

University Primary Academy Kidsgrove

Gloucester Road, Kidsgrove, Stoke-on-Trent, ST7 4DJ

Inspection dates 9–10 July 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy	
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils, including the most-able and disadvantaged pupils, do not consistently achieve well in reading and writing in Key Stage 2.
- Pupils are not given enough encouragement to read for pleasure and this means they do not always make sufficient progress in their reading.
- The quality of teaching requires improvement because teachers do not consistently match work to pupils' abilities. Teachers do not always use searching questions to promote rapid progress for the most-able pupils in Key Stage 2 or encourage all pupils to develop their literacy skills by writing at length.
- Pupils' behaviour requires improvement. Their attitudes to their learning are not always as positive as they should be. Not all teachers follow agreed procedures consistently or deal swiftly and effectively with low-level disruption.
- The academy's work to improve pupils' attendance has yet to bring it in line with the national average.
- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement. Pupils and parents are not always certain that their concerns about isolated cases of bullying will be dealt with promptly.
- Leadership and management require improvement because the contribution of middle leaders to improving teaching and learning is underdeveloped.
- The academy trust, governors and academy leaders have not successfully shared their vision for the academy with all parents.
- Academy leaders and governors are not always sharp enough in their use of information about pupils' progress to identify weaker achievement or to judge the quality of teaching.

The school has the following strengths

- The academy is improving. Academy leaders' recent action to address areas of weakness have led to improvements in the quality of teaching and in pupils' achievement.
- The early years provision is good. All groups of children make good progress in a stimulating and caring environment.
- The academy successfully promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The academy's work with disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good. These pupils are well supported and make good progress.
- The most-able pupils achieve good standards in reading and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils’ learning in 15 lessons, seven of which were jointly observed with the Principal or the Vice Principal. In addition, inspectors looked at pupils’ work in their books and listened to younger pupils read.
- Inspectors held meetings with several groups of pupils, senior leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the academy trust. An inspector also held a telephone conversation with the Chair of the academy’s statement of action committee.
- Inspectors took account of the 27 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and considered the 16 responses to a staff questionnaire. Inspectors considered responses by parents to a recent questionnaire from the academy. Inspectors also considered information given by parents in telephone conversations and by email.
- Inspectors examined the academy’s own information on pupils’ recent and current progress; the academy’s evaluation of how well it is doing and its records of the monitoring of the quality of teaching; records relating to behaviour and attendance; and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Richard Boswell, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Janet Bird

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- University Primary Academy Kidsgrove is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are White British.
- The percentage of disadvantaged pupils who are supported through the pupil premium is above the national average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for students in local authority care and those currently or previously known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The early years provision in both the Nursery and Reception classes is full time.
- The academy runs a breakfast club.
- The academy's own data indicates it met the government's current floor standards in 2014, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. However, there were administrative issues regarding publication of the academy's Key Stage 2 results in 2014. This means that it is not possible to make the usual comparisons between the attainment of different groups of pupils and other pupils nationally.
- The academy was created in September 2013. The academy's sponsor is the University of Chester Academies Trust. The academy's Principal has been in post since May 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and so raise the achievement of all pupils in Key Stage 2, including that of the most-able and disadvantaged pupils, by making sure teachers:
 - consistently set tasks that match the needs of different groups of pupils and challenge them to achieve more
 - provide more opportunities for pupils to write longer pieces of work so that they develop their writing skills to the full
 - help pupils to make improved progress in reading by providing them with better access to high quality books
 - ask probing and challenging questions in class that encourage pupils to develop intellectual curiosity and think deeply.
- Improve pupils' behaviour and the academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure by ensuring:
 - all staff have the same, consistently high, expectations and consistently follow agreed procedures for managing behaviour and identifying and addressing any instances of bullying
 - low-level disruption is eliminated and all pupils learn to take turns and to listen attentively to each other and to adults from the moment they enter the early years
 - the academy makes further improvements in attendance so that it is at least in line with the national average
 - any concerns expressed by pupils or parents are dealt with swiftly and effectively.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring:
 - the trust works more closely with leaders and governors to establish stronger channels of communication with all parents so that they understand and share its vision for the development of the academy
 - the roles of middle leaders are developed so that they lead their areas of responsibility more effectively
 - leaders and governors analyse patterns in pupils' achievement more rigorously so that they can quickly identify where improvements are needed and take appropriate action
 - leaders' checks on the quality of teaching focus more rigorously on how well pupils are learning.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders and governors have moved the academy in a positive direction but have failed to share their vision with a significant proportion of parents. Academy leaders have yet to create an ethos in which behaviour is consistently good. The changes they have made have led to improvements in the quality of teaching and raised pupils' achievement, but these have yet to have a consistent impact across all year groups.
- Although leaders have successfully focused effort and resources on improving the performance of Year 6 pupils, a legacy of weaker teaching and remaining inconsistencies in teaching, particularly in Years 3 to 5 are restricting pupils' progress. There is evidence, however, of sustained improvement in the early years and Key Stage 1.
- The Principal has the confidence and respect of the staff. Together with his senior leaders, he has identified the right priorities to improve the academy. There are already positive signs of improvements in pupils' achievement but these have yet to be seen in all year groups. There have been improvements in behaviour, but not all parents and pupils consider that the academy responds swiftly enough to their concerns.
- Procedures for monitoring pupils' progress are in place but, until recently, leaders have not always identified and responded to underachievement sharply enough. As a result, they have not always used the pupil premium as effectively as they should have done. This has meant that some pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, have not had the same opportunity as other pupils to make good progress or achieve higher standards. The academy has conducted an extensive review of its use of the pupil premium funding and this is now having a much greater impact on pupils' achievement.
- The academy has recently introduced more effective processes for holding teachers to account for the progress of the pupils they teach. The training the academy provides is strongly focused on bringing about improvements in teachers' performance. Senior leaders provide good support for staff who are new to the academy.
- Middle leaders are being given greater responsibilities. However, their roles are not currently fully developed and they do not all make a sufficient contribution to improving teaching and learning. In contrast, the impact of the effective leadership of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and in the early years is clearly evident in the improved progress of pupils in these areas.
- The academy uses the physical education and sports premium funding effectively to provide pupils with a range of sporting opportunities led by professional coaches who work alongside teaching staff. Pupils show understanding of the importance of physical exercise and healthy lifestyles.
- The academy introduced the Learning Challenge curriculum in 2014. This has enabled it to provide a broad and balanced range of subjects that are carefully planned so that they reflect pupils' known interests and preferences. Teachers set homework regularly and pupils enjoy sharing their projects with their parents. The academy's busy breakfast club has helped to improve attendance and punctuality, although leaders recognise that more needs to be done to make attendance really good.
- The academy promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. It makes good use of educational visits and visitors to stimulate pupils' imagination and interest, and provides good opportunities for them to take part in sport, art, music, dance and drama activities with professional practitioners. For example, in one activity, pupils decorated tiles with a professional artist in the style of Islamic art of the Golden Age. These experiences contribute to pupils' understanding of other cultures and faiths.
- The academy ensures that pupils have a good understanding of British values, such as democracy and tolerance, and tackles even the slightest hint of discrimination immediately and resolutely. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain and for their move to secondary school.

- The academy's sponsor, the University of Chester Academies Trust, has been effective in challenging and supporting the academy in its early stages. The trust has not, however, ensured that the arrangements for governance include a sufficient degree of parental involvement in their children's education or established sufficiently good channels of communication with all parents.
- The academy's safeguarding arrangements are effective and meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance requires improvement. Links with parents and the local community are not strong enough. As a result, not everyone shares the vision of the academy's leaders for raising aspirations and driving up standards. A very small committee was put in place in order to drive changes in the initial phase of the academy's work. This committee reports to the University of Chester Academy Trust. Plans to establish a wider governing group, including more of the parental and local community, have yet to be realised.
 - The academy's statement of action committee has considerable experience and expertise. Governors possess the educational and business skills to hold the academy to account. Governors visit the academy frequently and have a good understanding of its performance, having had appropriate training. This information has not always been used to drive rapid enough improvements in pupils' progress.
 - Governors understand the importance of securing high quality teaching in all classes, check how teachers' performance is managed and help to tackle any underperformance. They understand the analysis of the academy's performance data and play their part in checking that academy funding is used to achieve the best outcomes for pupils. This includes the use of the pupil premium and the additional primary sports and physical education funding.
 - Governors ensure that all legal requirements for safeguarding are met.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Pupils say that, while there has been an improvement in behaviour, there is still occasional low-level disruption in some lessons. Not all teachers deal with these disruptions swiftly and effectively. By contrast, pupils in other classes are attentive to their teachers and behave well.
- Despite the improvements leaders have introduced, there remain some inconsistencies in teachers' use of sanctions to address less good behaviour and variations in pupils' attitudes to learning. Academy records indicate that the number of incidents of poor behaviour has reduced. This reflects leaders' determination to establish high expectations for behaviour across the academy.
- Leaders' efforts to include pupils who sometimes present challenging behaviours in the day-to-day life of the academy have not always been clearly explained to all parents. That said, there have been very few permanent exclusions since the academy opened. The low number of temporary exclusions relates to a very small number of pupils.
- The academy has worked hard and effectively to improve attendance but this is not yet in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils arriving punctually for the start of the academy day has improved.
- Visits and residential stays ensure pupils learn to look after themselves and broaden their horizons. Leaders ensure that all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, can participate in these visits through careful use of the pupil premium funding. Pupils who have difficulties managing their behaviour have responded well to being included in these visits and their behaviour has improved as a result.
- Pupils take on responsibilities from an early age, helping out in the classroom and looking after each other. Older pupils make a good contribution to the life of the academy, for example as members of the democratically elected academy council and as lunchtime helpers with the children in early years.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement.
- Pupils understand the different types of bullying, including racist and homophobic bullying, and they are aware that name-calling is wrong. While pupils say they feel safe at the academy, isolated incidents of alleged bullying do occur. Pupils and parents are not always certain that their concerns will be dealt with promptly.
- Pupils are knowledgeable about keeping safe on the internet and the dangers of cyber bullying as a result of lessons and assemblies for all year groups. The academy offers a good level of care and guidance to all pupils, including those whose circumstances make them vulnerable, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Improvements have been made to the security of the academy site both around the grounds and inside the academy's reception area. These have ensured that the site is completely safe. The academy carries out rigorous risk assessments both of the site and when pupils are likely to be off-site on educational visits.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teachers do not always match work appropriately to pupils' abilities. As a result, pupils do not make the progress they should.
- The teaching of writing in Key Stage 2 does not provide pupils with enough opportunities to extend the length of their pieces of writing gradually so that their basic literacy skills become more secure.
- The teaching of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) is good in the early years and Key Stage 1. However, teachers do not always instil a love of reading in pupils as they move up the academy and the choice of texts is sometimes limited. This restricts pupils' progress, particularly those who are disadvantaged and those who are the most able.
- Teachers do not always use searching questions in class to stimulate deeper thinking and more imaginative responses, particularly from the most-able pupils. Teachers offer a more consistent level of challenge to the most able in Key Stage 1 than they do in Key Stage 2.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well supported in lessons by experienced and expert support staff.
- The teaching of mathematics has recently improved and there is evidence in pupils' books and from their comments that they generally enjoy their lessons. This is particularly the case when teachers set them imaginative challenges in their regular outdoor mathematics lessons, for example, making fractions with their bodies on the playground.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Academy checks and pupils' work show that pupils do not make consistently good progress over time in Key Stage 2, particularly in reading and writing. This is because teachers' expectations have not always been high enough. As a result, they do not always achieve the standards of which they are capable by the end of Key Stage 2. The latest unofficial results suggest standards fell below the latest national average for Year 6 in the current academy year.
- The most-able pupils are not making the rapid progress they should in Key Stage 2 and as a result they do not achieve the highest standards at the end of Year 6, particularly in reading and writing. Across the school as a whole, they do not routinely have access to high quality texts to stimulate their reading. There are not enough opportunities for them to develop their literacy skills fully by writing at length. The

proportion of pupils attaining higher levels in reading and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1, however, is now above the latest national average.

- The academy's own information shows that the progress of disadvantaged pupils requires improvement. Disadvantaged pupils were half a term behind other pupils in the academy in reading, writing and mathematics overall in 2014. The academy has put detailed plans in place for ensuring more rapid progress for these pupils and these have already shown some marked improvements in Year 2 and Year 6. As indicated earlier, there is no official data available to enable comparisons to be made with other pupils nationally.
- Pupils develop a good understanding of letters and the sounds they make (phonics). The proportion achieving the expected level in the Year 1 phonics check was above the national average in 2014 and a similar proportion achieved this level in 2015. The good start they make in reading is not sustained in Key Stage 2 because there is not sufficient encouragement for pupils to read widely and often.
- Due to clearly focused support that meets their needs, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress overall. The academy's clear focus on improving the support for, and the achievement of, this group of individual pupils means these pupils often make really rapid progress.

The early years provision

is good

- A team of committed and expert teachers and support staff work well together to the benefit of the children in their care. This is as a result of good leadership of the early years provision. The team ensures that children settle into Nursery and Reception routines as quickly as possible. The environment, both inside and out, is stimulating and engaging.
- The quality of teaching is good. The well-organised team of teachers and support staff makes good use of stimulating resources to support children who are struggling and to challenge the most able. The teaching of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) begins as soon as children arrive in Reception and they go on to do well in their Year 1 screening check. Children are well prepared for Year 1 and arrive ready to learn and with the skills they need.
- Children enter the academy in the early years with skills and understanding in language and physical development that are well below those typical for their age. The staff work hard to help the children develop the key social and personal skills that will allow them to make progress in their learning. Even with this delayed start to the learning of many children, the proportion reaching a good level of development on leaving Reception was above the national average in 2014. While attainment in 2015 was less strong, children have still made good progress from their starting points. The achievement of children in the early years provision is therefore good.
- Children's behaviour is good. They learn to work well with each other in pairs and in groups. They learn to concentrate when working on their own for increasingly long periods of time. Children know that unkind words can be hurtful. They readily celebrate the cultures and lifestyles of other groups in society that are very different to their own. The early years provision is not outstanding because children do not always listen as attentively as they should to adults and to each other.
- Safety is good in the early years provision because leaders ensure that carefully considered and regularly reviewed procedures are in place so that children are always safe. The arrangements for safeguarding children meet statutory requirements. Children learn to look after themselves and each other, particularly through increased use of the outdoors area. They develop confidence and resilience, and learn from the role models of older pupils who are frequent visitors to the early years provision.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	139949
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	450193

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	205
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Harry Ziman
Principal	Jonathan Farrington
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01782 296825
Fax number	N/A
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