, Burnt Oak, Barnet HA8 9YA

Inspection dates

3–4 May 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The acting headteacher has successfully stabilised the school. She has embedded a clear vision where staff morale is high and pupils achieve well.
- Senior and middle leaders have an accurate understanding of the school. They have implemented effective initiatives with rigour.
- Strong teaching enables pupils to make good progress, particularly in their speaking and listening skills.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged make good progress. Leaders ensure that these pupils are well supported in lessons.
- Pupils benefit from strong opportunities to develop their reasoning skills in mathematics. Teachers use practical resources to deepen pupils' mathematical understanding. However, the most able pupils do not routinely receive work that challenges them further.
- Pupils make strong progress in their early reading because of high-quality phonics teaching.
- The school's rich curriculum successfully develops pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils progress well in the early years, and are well prepared for the next stage of their education in Year 1.
- Pupils understand the school's values well. They are polite and have good behaviour.
- Pupils make strong progress across subjects because of a deep curriculum enabling pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding.
- Leaders have prioritised the improvement of pupils' writing. Nevertheless, pupils do not write to as high a standard in their topic lessons as they do in their writing lessons. Furthermore, the least able pupils do not make the progress in writing of which they are capable.
- Leaders have taken effective action to improve pupils' attendance significantly. However, absence, including persistent absence, remains above the national averages.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to strengthen the teaching of writing so that:
 - the quality of pupils' writing in all subjects is as high as in their writing lessons
 - the least able pupils make the progress of which they are capable.
- Ensure that the most able pupils are challenged to develop their mathematical thinking further.
- Improve pupils' attendance further and reduce levels of persistent absence so that they are at least in line with the national averages.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The acting headteacher has provided the school with strong leadership. She, together with the interim deputy headteacher, has been pivotal in stabilising the school after a period of difficulty since the school started.
- Leaders evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the school accurately. They check school performance regularly and do not shy away from taking difficult decisions to challenge underperformance. Leaders skilfully oversee staff professional development and work closely with the academy trust and local authority to plan bespoke training. As a result, leaders are well placed to strengthen the school as it continues to grow.
- In the past, recruitment of staff had been a significant issue at the school. The acting headteacher has successfully built a highly motivated team where pupils' achievement is central to all that happens. Teachers create opportunities to develop their own learning and are increasingly involved in discussions to improve the curriculum. A member of staff shared colleagues' view that the school was now 'one big happy family'. Staff enjoy working at the school.
- Middle leaders play a significant role in developing the school. They have implemented effective initiatives in a short amount of time and have an accurate understanding of the school and its next steps. Subject leaders check pupils' progress regularly and provide strong support to staff. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning continues to improve.
- Leaders have prioritised a rich curriculum, which underpins pupils acquiring strong knowledge and understanding. Pupils learn a variety of subjects through well-planned themes. British values are promoted well through the school's 'I-CARE' values: integrity, confidence, appreciation, responsibility and excellence. Elected pupils undertake roles in sharing new rules with others in a responsible manner.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively. Leaders and governors prioritise good-quality provision for disadvantaged pupils, including additional support where required. Staff demonstrate a strong understanding of disadvantaged pupils' needs. As a result, these pupils make good progress.
- Additional funding to support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is used well. Leaders prioritise the correct identification of pupils with additional needs and make good use of external support for these pupils when required.
- The primary school physical education and sport premium is used well to enable pupils to benefit from the expertise of specialist sports coaches. Pupils benefit from accessing sports and physical activities throughout the day, including at lunchtimes.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very well. Pupils learn from a broad range of subjects and well-thought-out themes in topic lessons. These enable pupils to learn about a wide range of cultures different from their own. Pupils are respectful of each other and thrive in a diverse and inclusive school. Trips and workshops are integral to the school's approach to widen pupils' experiences. For example, pupils visit science and maritime museums linked to their topic work.

- Parents' and carers' views on the school, particularly about how their children progress, are positive. Those parents who met with the inspector were unanimous in their views that the school has come a long way since opening in 2015. In particular, parents share that stable staffing has improved communication and the progress that their children make significantly.

Governance of the school

- Governors provide strong support to leaders. The governing body knows the school well and has a firm grasp on current priorities. Governors have increased their capacity through ongoing training and the appointment of new members.
- Governors visit the school regularly to find out for themselves how well pupils are achieving. For example, governors worked alongside school leaders and met with pupils to gather their views on school values. Governors play an active role in building links in the wider community.
- The academy trust provides strong strategic direction for the school. Representatives of the trust work effectively with leaders to improve the school further. The trust has clear plans in place to strengthen further the efficiency of the governing body.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that all members of staff are checked for suitability for working with children. Staff receive regular training, including on the 'Prevent' duty in order to keep pupils safe from extremism. Staff demonstrate a strong understanding of safeguarding procedures and know how to report their concerns. They know what to look out for to ensure that pupils are kept safe.
- Pupils have many opportunities to learn how to keep safe in the wider curriculum. For example, pupils learned about personal safety through a workshop run by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC).
- Leaders work closely with other professionals and parents to ensure pupils' safety. Record-keeping is robust, and the school follows up safeguarding concerns diligently with external agencies. Leaders know vulnerable pupils well and work with determination to ensure that these families are well supported.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Consistently effective teaching by all adults contributes to pupils' good progress over time. Adults regularly assess pupils' understanding and provide interesting tasks that pupils enjoy.
- Staff form strong working relationships with pupils. Teachers routinely encourage pupils to discuss their work, and this enables pupils to make strong progress in their speaking and listening skills. Pupils who speak English as an additional language and are new to speaking English benefit from clear instructions from adults. As a result, these pupils develop strong foundations in acquiring new vocabulary.

- The teaching of phonics is a strength across the school. Adults use well-thought-out resources to help pupils practise new rules. Pupils in these lessons are highly focused, and adults provide strong guidance to encourage pupils to apply their phonics skills to their writing. Adults check pupils' understanding diligently and ensure that pupils with misconceptions receive targeted support.
- Teachers establish clear routines during lessons that enable pupils to learn in a happy and caring environment. Adults know pupils well and provide them with the resources they need for effective learning. For example, pupils readily use phonics charts to support their writing. Teaching assistants interact well with pupils and regularly use strong questioning to develop pupils' thinking further.
- Teachers develop pupils' knowledge and understanding very well through cross-curricular work. For example, Year 2 pupils demonstrated a strong understanding of 'landscape' art using collage, as part of their topic on Africa. These pupils used newly learned vocabulary to write with confidence about giraffes and lions. In Year 1, pupils showed a keen interest in learning more about the Queen before an upcoming trip to Windsor Castle, as part of their topic on 'There be Dragons'.
- Leaders have worked hard to raise the profile of writing throughout the school. A rich-themed curriculum enables pupils to have many opportunities to write across the curriculum. For example, Year 2 pupils wrote a diary entry at length, linked to their trip to the Royal Air Force museum, as part of their topic 'Flying high'. Pupils skilfully wrote in depth about their visit, including the role of the Wright brothers within aviation. In design and technology, pupils deepened their learning by creating butterfly booklets. However, teachers' expectations of pupils' writing in their topic lessons are not as high as those in their writing lessons. Furthermore, the least able pupils, including those who have SEN and/or disabilities, do not typically receive the guidance to enable them to write as well as they could.
- Pupils make strong progress in mathematics as a result of well-planned lessons. Teachers use practical equipment, and pupils use these resources to enhance their mathematical understanding. Pupils collaborate well with their peers, and this helps them to deepen their learning. For example, pupils in Year 2 discussed a money problem confidently with each other, sharing different strategies to provide a solution. However, most-able pupils do not routinely receive work that challenges their thinking further.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school's values underpin pupils' development and welfare. For example, pupils have regular assemblies to promote their well-being and learn about values such as 'excellence'. As part of a topic on London, Year 2 pupils learn about London's diversity and respect for differences. As part of 'home learning projects', pupils are encouraged to learn about a wide range of communities.

- Leaders check pupils' views on a wide range of issues, such as keeping safe, through pupil questionnaires. Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe and that bullying is very rare. Pupils have a robust understanding of keeping safe online, including not sharing their details with strangers. Pupils benefit from well-planned workshops and trips, which broaden their life experiences. Pupils learn about safety through swimming lessons, and have access to a broad range of after-school clubs.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils benefit from a culture of collaboration in lessons, where strong adult support allows them to develop their confidence. Pupils know the behaviour systems well and appreciate rewards and recognition during weekly assemblies.
- Pupils are polite and welcoming. They play with their friends at playtimes in a safe manner. A range of activities, such as football, dressing up and games, are used effectively to help pupils develop strong social skills. Adults provide a good level of vigilance and ensure that pupils move through the school in an orderly way.
- Leaders have worked hard to improve pupils' attendance, including persistent absence rates. They monitor pupils carefully and liaise effectively with external agencies. Despite significant improvements to pupils' attendance, rates of absence, including persistent absence, still remain above the national averages.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In 2017, the proportion of Year 1 pupils meeting the phonics skills check was slightly below the national average. Current assessment information indicates that this will be broadly in line with the national average at the end of 2018.
- In 2017, the proportion of children attaining a good level of development in the early years was broadly in line with the national average. Current assessment information suggests that children are likely to attain above the national average at the end of the current academic year.
- Pupils, including those who have SEN and/or disabilities, make good progress in their reading and mathematics, but progress in writing for these pupils is not as strong as in other subjects. Disadvantaged pupils make the same progress as their peers, and these pupils' attainment is not significantly below others in the school.
- Pupils in Year 2 are making good progress from their starting points. The school's assessment information and work in pupils' books indicate that they are likely to attain broadly in line with the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics in 2018.
- Pupils' progress across the wider curriculum is strong. Pupils demonstrate strong understanding in their history and science topics.
- The school's assessment information and work in pupils' books show that pupils make strong progress in mathematics. Teachers ensure that pupils develop strong arithmetic skills and apply their knowledge well to work out fractions of amounts.

- The most able pupils progress well, particularly in their reading and writing. They write fluently and at length, showing an increasing sophistication in their use of a range of vocabulary. In mathematics, the most able pupils attain well, but do not progress as well as they could.

Early years provision

Good

- Leaders in the early years provide strong direction and support. They have an accurate understanding of the strengths and areas to improve. Leaders have worked hard to overcome past vulnerabilities. They collaborate well and assess children regularly. As a result, children make good progress and are well prepared for their transition to Year 1.
- The learning environment in the early years is vibrant and inviting. The outdoor learning environment is well resourced and used well to promote children's access to all areas of learning. Children work together sensibly with their friends and collaborate well.
- The curriculum design is a striking feature of the early years and enables children to develop strong knowledge and understanding in different areas. For example, children were fully engaged with the 'superheroes' theme; they took part in art activities, choosing the correct colours that matched their superhero of choice. Other children thought creatively to make a trap for the 'joker' and articulately shared that he was a 'villain'.
- Teachers provide strong opportunities for children's writing. For example, children enthusiastically wrote a speech bubble from the story 'Super Daisy'. They demonstrated a deep understanding of the story and inferred well about what a character might say. Strong questioning and direction from teachers enable children to learn how to improve their writing further. For example, children were able to identify 'conjunctions' and use these successfully in their writing.
- Phonics teaching is strong, and children make good progress. Adults plan a range of activities for children to practise these skills and embed their learning. For example, children enjoyed an activity to find hidden sounds in a sand pit, and independently repeated the sounds.
- In writing, children use phonics sound-mats confidently and readily sound out words using finger spaces. The most able children make very strong progress in their writing, using legible handwriting and increasingly difficult vocabulary. However, the least able children's progress is limited because they do not routinely receive appropriate guidance to develop their writing further.
- In mathematics, teachers use practical activities to teach children to understand early arithmetic. For example, children worked with adults to halve numbers using peas and then followed this up by trying to halve numbers themselves, while learning outside.
- Adults interact positively with children and ensure that they are kept safe. Teachers focus on developing children's speaking and listening skills through precise instruction. As a result, children, particularly those who speak English as an additional language, make strong progress. Teachers provide extra challenge to children through 'rainbow challenges', where children take ownership of their learning.

- Children behave well and are polite and respectful. They follow instructions and benefit from clear routines. Children enjoy using outdoor equipment, such as building blocks and tricycles, and often use these as opportunities to think creatively. For example, children pretended to refuel their tricycles and took turns while doing this, waiting patiently for each other.
- Parents are involved well in their child's learning through workshops and regular communication. They agree that their children are kept safe and progress well.

School details

Unique reference number	142114
Local authority	Barnet
Inspection number	10048382

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	168
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governors	Dhanmita Boodhna
Acting headteacher	Sonia Mallick
Telephone number	0208 353 4249
Website	www.watlingparkschool.org.uk
Email address	office@watlingparkschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Watling Park School opened in September 2015 at a temporary site. It is part of the Bellevue Place Education Trust. When full, the school will cater for 420 pupils, with two forms of entry to Year 6. Currently, the school has pupils up to Year 2.
- The acting headteacher has worked at the school since September 2017.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is higher than average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is well above average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited all classrooms across a range of subjects. The acting headteacher and interim deputy headteacher accompanied the inspector on most of these visits.
- The inspector scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including information related to safeguarding, attendance, pupils' achievement and school action plans.
- The inspector held meetings with senior leaders, representatives from the academy trust and the governing body, middle leaders, teachers and teaching assistants. The inspector made two telephone calls to a representative from the local authority and one to the Department for Education.
- The inspector met with a group of pupils from the school's leadership group to gather their views about the school. Pupils were spoken to during playtimes and informally in lessons.
- The lead inspector took into account parental views through meeting parents in the playground. The inspector took into account the 40 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey.

Inspection team

Noeman Anwar, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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