

Zouch Academy

Wavell Road, Tidworth, Hampshire SP9 7JF

Inspection dates

16–17 March 2017

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

- Leaders demonstrate determination and a resolve to ensure that all pupils benefit from a high-quality education. Their actions are successful in securing improvement.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is consistently good across the school. This enables pupils to make good progress and catch up previously lost ground in their learning.
- Pupils' outcomes are good. The large majority of pupils make good progress from typically low starting points to reach standards expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Disadvantaged pupils, service children and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make progress which is broadly in line with that made by other pupils nationally from similar starting points.
- Children in the early years make good progress because of well-planned teaching delivered in a rich and well-resourced learning environment. However, this is less evident for children who attend the pre-school.
- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils feel valued, safe and secure.
- The curriculum successfully engages and motivates pupils to learn in a range of subjects. This is supporting them to make good progress, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- Leaders, including governors, know their school well and have a deep understanding of the community they serve. This enables them to tailor the support and guidance that they offer so that it precisely meets the needs of their pupils and their families.
- The White Horse Federation robustly holds leaders to account. It provides high-quality training and opportunities for staff to compare their work and that of their pupils across a range of other schools.
- At times, leaders, including subject leaders, do not check precisely enough the difference that planned actions are making to raise standards further. This limits the ability of some pupils to attain the highest standards.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further develop the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that the school's approaches to improving quality in these areas are fully embedded and consistently implemented to enable more pupils to achieve at the highest levels.
- Continue to improve the school's performance by ensuring that:
 - targets in the school development plan have precise success criteria focusing on pupil outcomes
 - all leaders, including subject leaders, carefully evaluate the impact of teaching on the learning and progress of all groups of pupils.
- Ensure that the high-quality provision in the Reception classes is matched in the pre-school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The principal and vice-principal lead with a determination and absolute belief that every child can succeed at Zouch Academy. They demonstrate a passion for their school and a relentless drive to bring about further improvement. They receive strong strategic support from the executive principal and multi-academy trust board. Collectively, these leaders continue to improve outcomes for pupils as well as develop capacity for further improvement.
- Leaders have taken decisive action to improve the quality of teaching across the school. In particular, they have ensured that teachers are now teaching pupils in the year groups where they are most effective. This had led to improved outcomes for current pupils in the school.
- The school's pastoral systems are highly effective. Leaders frequently go 'the extra mile' to ensure that external barriers to learning are minimised or removed completely. The inclusion manager is highly skilled at identifying the needs of pupils and their families and putting the support in place to meet these needs. This high-quality support helps pupils to thrive at this school.
- Leaders know their school well and have a clear picture of its strengths and areas of improvement. School improvement planning is accurate and focused on the correct areas, for example to improve boys' writing. This has led to substantial improvement over the previous two years. However, to bring about sustained improvement, planning now needs to have greater precision and be sharply focused on improving the outcomes of specific groups of pupils.
- Due to recent changes in staffing, subject leadership is still developing. At present, much still depends on the strong leadership of the vice-principal. She provides highly effective coaching and mentoring. As a result, the recently appointed subject leaders are well supported in acquiring the knowledge, skills and confidence required for their roles. They are, however, now ready to be given a greater role in driving up standards in their subjects. This will enable greater numbers of pupils to achieve the higher standards.
- The White Horse Federation provides strong support and effective strategic direction to the school. Its work has been fundamental to the school's journey of improvement. Leaders from the multi-academy trust regularly carry out quality assurance and monitoring visits and hold the school robustly to account. This has led to sustained improvement in all areas of the school's work. As a result, outcomes for pupils continue to rise.
- Through the comprehensive support network provided by the Federation, school staff have access to high-quality training as well as opportunities to share good practice across a number of schools. This work has had a positive impact on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment at Zouch Academy.
- The school's spending of additional funds is effective, and expenditure is carefully targeted to where it is needed most. This is having a positive impact on outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and

service children. Leaders work tirelessly in partnership with outside agencies, including the Army Welfare Service, to focus resources upon the welfare of pupils and their families.

- The additional funding to promote sport and physical education is well spent. It is used to provide professional development and training for staff and increase pupils' participation in sporting activities.
- The curriculum is exciting and carefully tailored to meet the needs of all groups of pupils. For example, recent projects on dinosaurs, castles and superheroes have particularly engaged younger boys and inspired them to write. Throughout the school, the curriculum is enhanced by a rich programme of visits, visitors and exciting activities which promote learning. For example, the choir recently attended a concert at the O2 arena in London. In addition, the whole school community was thrilled to see the Queen when she visited the local garrison.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively through the school's chosen 'values-led approach to learning'. These principles are central to the school's work and provide opportunities to learn about respect, equality and fairness as well as to promote British values. Year 6 pupils told the inspector about a recent visit to the Houses of Parliament and how this had given them a greater understanding of democracy.

Governance of the school

- The local board of governors has a deep understanding of the school's community and ensures that the school's provision successfully meets the needs of the pupils.
- Leaders ensure that governors are kept well informed so that they have an in-depth understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further improvement. Governors analyse this information and provide challenge and support to improve the school's performance further.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. In discussions during the inspection, staff demonstrated a thorough understanding of the school's safeguarding procedures as well as the risks their pupils face. Induction of staff is comprehensive and, as a result, new staff are confident to implement the school's policies and follow guidance to keep pupils safe.
- The school works with a number of different agencies. This is a strength of its work. Systems for referring pupils are well established and, when required, this is done in a timely manner. Designated safeguarding leaders keep detailed records which ensure that recurrences and patterns are identified and the most vulnerable pupils are kept safe.
- Pupils know how to stay safe and have a deep understanding of online safety. They talk knowledgeably about the responsible use of social media and can identify the associated risks.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Recent stability in staffing, combined with new and effective approaches to improve teaching, learning and assessment, has brought about rapid improvements in the quality of teaching. This good teaching in mathematics, reading and writing is resulting in pupils making increasingly good progress across the school. However, leaders confirm that these new approaches are not yet fully embedded to ensure consistency across year groups and subjects.
- The teaching of the school's most able pupils has also improved. Teachers have high expectations and these pupils, in particular, benefit from frequent opportunities to deepen their understanding in a range of subjects. Subsequently, a higher proportion are now working above the standard expected for their age.
- The teaching of phonics is of a high quality. Teachers plan well-organised and engaging activities to motivate pupils to learn well. Pupils review previous learning before moving on to new concepts. This supports pupils successfully to practise and apply their knowledge and skills to deepen their learning.
- Teachers have secure subject knowledge and use this to provide tightly focused activities that challenge pupils of all abilities. They set out their expectations clearly so that pupils understand their tasks and know what successful learning looks like.
- Teachers provide developmental feedback in line with the school's newly developed system. Where requested to do so, pupils redraft, remodel or correct misconceptions. Pupils' positive attitudes to learning ensure that they take care to improve their work.
- Teachers and teaching assistants use questioning skilfully and expect pupils of all ages to justify their responses. This approach encourages pupils to think deeply about their learning and develop an appetite to know more. An example of this was in a computing session, where the teacher's strong questioning probed pupils' understanding and sparked a thought-provoking discussion about the dangers of online bullying.
- Staff build strong and trusting relationships with their pupils. This is a strength of the school. These relationships are based on mutual respect and, as a result, pupils want to learn and do their best.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from teaching which is focused precisely on their needs. Interventions are timely and address misconceptions as they occur. Pupils are well prepared for the next steps in their learning.
- Teachers have a secure understanding of what pupils know, understand and can do. This information is used to ensure that the attainment of different groups of children, including service children, is monitored closely so that swift action is taken when learning falters.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.

- Leaders, including governors, have a deep understanding of the school and have created an exceptionally strong community where all pupils, staff and families feel valued. This is having a noticeable impact on pupils' personal as well as academic development, and particularly for service children and their families.
- Leaders have built strong and well-established links with outside agencies, including the Army Welfare Service. Additional funding that the school receives, including the sports premium funding, is used effectively. This support addresses pupils' emotional needs, supports their well-being and promotes academic and personal development.
- The inclusion manager, family support worker and emotional literacy support assistant show great commitment and dedication to the pupils they support. They work tirelessly together to provide a wealth of opportunities, for example the 'Lunchtime Bluey Club' which is run for pupils with a parent who is away for two weeks or more. This work ensures that pupils feel safe and secure, particularly when a member of their family is serving abroad.
- Pupils and parents, both service families and civilians, value the amount of help and guidance that members of staff provide. One parent told an inspector, 'I love this school – teachers are lovely – I feel well supported'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are courteous and demonstrate high levels of empathy and respect for the needs of other pupils.
- Pupils are proud to be members of the Zouch community and genuinely want to be in school. One parent said, 'When the school gate opens in the morning, the pupils run into school – they can't wait!'
- Leaders promote high standards of behaviour assiduously. As a result, pupils' attitudes to learning and their conduct around the school are good. This is underpinned by the school's values-led approach and mutual respect. Pupils know what is expected of them and respond accordingly. In a small number of classes, behaviour is less positive, but leaders have identified this and put systems in place to ensure that this matches the high standards seen in the majority of classes.
- Incidents of bullying and discriminatory behaviour are rare and, when they do occur, they are dealt with swiftly and appropriately. This view is supported by the parents and demonstrated in the school's behaviour records.
- Leaders consistently promote the importance of good attendance. They monitor individual absences and intervene when necessary. In addition, they work tirelessly with families to support them in understanding the importance of good attendance. However, although improving, attendance is just below the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' attainment is rising rapidly throughout the school as a result of improved teaching and leaders' high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils have now largely made up for any historical underachievement.
- Disadvantaged pupils and service children achieve as well as their peers and as well as

other pupils nationally with similar starting points. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points.

- In the past, children joined the school with knowledge and skills which were slightly below those typically expected for their ages; this was particularly evident in speaking and listening. In the past two years, the proportion of children leaving Reception with a good level of development has risen significantly so that it is now slightly above the national average. The school's predictions indicate that this improvement is continuing, especially in boys' reading and writing.
- National phonics check results improve from year to year because of strengths in teaching. The large number of pupils who join the school during Year 1, and who are working below the expected standard, catch up quickly. By the end of Year 2, the proportion achieving the expected standard in the phonics screening check is above the national average.
- In 2016, teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 showed that the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was broadly in line with the national averages. However, the proportions working at greater depth were below national averages, particularly in mathematics.
- The most recent published key stage 2 results confirm a legacy of underachievement due to historical weaknesses in teaching. As a result, they do not represent the significant improvements the school has made and the progress which current pupils are making in all year groups.
- Current pupils in both Year 2 and Year 6, including the most able, are on track to achieve higher standards this year. They read well, many with an understanding beyond that expected for their age. In English, work in pupils' books confirms that they can write at length, with appropriate grammar, punctuation and spelling, and can adapt their style for a range of audiences. In mathematics, pupils have knowledge and skills in line with those expected for their level of development and are able to apply their understanding in word problems and other reasoning activities.
- Accurate assessments show that in the majority of year groups, proportions of current pupils working at both expected standards and greater depth are rising.
- Pupils benefit from the school's strong emphasis on developing their speaking and listening skills. As a result, pupils are increasingly articulate and able to verbalise their thoughts before submitting these to paper. This helps them to write with fluency and accuracy.
- Leaders make very good use of the school's pupil premium funding to ensure that both disadvantaged pupils and service children do as well as other pupils in the school. They use their accurate analysis of pupils' outcomes to inform any additional assistance required, for either academic or emotional support.

Early years provision

Good

- Children enter the pre-school with skills that are below those typical for their age. They make good progress across the early years, particularly in Reception, so that the proportion reaching a good level of development is slightly above the national average.

This ensures that the majority of pupils are well prepared for Year 1.

- Strong leadership and management ensure that provision is good. Leaders have accurately assessed the areas for development and plans are in place to ensure that identified strengths are replicated across all areas.
- Children develop strong phonic knowledge and early reading skills because teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations. They plan daily activities which inspire children and constantly check the progress they are making. In the Reception classes, children use their initial sounds and are able to read words like 'crown' and 'frown' with accuracy.
- The indoor and outdoor learning environments are bright, stimulating and well resourced, although these are not being used to full effect in the pre-school. Where provision is most effective, teachers plan activities to address the needs and interests of individual children; for example, children wrote instructions about a recent treasure hunt and the very detailed preparation of mud pies!
- The curriculum engages children in all aspects of learning. Teachers check that children's self-chosen activities cover all areas of the early years curriculum. Having participated in an activity, adults require the children to talk about their learning and this is proving a key component in the development of children's speaking and listening skills.
- Staff work hard to involve parents in their children's learning, and regular workshops are well attended. These provide opportunities for parents to work alongside their children. For example, leaders encourage children to lead their own learning and explain their thinking and reasoning to their parents. Parents were very positive about the school's communication and ongoing relationships: 'They do everything they can to involve us,' said one.
- The children feel safe and grow in confidence throughout their time in the early years. Leaders make sure that all of the statutory safeguarding requirements are met and the setting is secure. As soon as they join the school, children and their families benefit from the school's outstanding welfare systems. Staff quickly identify any support required so that provision can be targeted to meet individual needs and reduce any barriers to learning.
- Teaching assistants support children's learning very effectively. This includes strong and effective support for those with communication needs and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, all children are able to fully access the curriculum and are well supported to make good progress from their starting points.
- Children engage confidently with each other and adults and, as a result, outcomes are particularly strong in personal, social and emotional development. Behaviour is good, although this is less consistently the case in the pre-school, where a lack of precision in the planned activities leads to occasional levels of disengagement.
- The setting uses its pupil premium funding well to ensure that any disadvantaged pupils and service children make the same progress as other children nationally.

School details

Unique reference number	140685
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10024899

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	243
Appropriate authority	The White Horse Federation
Chair	Ian Cooke
Principal	Becky O'Brien
Executive Principal	Simon Cowley
Telephone number	01980 842293
Website	www.zouch-academy.twhf.org.uk/
Email address	admin@zouch.wilts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Zouch Academy is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school is a member of The White Horse Federation (TWHF) and opened as an academy in April 2014. The Federation has given significant support to the school, including the allocation of an executive principal.
- TWHF governs the school overall and holds the statutory responsibilities. Local governance is undertaken by the local board of governors.
- There have been a number of staff changes since the school became an academy, including to the leadership of the school.
- The majority of pupils are White British and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is broadly in line with the national average.

- The number of disadvantaged pupils supported through pupil premium funding is below the national average. However, over 70% of the school's population are eligible for the service children premium.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- The school meets the current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited classrooms and many of these visits were made jointly with the senior leaders in the school. Pupils' learning was observed in all year groups.
- Meetings were held with the principal, vice-principal, executive principal, the wider leadership team, staff, the local board of governors and the chief executive officer from the TWHF. The inspectors also took into account the responses to questionnaires completed by members of staff.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation, including the school's evaluation of its own performance, the school development plan and records of pupils' attainment and progress. They also checked the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding arrangements and absence information.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils throughout the inspection to seek their views, and listened to them read.
- Fifty-six responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, were taken into account, including a number of free text messages. The inspectors also spoke to a number of parents during the inspection.

Inspection team

Jonathan Dyer, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Her Majesty's Inspector

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