

All Faiths' Children's Community School

Gun Lane, Strood, Rochester, ME2 4UF

Inspection dates 25–26 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good		2
Quality of teaching	Good		2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding		1
Leadership and management	Outstanding		1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress, which is especially strong in English. This is because teaching is consistently good, and a growing proportion is outstanding. Teachers work hard to meet the particular needs of all pupils.
- Teaching assistants provide excellent support for pupils and this has a marked impact on their achievement. When pupils need extra help, they get it.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is very good. They know what is right and wrong and they have a good understanding of different cultures and beliefs.
- The headteacher is totally determined that all pupils achieve well, whatever their backgrounds or needs. Leaders, including governors, are highly effective in improving the academy.
- Pupils' behaviour is excellent both in and out of lessons. They work and play together well, respect each other, and they really enjoy coming to the academy. The work they do ignites their curiosity.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- While standards are rising, they are still below average. Pupils' progress is slower during Key Stage 1, although it is improving. Pupils' progress in mathematics does not yet match the rapid progress they make in English.
- Teaching does not always lead to outstanding learning. Not all pupils are fully stretched in every lesson and this sometimes prevents them from making outstanding progress.
- Although the gaps between the achievement of pupils eligible for the pupil premium and other pupils are closing rapidly, they need to close further.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons and several parts of lessons, including three observations undertaken jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils, and talked to pupils in lessons and around the academy, in order to gather pupils' views about the academy.
- Inspectors analysed the academy's information about pupils' achievement. They also looked carefully at pupils' work, and at teachers' marking.
- Inspectors took into account 49 responses to the staff questionnaire. There were not enough responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) for inspectors to analyse, but the academy's annual survey of parents' views was looked at.
- Meetings were held with a variety of people, including leaders and other staff, three governors, and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors considered a range of documentation provided by the academy, including records of observations of lessons, various policies, minutes of governing body meetings, the academy's own checks on how well it is doing, the academy's improvement plans, attendance records and logs of behavioural incidents.
- Safeguarding procedures were checked.
- During this inspection, inspectors asked additional questions designed to ascertain the academy's view of the impact and effectiveness of local authority services to support school improvement. This information will contribute to work being carried out by Ofsted to assess the use, quality and impact of those services.

Inspection team

Matthew Haynes HMI, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ann Sydney

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this academy

- This is a smaller-than-average sized primary school. It converted to academy status in June 2012 as part of RGS/AFS Academy Trust.
- The proportion of students for whom the academy receives pupil premium funding (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those who are looked after by the local authority and pupils with a parent in the armed forces) is over double the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported by school action is slightly above average. The proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above the national average. The academy has specialist provision for 18 deaf pupils. There is an agreement with the local authority that the academy may offer up to 24 places, and there are currently 22 deaf pupils at the academy.
- Three quarters of pupils are from White British backgrounds. Other pupils belong to a range of minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is slightly above average.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment.
- There is a children's centre on the site, which is subject to separate inspection arrangements.
- A nurture group is run by the academy. This makes full-time provision for eight pupils who have particular social and emotional needs and who need extra help with their education. Half of these pupils come from other schools in the area.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen teaching further so that it consistently leads to outstanding learning by:
 - fully stretching all pupils in every lesson, including the brightest pupils, by always setting them tasks that are at the right level of difficulty and really challenge them
 - providing regular opportunities for pupils to act on teachers' advice about what they could improve in their work
 - developing pupils' abilities and confidence to challenge each other's thinking when they are working together.
- Raise achievement so that the majority of pupils make outstanding progress by:
 - improving pupils' progress further during Key Stage 1
 - raising pupils' achievement in mathematics so that it matches the outstanding progress pupils make in English
 - continuing to close the gap between the achievement of pupils eligible for the pupil premium and that of other pupils.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils start at the academy with levels of attainment that are generally well below those expected for their age. They make good progress in Nursery and Reception classes, particularly in their early literacy skills and in their personal and social development. Consequently, standards at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage are average.
- Standards in English and mathematics are below average at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, but they are rising. Accurate assessments for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 show that pupils' attainment will be higher in 2013 than in 2012. Standards are rising steadily in other year groups.
- Pupils currently make expected progress during Key Stage 1, but this is improving. For example, pupils' abilities to match letters to the sounds they make have improved very rapidly over the last year.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics during Key Stage 2. Their progress in English during Key Stage 2 is outstanding.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including deaf pupils, make the same progress as other pupils in the school. This is also true of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and pupils who speak English as an additional language. This is because of good teaching which meets their specific needs. They also get effective extra help in and outside of lessons.
- The average points scores of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, including pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, are lower overall than that of similar pupils in the country. Their progress is improving and most of them now make at least the same progress as other pupils in the academy. Overall, these pupils are about one term behind other pupils in English and mathematics. However, over half of them have special educational needs, which means that their attainment is sometimes lower than that of other pupils in this group. The pupil premium is used well, for example to provide one-to-one tuition or small group teaching. As a result, the gaps in achievement between these pupils and others are closing rapidly. However, leaders acknowledge that there is scope for further improvement in closing this gap.
- Pupils in the nurture group make very good progress. They are given effective support which is carefully tailored to meet their needs.
- Pupils' skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening are developed very well across the curriculum. Pupils enjoy reading, and they write enthusiastically and at length in a wide range of subjects. If they find reading difficult, they get the extra help they need. Pupils apply their skills in mathematics successfully in some other subjects, for example science and geography.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is consistently good. A growing proportion of teaching is outstanding, particularly in Key Stage 2. Teachers have good subject knowledge and they have high expectations of what pupils should achieve. Teachers often target questions well to extend pupils' thinking.
- Pupils are consistently clear about what they are learning in lessons and what they need to do to be successful.
- Teachers work hard to match tasks precisely to the wide variety of abilities of different groups of pupils. This is usually successful, and it helps pupils to make good progress in lessons. Sometimes, however, pupils are not stretched as much as they could be, particularly the brightest pupils.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and in detail, giving pupils specific advice about how they can improve. Teachers also give pupils good feedback during lessons. Sometimes pupils make the necessary improvements to their work, but this is not yet consistent enough.

- Pupils work together well in lessons. They enjoy working in pairs or small groups and they regularly help each other solve problems or complete tasks. In a minority of lessons, pupils are beginning to challenge each other's thinking by asking hard questions of their peers; however, this very good practice is not yet widespread.
- Pupils are highly engaged in lessons. Their levels of concentration are good, and they work well on their own.
- Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to pupils' progress. They question pupils skilfully and provide good guidance that supports pupils' learning. They make sure the needs of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including deaf pupils, are met very effectively.
- The teaching of early reading skills is good. This has improved rapidly over the last year.
- Homework is set regularly. This makes a good contribution to pupils' learning. Teachers also set homework which successfully helps parents get involved in their children's learning. Pupils particularly like 'thinking homework', which consists of open-ended tasks that require them to investigate and answer interesting questions.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils have excellent attitudes to their learning. They want to do well and make good progress. They are hungry to learn.
- Behaviour in lessons is usually outstanding and never less than good. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well, emphasising pupils' responsibilities to make sure their behaviour is good. This means that pupils have high expectations of their own behaviour and that of other pupils.
- Pupils are extremely polite, friendly and welcoming. Behaviour outside of lessons is excellent. They enjoy playing together. There is an atmosphere of harmony in the school.
- Pupils like coming to the academy and want to be there. As a result, attendance is slightly above average and improving. A number of successful approaches are in place to help individual pupils whose attendance is lower. For example, the home/school support worker provides targeted support for certain pupils and their families.
- There are no permanent exclusions and very few fixed-term exclusions. Leaders and teachers are committed to keeping pupils in the academy so that there are no interruptions to their learning.
- Pupils say that there is no bullying. They have a very good awareness of the different types of bullying. Racist incidents are extremely rare and are dealt with very quickly and effectively.
- Pupils feel very safe in the academy. They know how to keep themselves safe, including on the internet. Parents feel that their children are very well cared for.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher is relentless in her determination to make sure that all pupils achieve their best. She provides very strong leadership. She knows all of the pupils well and ensures that they get the help and support that they need. She rightly invests in training for other leaders, giving them opportunities to further develop their leadership. Consequently, for example, three leaders have become specialist leaders in education.
- All leaders play a central role in the academy's improvement. They lead teams of teachers effectively so that all teachers are accountable for improving pupils' achievement.
- Leaders know the strengths of the academy and what needs to improve further. Effective improvement plans are detailed and set demanding targets for improvement. Pupils' progress is tracked in detail and pupils are given effective support if they are at risk of falling behind. As a result, standards are rising.

- Leaders observe teaching very regularly. Teachers get detailed and accurate feedback about how to improve, focused specifically on increasing pupils' progress. The amount of outstanding teaching is increasing.
 - Leaders have focused recently on improving the teaching of early reading. Consequently, this is now good and pupils' abilities to match letters to the sounds they make have risen rapidly.
 - The process for checking on teachers' performance is regular and rigorous. Teachers are set challenging targets which they achieve because of the high quality, frequent training they receive. Leaders and teachers seek to constantly improve teaching. Teachers are only rewarded for good performance.
 - The curriculum is exciting and it ignites pupils' curiosity. Pupils are constantly required to develop their thinking in all that they do. The curriculum meets the needs and interests of all pupils. This means that all pupils have an equal opportunity to succeed and that they are very well prepared for the next stage in their education. Pupils' literacy skills are developed extremely well throughout the curriculum. There are a number of extra-curricular opportunities that a great many pupils enjoy taking part in.
 - Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is developed in a wide range of ways and this is a particular strength of the academy. For example, the daily act of collective worship requires pupils to reflect deeply, and they sing together tunefully and enthusiastically. The trips pupils go on and frequent visitors to the school extend pupils' experiences of the world around them. Pupils learn about different cultures and faiths in lessons. They show a strong sense of respect for each other and for people from different backgrounds. Pupils celebrate each other's achievements regularly.
 - Parents feel very well informed about their children's progress. They rightly think that teaching is good and that their children make good progress. Parents value what the academy does for their children.
 - The academy maintains good links with the local authority. Senior officers of the local authority monitor the performance of the academy. The adviser who works most closely with the academy knows it well and provides effective challenge and support. The local authority recently evaluated provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and gave useful advice about further improvements. The academy's leaders have made good use of the advice on human resources offered by the local authority. The headteacher rates the work of the educational psychologist very highly and values this support.
 - **The governance of the school:**

is very effective. Governors are highly ambitious for pupils, and regularly challenge leaders. The governing body receives detailed and useful information from the headteacher about how well the academy is doing, including the progress pupils make. This, together with nationally published information on achievement, means governors know the academy very well, including the strengths in teaching and what needs to improve further. They visit the academy regularly to judge the impact of improvements. Governors frequently access training and support from the local authority's governor services, which has helped them challenge the school even more effectively. The budget is managed and monitored well. Governors know how the pupil premium is spent, and the good impact that this has on pupils' achievement. They manage the performance of the headteacher very effectively, setting demanding targets for her to achieve. They also ensure that the process for checking teachers' performance is rigorous.
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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	138182
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	412617
Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	218
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr D Morrison
Headteacher	Mrs H Taylor
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01634 717115
Fax number	01634 295715
Email address	taylh017@medway.org.uk

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