

Tadpole Farm CofE Primary Academy

Greene Street, Tadpole Garden Village, Swindon, Wiltshire SN25 2QS

Inspection dates

17–18 May 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

- The principal has demonstrated relentless drive and ambition in creating a new school. She has skilfully built a team of staff which is focused on enabling pupils to achieve well.
- Leaders, governors and teaching staff have a shared vision for the school and its further expansion. There is an effective plan in place for the opening of key stage 2 classes in September 2017.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Consequently, pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The quality of pupils' writing is, however, sometimes reduced by an insufficient focus on the development of basic skills.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years. They make strong progress in both the Nursery and Reception classes. This ensures that they are well prepared for the demands of key stage 1.
- Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. They treat each other and adults with respect and are proud to be pupils at Tadpole Farm.
- School staff, including the principal, know the pupils extremely well. They provide strong pastoral support and this is appreciated by a large number of parents.
- Opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are extensive. Pupils have a strong understanding of values, for example service, tolerance and respect. They know how these can be applied to life both in and outside of school.
- The Diocese of Bristol Academies Trust provides strong strategic direction. It has an in-depth knowledge of the school and holds leaders firmly to account. The local governing board is developing its skills, but is not yet providing sufficient levels of challenge.
- Leaders have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. However, at times, development planning does not accurately focus on the impact actions are having upon the outcomes of key groups of pupils.
- The school recognises that, as it grows in size, the capacity of middle leadership needs further strengthening in order to reduce the number of responsibilities currently held by the principal.
- Safeguarding is effective. Systems are strong and leaders work well with a range of external agencies to ensure that pupils are safe. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe online.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that self-evaluation and school development planning focuses more closely on the impact actions are having on the outcomes of groups of pupils
 - developing the capacity of the local governing board to hold school leaders to account more robustly for the outcomes of pupils in the school
 - further developing the capacity of middle leaders so they can take a greater share of the leadership responsibilities currently held by the principal.

- Further develop the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that teaching has a sharper focus on the development of the basic skills required to underpin pupils' high-quality writing skills.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The principal, assisted by other members of the leadership team, has skilfully overseen the opening and development of this new school. She has established a set of values which permeate all aspects of the school's work and underpin its approach to teaching and learning.
- Leaders set high expectations for staff and pupils and value the contributions made by staff at all levels. Morale is high and there is a strong sense of pride. As a result, the quality of teaching is good and is having a positive effect on pupils' learning.
- Leaders have a precise understanding of where teaching and learning is most effective and where it needs improvement. They keep a close eye on the quality of teaching within their phases as well as the progress being made by individual pupils. Leaders hold teachers to account through performance management objectives, which align closely with the school's improvement plan. Where the quality of performance falls below expectations, support and guidance is put in place. The induction of new staff is thorough and pupils benefit from a consistent approach to learning.
- Leaders accurately identify what needs to be done to move the school forward. School improvement plans are detailed and securely based on systematic self-evaluation. However, some targets are not specific enough to enable leaders to evaluate the impact their actions are having upon pupils' outcomes.
- The assistant principals are developing in their roles and providing increasingly strong support to the principal. However, too large a share of leadership responsibility still lies with the principal. Currently, the leadership team is working effectively but, as the school continues to expand both in the number of pupils and their age range, greater capacity will need to be added. This is recognised by governors and the academy trust. They have put plans in place to review leadership roles and make additional appointments, for example a leader to oversee the school's provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Leaders make good use of additional funding. There are a relatively small number of disadvantaged pupils but, as a result of effective support, they make strong progress and have similar opportunities to learn to other pupils.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. Leaders target additional funding effectively to ensure that provision is precisely matched to their needs.
- Leaders have developed a curriculum which offers a wide range of opportunities for pupils to develop and learn new skills. Pupils enjoy the challenges set and the responsibility they are given to manage their work. The school's agreed focus on enquiry-based learning underpins their curriculum. This work is effectively developing pupils' abilities to think for themselves and apply their learning across a range of subjects.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is developed well through a relevant and diverse curriculum. Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of British values, such as tolerance and respect. These are an integral part of the school's

values-led approach and are effectively promoted through assemblies and class worship. For example, during the inspection, pupils reflected upon the importance of service and how this could be observed in members of the school community.

- Work in pupils' books demonstrates a good understanding of other faiths and religions. Pupils across the school are able to discuss different beliefs. For example, children in the Reception classes can explain what Muslims believe and compare the similarities and differences between a church and a mosque.
- Additional sports funding is used effectively to increase pupils' participation in physical activity. Money has been targeted on additional resources, including a trim trail and playground markings, as well as on additional training for staff.
- The majority of parents are pleased with the progress their children make and the support provided by the school. Inspectors spoke to a number of parents who had high praise for the school. One parent, summing up the view of many, told an inspector that she was initially unsure about accepting a place. However, when visiting the school, she had been impressed with the principal's vision. Most parents of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities appreciate the care the school provides and how this allows their children to make good progress in their learning.

Governance of the school

- The Diocese of Bristol Academies Trust (the Trust) provides strong governance and is effectively holding the school to account. The Trust closely monitors the school's performance. They have a secure understanding of the progress leaders are making towards development targets. This support and challenge is playing a significant role in the continuing improvement in the school.
- Local governance is undertaken by the local governing board, which contains a number of newly appointed governors. These governors have a growing understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They talk knowledgeably about the school's provision, including for disadvantaged pupils. However, they are not yet clear about the impact initiatives are having upon pupils' outcomes.
- The Trust is providing strong support for the governing board and this is developing their skills. The principal provides governors with detailed information about pupils' outcomes. In addition, minutes of meetings of the governing board show that board members are increasingly asking more detailed questions. These questions, however, do not yet provide the level of challenge required to sufficiently hold school leaders fully to account.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff have a clear understanding of procedures and know how to respond if they have concerns about an individual pupil. Training is up to date and the induction of new members of staff raises their awareness of the school's vigilant approach to keeping pupils safe.

- Pupils are taught how to stay safe and have a detailed understanding of the dangers associated with the surrounding building sites. Pupils talk knowledgeably about online safety. For example, pupils were able to tell an inspector about the importance of not sharing personal information. Pupils also knew that if they saw something that made them feel uncomfortable, they should immediately tell an adult.
- The principal, and other leaders responsible for safeguarding, regularly review the support provided for the school's most vulnerable pupils. They work closely with parents and ensure that all local agencies respond promptly to any concerns raised.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching is good across the school. Teachers and teaching assistants have strong subject knowledge and high expectations for pupils' learning. They use effective questioning to check pupils' understanding, as well as to challenge and deepen the learning of the most able pupils. This is enabling pupils throughout the school to make good progress from their various starting points.
- Teachers know their pupils well and use exciting and innovative experiences to engage pupils in their learning. Pupils in all year groups told inspectors how much they enjoy the school's curriculum and how they are helped to think for themselves. For example, a Year 2 pupil said, 'Teachers set up exciting activities for us and we choose the ones we need to do.'
- Teachers accurately assess pupils' needs and routinely modify their plans to address gaps in their knowledge, skills and understanding. Teachers make every effort to ensure that pupils joining the school mid-term settle in well. They quickly establish new pupils' starting points so they can build upon prior learning as seamlessly as possible.
- The teaching of phonics is a strength. Pupils are confident using their phonics skills in lessons and can apply these skills when reading independently. The majority of staff exhibit secure subject knowledge although a few incorrectly model letter sounds.
- Pupils across the school read with fluency and expression. Teaching has been focused on developing pupils' comprehension skills. The impact of this is evident in pupils' ability to answer questions about what they have read. Pupils are reading regularly in school. However, not enough is being done to encourage pupils to read frequently at home.
- Teachers use a range of methods to develop pupils' writing skills across a range of genres. Pupils respond well to tasks which interest and challenge them. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 have produced some high-quality writing about the Titanic. This work includes diary entries, historical recounts, explanation texts and comparisons between the experiences of first-class and steerage passengers. Through this work, pupils get opportunities to develop their writing skills across a range of other subjects.
- Teachers provide pupils with feedback that moves learning forward and supports the school's ethos of promoting independent learning. Pupils appreciate this approach and are given responsibility to edit and improve their own work. However, on occasion, pupils do not have the knowledge required to accurately identify errors in their own work. Consequently, basic misconceptions, particularly in spelling and grammar, go

uncorrected. This is affecting the quality of pupils' writing, which, in content and style, is otherwise strong.

- In mathematics, pupils have a good understanding of basic skills and are given opportunities to reason and apply their knowledge across a range of different concepts. For example, in Year 2, pupils were required to think carefully about multiplication patterns and explain whether particular rules were sometimes, always or never true.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported. Staff assess their needs accurately. Interventions, both during lessons and in withdrawal groups, help them to make good progress from their starting points.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Staff know individual pupils and their needs very well. Consequently, pupils feel safe and well cared for.
- From when they start in Nursery, children are taught to respect each other and care for their school environment. Throughout the school, there is a strong ethos of friendship and tolerance for others.
- Pupils are enthusiastic learners and relish the challenges given to them. 'The harder the challenge, the better,' was a view expressed by a number of pupils.
- Pupils enjoy the responsibility they are given for their own learning and, those spoken to, were unanimous in their view that they 'love' school. The school's ethos of independent and enquiry-based learning is, for the majority of pupils, developing skills in these areas. However, on occasion, a few pupils struggle with this level of independence and, as a consequence, do not make the very best use of time in lessons.
- Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of how to stay safe, including when online.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils talk positively about the school's work to teach them about making the right choices.
- Pupils work well together and respond appropriately to adults during lessons and around the school. Pupils who spoke to inspectors were very clear that behaviour is typically good. They said that everyone gets along with one another, with one pupil adding, 'We're all friends here.'
- The school is a calm and orderly environment. Pupils play happily together during break and lunchtimes, even when they have to remain indoors due to inclement weather.
- Pupils say bullying is rare and older pupils know the difference between bullying and unkind words or actions. Pupils said that if an incident did occur, they would know who to speak to. They are confident that adults in the school would resolve it quickly.

- Some extreme behaviour was observed during the inspection. However, this was handled appropriately and sensitively. Records show that staff have received training to support them in dealing with behaviour of this type while ensuring that all pupils remain safe.
- Attendance is broadly in line with the national average. Leaders carefully monitor the attendance of individual pupils and groups. Pupils with low attendance are supported in improving punctuality and/or in attending more regularly.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils, including the few disadvantaged pupils, make good progress from their starting points across a range of subjects.
- This is the first year the school has had pupils in Year 2 and, therefore, there is no historical data available. For current pupils, the school's assessment data indicates the proportion of Year 2 pupils working at the expected standards is at least in line with national averages. The proportion of pupils working at greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics is also in line. This assessment information is supported by the work in pupils' books.
- At the time of the inspection, there were no pupils in key stage 2.
- Pupils make good progress in reading. The proportion of pupils who met the expected standard in the 2016 Year 1 phonics screening check was in line with the national figure. These skills are secured as pupils move into Year 2. They apply their knowledge of sounds to read more complex vocabulary and are able to discuss their reading with confidence.
- Progress in writing is good. The majority of pupils are writing with content and style which is at least in line with the standard expected for their age. However, some pupils' spelling is not of the same quality.
- In mathematics, pupils typically have a secure grasp of basic skills. They are able to apply their understanding through reasoning and problem-solving. This is enabling a greater proportion of pupils to work at greater depth.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making good progress from their starting points. Those not on track to reach age-related expectations by the end of the year are given carefully planned support to enable them to do so as quickly as possible.

Early years provision

Good

- Children make good progress from a range of different starting points and, as a result, are well prepared for Year 1.
- Across the Nursery and Reception Years, the early years team has established an inviting and stimulating environment for children to learn. Well-planned activities follow the children's interests and ensure that they successfully acquire early reading, writing and number skills.

- The early years is well led. The leader's accurate evaluation of the quality of provision and children's needs ensures that planned learning is adapted to address gaps in children's knowledge, skills and understanding. For example, a topic on pirates is engaging boys, in particular, and raising standards in their writing.
- In the Nursery and Reception Years, children thoroughly enjoy their learning. They participate enthusiastically in the wide range of stimulating activities provided both indoors and outdoors.
- Children enjoy the challenge-based approach to learning and relish finding things out for themselves. This was evident, for example, with a group of children who were closely examining a selection of fish to identify different features. 'This is where they breathe underwater and these are their sharp teeth,' one child enthusiastically told an inspector.
- Teachers and teaching assistants foster positive relationships with children. This promotes strong behaviour in the majority of children, although some occasionally lose focus during independent activities.
- The teaching of phonics is strong. Children quickly develop a secure understanding of their sounds and teachers provide opportunities for them to apply their understanding in a range of contexts.
- Adults use the children's ideas and skilfully question them in order to develop their learning. For example, a group of children wanted to see how many buckets of water it would take to fill a container. The adult supporting them asked them to predict how many they thought would be needed before having a go. They then discussed why different children had come up with different results. 'To make it fair, you need to have the same amount of water in each bucket,' one observed.
- Links with parents are good. Parents spoken to said they appreciated the online information they receive about their children's learning.
- Leaders make effective use of additional funding. This ensures that disadvantaged children and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make progress which is at least in line with other children with similar starting points.
- Safeguarding is effective. Children are extremely well looked after and staff ensure that statutory requirements are met.

School details

Unique reference number	140420
Local authority	Swindon
Inspection number	10033099

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	230
Appropriate authority	Diocese of Bristol Academies Trust
Chair	Sue Wilkinson
Principal	Jane Leo
Telephone number	01793 729 740
Website	www.tadpolefarmcepa.co.uk
Email address	school@tadpolefarmcepa.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Tadpole Farm CofE Primary Academy opened in September 2014. Initially, it only admitted children into the early years and currently has pupils up to Year 2. In September 2017, in addition to Year 3 pupils, the school will be admitting pupils into Year 4 and Year 5.
- The school is a member of the Diocese of Bristol Academies Trust. Local governance is undertaken by the local governing board.
- The majority of pupils are White British and the proportion who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through pupil premium funding is well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special

educational needs or an education, health and care plan is in line with that found nationally.

- The school provides a breakfast club and an after-school club as well as a wide range of extra-curricular clubs for pupils.
- The school met requirements on the publication of specified information on its website by the end of the inspection.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited classrooms and some of these visits were made jointly with the principal. Pupils' learning was observed across early years and key stage 1.
- Meetings were held with school leaders, staff, members of the local governing board and the school improvement officer from the Diocese of Bristol Academies Trust. Inspectors also took into account responses to questionnaires completed by staff and pupils.
- Inspectors looked at the school's evaluation of its own performance, its improvement plan, a number of key school policies and the minutes of meetings of the local governing board. They also considered a range of documentation in relation to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils throughout the inspection to seek their views and listened to a selection of them read.
- Inspectors took account of 60 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including a number of free-text responses. Inspectors also spoke to a number of parents during the inspection.

Inspection team

Jonathan Dyer, lead inspector

Lizzy Meadows

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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