

Wyvern School

Aylesbury Street, Wolverton, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire MK12 5HU

Inspection dates

8–9 May 2019

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|----------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| 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 | Requires improvement |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Since the last inspection, leadership expertise, including from the recently formed Viaduct Federation, has yielded a very positive impact. Standards are rising quickly and securely. Pupils achieve well.
- Senior leaders and governors hold a compelling vision for the school, rooted in serving its local community effectively. This is conveyed well. Nevertheless, school improvement planning could be strengthened to mirror leaders' goals more precisely.
- Leaders have established robust systems for tracking the performance of pupils. However, analysis of this information is at an early stage.
- The teaching of reading and writing is highly effective. From the earliest stages, pupils develop a secure love of reading. Pupils enthusiasm for activities such as storytelling and writing for pleasure shine through.
- Pupils attain well in reading, writing and mathematics. However, too few are working at greater depth in mathematics.
- Throughout the school, the progress that disadvantaged pupils make has strengthened. However, although their progress is now similar to that of their peers, they attain less well.
- Leaders have designed a curriculum that captures pupils' interest. Adjustments in recent times mean it serves pupils well.
- Staff training is regular and helpful. Nevertheless, a small proportion of adults are less skilled when supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- Staff in the early years know the children well. Most children achieve a good level of development which leaves them well prepared for the challenges of Year 1.
- Pupils, including children in the early years, behave well. Principled leadership promotes the core values of modern society very effectively.
- Governors are highly skilled and enhance the school's leadership capacity. They drill into information, asking challenging questions of school leaders.
- Leaders' use of additional funding is effective. Nevertheless, leaders' published plans relating to this aspect omit some of the required elements.
- Parents and carers brim with enthusiasm about the difference that the federation is making to the school. They speak positively about improvements to the environment, leadership and the quality of teaching and learning.
- Safeguarding is effective. Staff are knowledgeable and know what to do if they are concerned about pupils' welfare.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards further by:
 - ensuring that more pupils work at greater depth in mathematics
 - further diminishing the gap between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils
 - strengthening the quality of support for pupils with SEND, particularly those with an education, health and care plan (EHC) plan.
- As federated working arrangements take hold, continue to strengthen leadership and management by:
 - including measurable targets on school improvement planning
 - making greater use of information to evaluate school effectiveness more rigorously
 - improving the quality of staff training for teaching assistants who work with pupils with significant needs
 - ensuring that the school's website is compliant with the Department for Education's requirements.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Following a period of decline, Wyvern School is back on track and going from strength to strength. Since the executive headteacher's and associate headteacher's appointments, improvement has accelerated rapidly. Senior leaders' drive is uncompromising and firmly focused on getting the best for pupils. The school's mantra of 'be the best you can be' fully personifies leaders' work.
- Parents report their tremendous pride in school leaders' work, with many describing 'the dramatic improvements' that they are witnessing in a short space of time. One parent, summarising the views of many, commented: 'My children have been there since 2017 and the changes to the school have been incredible.'
- Now that new federated ways of working are at the end of their first year, the qualities that typify leaders' work are highly visible. For instance, pupils' performance is tracked closely, enabling leaders to gather a wealth of information about school effectiveness. However, their analysis of trends and patterns is at an early stage.
- School leaders adopt a thoughtful and graduated approach to school improvement planning which is communicated clearly. The school's improvement plan identifies appropriate actions which are underpinned by regular monitoring activity and useful training opportunities for staff. The plan, however, lacks measurable targets for leaders to evaluate the impact of their actions.
- Leaders have established new systems and processes including those relating to staff performance management. Since federating, staff are reinvigorated and are appreciative of the training and support on offer. As a result, ambition is high. All rightly believe that the school has improved considerably since its last inspection and are proud to be members of the Wyvern team.
- English and mathematics leaders are knowledgeable and demonstrate a secure understanding of what is expected from pupils. They have ensured that staff are better equipped to deliver a curriculum that has the rigour required to enable pupils to reach age-related expectations. This tier of the school's leadership team is heightening staff expectations very successfully.
- Regular monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning, including by middle leaders, is ensuring that teachers receive helpful guidance on how to improve. This is further bolstered by the school's thorough and relevant training programme. Nevertheless, staff who support pupils with social and emotional health needs have not received training that equips them to support these pupils' needs as effectively as those in other roles.
- Pupils report that the school's curriculum is wide-ranging and interesting. They acquire secure skills in a range of subjects. For instance, in music, Year 2 pupils could perform a song in different parts. Pupils then observed an orchestra performing, gaining a deeper understanding of how all the parts worked together.
- The school's curriculum plans, and assessment systems are well developed in physical education. This is a strong example of where this school has developed its practice, learning from expertise within the federation. Nevertheless, in some subjects, the

sequencing of curriculum planning occasionally limits pupils' ability to deepen their understanding, such as in mathematics.

- There are some gaps in what is required on the school's website. For instance, leaders and governors need to ensure that their published plans for the spending of additional funding consider the main barriers to achievement that disadvantaged pupils face. Nevertheless, leaders' use of additional funding is beginning to yield a more positive impact than in the past. Disadvantaged pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics has strengthened over the course of the year.
- The local authority supports the school well. Following the last inspection, a targeted improvement board was wisely established. Additional leadership support and regular visits from advisers have all contributed well to the forward momentum that is highly evident. Increasingly, leaders are now able to forge ahead under their own steam, relying less on external support and working with greater independence. The local authority has supported the school well in previous times of difficulty. Officers are equally proud of the school's positive turnaround in recent times.

Governance of the school

- Governance is highly effective. Since the formation of one overarching, federated governing body, the quality of governance has strengthened considerably. Parents speak enthusiastically about the positive influence of leaders, including governors, on school's improving effectiveness. One commented: 'Since the formation of the Viaduct Federation of Schools... there has been a dramatic improvement in the quality of education at Wyvern.'
- Governors are ambitious and determined that their collective impact makes a positive difference to the wider community. From the outset of the federation, governors balanced sensitivity with wanting to serve the families well with the shared aspiration to improve Wyvern School. As a result, they have constructed a useful development plan and supported this well with additional training. Governors keep a watchful eye on their own effectiveness as well as that of the school. Learning from one another is instrumental to leadership success in recent months.
- Governors offer a high level of challenge to school leaders. For instance, following discussion with leaders, pupil premium spending was adjusted this year and is now having greater impact on pupils' outcomes. Governors are highly skilled and experienced, bringing significant professional experience to their roles.
- Governors keep sharp oversight of the school's work and are proactive in requesting information or carrying out monitoring activities for themselves. They regularly meet with leaders who hold significant responsibilities, considering matters such as the quality of the school's curriculum or pupils' learning in mathematics and English.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

- Pupils feel safe. They know how to keep safe online. Pupils described what to do if they had a worry explaining: 'We can tell our grown-ups and know not to tell anyone where we live.' Pupils have a secure understanding of how to look after themselves.
- Staff are knowledgeable about a range of risks that pupils may face. All are familiar with 'Keeping children safe in education 2018', because of regular briefing and training sessions. Staff quizzes, at the request of governors, keep safeguarding at the forefront of everyone's thinking. Governors, too, have also completed useful safeguarding and safer recruitment training.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching has rapidly improved since the last inspection. It is further bolstered by expertise from the other partner school in the federation, particularly in subjects such as physical education. Pockets of strong teaching are taking hold in the school including in the early years.
- Leaders have been uncompromising in setting higher expectations, underpinned by a growing programme of useful training. Staff have benefited from this.
- The teaching of reading and phonics is highly effective. The youngest children are adept at transferring their early reading skills into writing activities. Older pupils are developing a love of reading. For instance, pupils in Year 1 talk enthusiastically about their love of traditional tales that are read to them in class sessions.
- Teachers model new concepts effectively. This helps pupils, some of whom need to catch up, grasp new ideas successfully. In Year 2, pupils were able to produce lively and interesting narratives that captured the reader's interest. Grammatical devices such as expanded noun phrases and fronted adverbials are used effectively in pupils' writing. As a result, pupils develop a rich vocabulary that enhances the quality of their storytelling.
- Teachers explore pupils' understanding with well-chosen questions. Pupils are encouraged to explain their thinking. This helps pupils make progress as there are frequent opportunities for them to consolidate their understanding. For instance, Year 2 pupils were able to 'spot the mistakes' efficiently when discussing the use of the apostrophe in writing.
- Leaders have revitalised assessment systems and expectations so that teachers check pupils' learning more frequently. Teachers' assessment is more accurate because there is more rigour to their work because of moderation with other schools.
- Teaching assistants are generally deployed effectively especially when working in class. They support learning activities well and form positive relationships with pupils. Teaching assistants are less effective when working directly with high needs pupils.
- In mathematics, this year, pupils are taught in groups according to their ability. Teachers help pupils grapple with new mathematical concepts and different methods of working. Expectations are high. For instance, in Year 2 teachers modelled addition and subtraction problem-solving effectively. This enabled pupils to master new strategies successfully. However, sometimes the most able pupils' achievement is restricted as there are too few opportunities to reason and explain mathematically.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils develop a strong social and moral code because of leaders' core ethos of 'learning together, belonging and being successful'.
- The federation has recently reviewed the school's vision and values with parents, pupils and staff. The school's aim of 'to be the best you can be' underpins the school's refreshed approach. Pupils respond well to these shared expectations and are keen to live up to leaders' aims. Reward systems such as the school's 'community coin' get the best out of pupils, successfully encouraging all to strive to go one step beyond what is typically expected.
- The well-being of pupils is a high priority. Relationships are strong. Adults promote pupils' self-esteem sensitively and effectively.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning well. They are proud of their efforts. Their determination to succeed shines through their presentation in books and their focused application to tasks and activities.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Most pupils behave well in lessons and in social times. Lessons flow freely with very little disruption. Pupils confirm that: 'We listen, and we learn together.'
- Teachers set high expectations, give clear instructions and, as a result, most pupils respond quickly and calmly. Routines are well established, and pupils are keen to please the adults who care for them, including in the early years.
- Most pupils, staff and parents believe that the school deals with bullying effectively. Pupils are knowledgeable about the differences between physical bullying and cyber bullying. They know that if they feel vulnerable or unhappy, they, 'should not just ignore things but tell a grown up'. Staff say that leaders support the management of pupils' behaviour well.
- Attendance is improving, including persistent absence because of leaders' higher expectations. Leaders have introduced a range of measures to improve pupils' attendance including working more closely with families. A few pupils who were persistently absent from school now attend more regularly because of leaders' well-judged intervention.
- Some support staff, particularly those who work with more challenging pupils, do not yet have the skills to dissipate situations that arise from time to time, calmly and quickly. This is because some staff require further training to develop their expertise.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Attainment at the end of key stage 1 in 2018 was below that seen nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. However, current pupils are achieving higher

standards. Standards have risen notably. In key stage 1, more pupils are now working comfortably at or within age-related expectations.

- Parents speak positively about their child’s achievement. Most parents are highly satisfied with the progress their child makes at the school. One encapsulated the views of others, saying: ‘My daughter only started in September and has made remarkable progress. I am very impressed with her teacher and with the school’s high standards.’
- Disadvantaged pupils are benefiting from high-quality teaching. This group of pupils are now making similar progress to their peers in all areas of learning. Gaps between them and their peers are beginning to diminish rapidly. All are making stronger progress this year.
- Most pupils with SEND are catered for well. Many make similar progress to their peers, particularly in Year 1. This is because teaching helps these pupils to build effectively on their secure starting points at the end of the early years. However, pupils with SEND who have EHC plans are making slower progress. This is because teaching does not always meet their needs so effectively.
- Pupils read widely and often and consequently achieve well in this aspect. At the end of Year 1 in 2018, the proportion of pupils who met the standard expected in the Year 1 phonics screening check was broadly in line with that seen nationally. This is because the teaching of reading, including in the early years, is highly effective.
- The proportion of children who achieve a good level of development at the end of the early years is broadly in line with that seen nationally. Children make good and even progress in all areas of learning and achieve well.
- The proportion of pupils who achieved at greater depth in reading and writing in 2018 was below that seen nationally. However, current pupils are achieving higher standards in these areas. Standards for the most able pupils are rising in these subjects. Nevertheless, too few pupils are working at greater depth in mathematics. Activities do not always enable pupils to test their capabilities fully.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years department, in both the Nursery and Reception classes, is awash with activity. Children participate enthusiastically in a host of activities. These are planned meticulously to cater for a range of different aspects of learning. Children’s enthusiasm and confidence shine through. They confidently take the lead, guiding visitors around the setting saying: ‘We are making a dinosaur today – come and see!’
- Parents, just like those in the rest of the school, are full of praise for the start their child receives to schooling. One commented: ‘We really could not be happier with the nursery. The atmosphere surrounding the whole school is positive and purposeful.’
- The early years leader has a clear view of strengths and weaknesses based on a thorough analysis of assessment information and regular observations of staff in action. The school’s provision is kept under watchful review and staff training aligned to the provision’s development needs. This means a cycle of continual improvement is firmly embedded.

- In the early years, teachers use assessment information astutely to plan and adjust provision to meet children's needs very effectively. Staff are highly alert to any emerging differences, such as when boys began to progress less well than girls in writing. This blip was addressed promptly as adults ensured that planned writing activities promoted boys' interest equally.
- The early years department shares children's assessment information with parents via an online system. Parents too share their own observations of their child's learning. This means that everyone works closely together, forging strong partnership working.
- The teaching of early reading skills, in both Nursery and Reception, is highly effective. In the youngest classes, adults engage well with children, structuring conversation thoughtfully, including when sharing stories. In Reception, phonics is taught systematically. Children cheerily chorus correct responses in phonics sessions. They are knowledgeable about the sounds that letters make and can use these to good effect when transferring their skills to writing simple sentences.
- Children behave well, sharing resources and taking turns. There are very few disagreements. Adults get the best out of children, initiating and structuring conversations well. Staff instinctively tap into children's curiosity. In one example, children's interest in number was sparked when an adult queried, 'Who has got the most?' Staff are attentive, highly skilled enabling the youngest children to thrive.
- Children enter the school with skills and understanding that are in line with those expected for their age range. By the time they leave Reception, the proportion moving into Year 1 having achieved a good level of development is in line with that seen nationally. This represents secure progress from children's starting points.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 110257 |
| Local authority | Milton Keynes |
| Inspection number | 10088116 |

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

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| Type of school | Infant |
| School category | Foundation |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 7 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 358 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr Jake Yeo |
| Executive Headteacher | Mr Steve Springett-McHugh |
| Telephone number | 01908 312275 |
| Website | www.wyvernschool.org |
| Email address | office@wyvernschool.org |
| Date of previous inspection | 6–7 December 2016 |

Information about this school

- The previous headteacher left in December 2017, after a period of absence. At the same time, Wyvern School federated with the nearby junior school, Bushfield School. The federation is called Viaduct Federation of Schools.
- In January 2018, the executive headteacher took up post, sharing his time equally between the federation's two schools. In January 2019, the associate headteacher took up post, also sharing his time between both schools.
- The deputy headteacher was appointed as the school's special education needs coordinator in September 2018.
- In April 2018, one federated governing body was formed. Some governors, who were originally part of Wyvern's governing body, joined.
- The local authority has provided regular support to the school via a targeted intervention board, following the last full inspection.

- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND and/or an education, health and care plan is below the national average.
- Approximately 40% of pupils speak English as an additional language, which is above that seen nationally.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information because some of the necessary information about the school's spending of pupil premium funding, the SEN information report and the school's equality objectives are missing from its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, senior leaders and other staff with significant responsibilities. The lead inspector also met with two representatives from the local authority.
- A meeting was held with the chair and vice-chair of Viaduct Federation of Schools' governing body.
- Inspectors visited a variety of lessons in all year groups, many accompanied by senior leaders. Inspectors also scrutinised work in pupils' books. Pupils' progress and attainment were discussed with leaders.
- Parents' views were considered through the 24 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 13 free-text comments. Inspectors took account of 16 survey responses submitted by staff.
- A meeting was held with some Year 2 pupils. An inspector heard several Year 1 pupils read.
- The inspection team scrutinised records and documentation relating to safeguarding, behaviour, attendance and school improvement planning.
- The checks made on staff about their suitability to work with children were reviewed.

Inspection team

Elizabeth Farr, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Alison Ashcroft

Ofsted Inspector

Peter Dunmall

Ofsted Inspector

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