

# Inspection of Water Hall Primary School

Fern Grove, Bletchley, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire MK2 3QF

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Inspection dates: 17 and 18 May 2023

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
The quality of education	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils feel happy, well supported and secure at this inclusive and welcoming school. Staff make sure that all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are fully included in school life. Parents and carers are positive about the school and know staff will help and support them alongside their children, if needed.

Pupils feel safe. Bullying is not tolerated. Leaders take swift and decisive action to resolve the rare incidents of bullying that occur. Pupils have confidence that all staff will help them if they have a worry or concern. Staff keep the school's values of 'ready, respectful and responsible' at the heart of their work. Pupils respond to this well. For example, pupils move quietly and sensibly around the school and listen respectfully when adults are speaking.

Senior leaders have high expectations for pupils at this school, including those with SEND, to achieve well. However, currently, many pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Pupils sometimes struggle to make connections in their learning and remember what they have learned. However, leaders are taking the right actions to make sure that pupils' achievement improves swiftly.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

Leaders have adopted a broad and ambitious curriculum. In a few subjects, for example mathematics and science, more experienced subject leaders have ensured clear expectations of what children will learn from early years to Year 6. In mathematics, important knowledge is clearly identified and organised into a coherent sequence of learning. This means pupils can make connections between topics to help them remember their learning. In this subject, teachers know exactly what to teach and how to support all pupils to achieve well.

However, the curriculum for most other subjects is at an earlier stage of development. Here, subject leaders have not yet benefited from training to enable them to develop their subjects effectively. Furthermore, leaders have not ensured that the key knowledge pupils need to learn is set out in sufficient detail from the start of early years. This means pupils do not develop their understanding as systematically as they should.

Teachers' subject knowledge is not consistently strong across the whole curriculum. Where subject knowledge is stronger, teachers set tasks that help all pupils to learn effectively. However, sometimes, teachers lack expertise in designing tasks that help pupils to know and remember more over time. When this is the case, teachers do not always use effective strategies to help pupils connect new knowledge to what they already know. For example, in design technology, pupils do not always complete projects in full. This means that they do not secure the essential knowledge they need to remember before moving on.

Leaders prioritise reading. They have high expectations for all pupils to learn to read fluently and with confidence. Children learn phonics right from the summer term in Nursery. If any pupil starts to fall behind in reading, they receive carefully considered interventions promptly. All pupils say they enjoy reading and particularly enjoy story time when teachers share well-chosen texts with them.

Pupils behave well in school. The school's behaviour policy is understood clearly by staff, pupils and parents. Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. They are calm and engaged in lessons and around the school. Strong relationships exist between staff and pupils. There is a culture of mutual respect.

Leaders' provision for pupils' personal development is strong. All pupils are supported well to develop their understanding of the world and their role within it. Pupils are encouraged to think of others. For example, pupils have made links with residents in the local care home and have participated in a local community regeneration project. Pupils enjoy learning about different cultures through cooking and sharing food with visitors who come into school. They also value inspirational visits from local employers, such as the Royal Air Force. These visits help pupils to learn about career choices and raise their aspirations for the future. Some pupils have the opportunity to take on leadership roles, such as playground buddies. Leaders value pupils' opinions and ideas. For example, pupils have helped design and plan vinyl wall art to be installed inside the school to enhance and celebrate the pupils, their interests and their community.

Leaders, including officers from the multi-academy trust, work well together to improve the school. They have a clear understanding of what they need to do to ensure that all pupils receive the quality of education that they deserve as quickly as possible.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that staff are trained in how to identify and report safeguarding concerns. Teachers know pupils well and are able to identify pupils who may need help quickly. Concerns are recorded in detail and followed up immediately. Leaders work with external agencies, drawing on further support and expertise where required. Leaders ensure that all appropriate checks are made to confirm that adults are safe to work in school.

Pupils learn how to stay safe both online and within their community. They are confident that any adult in school will help them if they need it.

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

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some subject leaders do not yet have the knowledge and skills to drive improvements in their curriculum area. As a result, pupils are not learning as well as they should across the curriculum. Senior leaders should ensure that all subject leaders have the knowledge and support needed to lead their subjects effectively.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is stronger in some subjects than it is in others. They do not always make the most effective pedagogical choices to allow pupils to achieve as well as they could in all subjects. Leaders need to strengthen teachers' subject knowledge in all subjects so that all pupils know and remember more across the whole curriculum.
- The curriculum in many subjects has not been planned with enough precision from early years through to Year 6. This means that pupils do not always learn the knowledge they need to develop understanding systematically over time. Leaders should ensure that they continue to develop the curriculum so that pupils can learn well in all subjects.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	148193
<b>Local authority</b>	Milton Keynes
<b>Inspection number</b>	10267797
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	292
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Chris Watt
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jamie Nairn
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.waterhallprimary.co.uk">www.waterhallprimary.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The interim headteacher is the Director of Primary Education for the Tove Learning Trust. They took up their post as interim headteacher in April 2023.
- The school joined the Tove Learning Trust multi-academy trust in September 2020.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met leaders, including the interim headteacher, deputy headteacher, the assistant headteacher and the special educational needs leader. The lead inspector also met with the chair of the local governing board and the chair of trustees and chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science, design technology and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of the safeguarding arrangements in the school by speaking with the designated safeguarding lead and members of the safeguarding team about their work. They also spoke to staff and pupils. Inspectors also sampled case studies and documentation, including the single central record.
- Inspectors considered the views of staff through the confidential online staff survey.
- Inspectors met with pupils formally and informally around the school, in lessons and at playtimes.
- Inspectors met parents at the start of the school day and took account of responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View.

### **Inspection team**

Debbie Bennett, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Gemma Piper	Ofsted Inspector
Tracey Brunton	Ofsted Inspector

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