

# The Premier Academy

Saffron Street, Bletchley, Milton Keynes, MK2 3AH

**Inspection dates** 3–4 July 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b> <b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The Chief Executive Officer and senior leadership team show great passion and determination to ensure their vision for the school is carried out.
- Pupils make good progress from their starting points to Year 5 and make rapid progress in Year 6.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and have strong positive relationships with the adults in school enabling them to have positive attitudes to learning.
- Teaching is good because of the clearly focused professional development and training given to staff.
- Staff manage pupils' behaviour well and effective systems are in place to support pupils who sometimes find behaving in an acceptable manner difficult.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff are enthusiastic and work seamlessly together to engage pupils in their learning. There is a positive and welcoming working atmosphere in school.
- Reading is a strength of the school. The school has addressed the previous low scores in the Year 1 phonics (linking letters and sounds) screening and this year more children will achieve the level required. There has also been an effective focus on improving spelling.
- Staff show flexibility and adaptability to meet pupils' needs. The school has established productive links with external agencies, such as health and social services, to work together to support pupils' social and emotional well-being very well.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- There is not enough outstanding teaching.
- Sometimes the pace of learning in lessons slows and pupils learn less at these times.
- Teachers do not always provide enough guidance in marking to show how pupils can improve their work.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 22 lessons of which four were joint observations with the Head of Education. In addition, there were a number of shorter visits to classrooms.
- The inspectors considered the 66 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), the schools' own survey of parents' and carers' views, emails from parents and carers and talked to several parents and carers by phone and on the playground.
- Inspectors listened to a range of pupils reading from across the school. They looked at work in pupils' books and on wall displays.
- Meetings were held with the Chief Executive Officer and other members of the school leadership team. The inspectors talked to groups of pupils and met with the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor.
- Inspectors looked at other evidence including the school's self-evaluation of its progress, the school's data for tracking the progress of pupils, the documentation relating to teachers' appraisals and the school's documentation relating to keeping children safe, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors also looked at the minutes of governing body meetings and the 50 responses to the staff survey.

## Inspection team

Susan Currie, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Alywne Jolly

Additional Inspector

Helen Owen

Additional Inspector

Stephen Fletcher

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The Premier Academy converted to become an academy school on 1 September 2010. When its predecessor school, Eaton Mill Primary, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be outstanding.
- The school was operating a 'transition' programme during the inspection. Each year group had moved up to its next class from May 2013. There were no children working in the Reception Year class as they had moved to 'Year 1'. Inspectors therefore looked at examples of pupils' work and at teachers' records. Year 6 were operating as 'Year 7' in school.
- This is a larger-than-average sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional funding provided by the government for children in local authority care, children from service families and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics in Year 6.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is higher than the national average.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from other minority ethnic backgrounds is above the national average, as is the number of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The school has established a private limited company, Eaton Mill Nursery and Out of School Day Care Limited, which shares the school site. It is inspected separately.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that a greater proportion is outstanding by:
  - enabling teachers to share the best practice across the school
  - improving the quality of marking so that it consistently helps pupils know how to improve their work
  - making sure lessons proceed at a brisk pace to ensure that pupils are fully engaged in learning throughout the lesson.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the Reception class with skills at below the levels expected for their age and well below expected levels in some aspects of language development, in particular writing and 'speaking, listening and attention'. They make strong progress through the Reception Year due to the daily phonics lessons, emphasis on writing, including correct letter formation, and individualised learning. However, children enter Year 1 with only a minority securely working at the level expected.
- Achievement at the end of Key Stage 1 is below average. Attainment dipped at Key Stage 1 in 2012 in writing and particularly in mathematics. However, pupils' attainment improved in reading as a result of the better teaching of phonics.
- Reading is now a strength of the school. Many pupils are fluent readers when they leave at the end of Year 6 because they have been taught the skills of decoding and understanding texts well.
- All groups of pupils make good, if variable, progress overall from Reception to Year 5. This includes disabled pupils and those with special educational needs as well as those from minority ethnic backgrounds including those who speak English as an additional language. Progress escalates in Year 6 with some outstanding progress evident. As a result, pupils leave school well prepared for their next stage of education. Many pupils reach Level 5 in both English and mathematics.
- Work in pupils' books shows that achievement and progress in other subjects, such as science and religious education, are not as strong as in mathematics and English.
- Pupils entitled to pupil premium funding make equivalent progress to their peers across the school. By the time they leave the school their attainment exceeds that of their peers in reading by a third of a year, matches their peers in mathematics and is just below in writing. There has been a particular focus on improving writing in Key Stage 2 for these pupils and progress rates are very strong. The school is using its pupil premium money effectively to narrow the gap. Equality of opportunity is well promoted.

### The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is predominately good and sometimes outstanding. Lessons are well planned and teachers ensure that all groups of pupils are fully included in all aspects of learning.
- Pupils' attitudes to school are very positive. They work well together and also with adults. Behaviour is well managed and pupils enjoy the positive comments and rewards given by teachers in lessons.
- In most lessons additional adults are well utilised to enable small-group work to be personalised to the needs of the pupils. This means that work can be carefully matched to the level needed and that adults can provide intervention should extra support be required.
- The best learning takes place when teachers plan lessons that really motivate pupils. This was particularly evident in a Year 4 class where pupils were watching a video about Boudicca to stimulate their writing and encourage them to use their senses. This stimulated pupils' interests and imaginations and, as a result, some high-quality writing was produced both by individual pupils and those working in small groups. In most observed lessons, teachers' effective questioning techniques encouraged pupils to express themselves well. Opportunities were always provided for pupils to talk together before answering questions and work was well matched to pupils' abilities and previous learning.
- In the very few observed lessons that required improvement, learning did not always move at a swift pace and, as a result, some pupils became restless and less engaged with their work. Very occasionally the work was too hard for the pupils and this affected their progress.
- Pupils know their individual learning targets and the oldest pupils are able to say the levels they

are working at and what they need to do to improve. However, the quality of marking of pupils' work is not consistent across the school. Only a few books showed pupils' responses to teachers' marking.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Behaviour is good and there are harmonious relationships throughout the school. Pupils enjoy school and relate well to each other. They are courteous and polite and typically behave well. There is occasionally restlessness in lessons that are less effective.
- Pupils with challenging behaviour are well managed and supported to ensure learning is not disrupted. There are positive rewards for good behaviour. The school is fully inclusive and encourages each pupil to do their best.
- Pupils say they feel safe. They know who to go to should they have a concern. A very small minority of parents and carers felt that there was bullying in school that was not fully dealt with. Discussions showed that pupils knew about the different types of bullying, for example name calling, prejudice-based bullying and cyberbullying, and how to keep safe on the internet. They felt all groups of pupils were treated fairly. They feel that bullying is dealt with well but very occasionally 'carries on'.
- The support from the inclusion and well-being leader is helping to support the personal, social and emotional needs of pupils and their families well. There are very strong established links between the school and the health and social services.
- Attendance levels are currently improving. The school works to follow up absence by calling home the first day a child is absent. School data shows that those who are excellent attenders make stronger progress.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The Chief Executive Officer provides a strong drive, high ambition, determination and clear creative vision for the school. This is shared by the enthusiastic leadership team which works well together as a cohesive unit to ensure this is carried forward. Leaders have rightly focused on maintaining Key Stage 2 outcomes for pupils and display the capacity to ensure the school improves in the future.
- Effective professional development linked to school improvement planning has helped teachers to improve their practice. Most teachers feel they are well supported through appraisal, support and training. However, a small minority of staff expressed less positive views of the school in the staff survey. The school uses external consultants to validate its own judgement on the quality of teaching and learning and joint observations during the inspection also validated these judgements.
- The school uses its funding for pupils entitled to the pupil premium effectively to support the specialist practitioners in school, provide training and an access fund to ensure these pupils are provided with the support they need to attain well.
- Most parents and carers hold positive views about the school. Those who talked to inspectors said that they were pleased with how pupils achieve and behave. Nearly all felt that there was good communication and engagement with the school and their concerns were listened to.
- The curriculum effectively focuses on improving reading, writing and mathematics and is enhanced through the good use of information and communication technology (ICT).
- The curriculum also supports pupils' personal, social, moral and cultural development very well. However, the school is aware that some of the spiritual aspects of the curriculum are in need of development. The curriculum is enhanced by trips and visits that pupils enjoy greatly and which help to prepare them well for the global society they live in. The school has also developed excellent links with outside agencies which it uses well to support pupils in need of extra help.

**■ The governance of the school:**

- Governors are supportive of the school and have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of provision. They have the confidence to ask the school challenging questions about its performance and about the quality of teaching and learning. They have a firm knowledge of how pupils' achievement compares with national figures. Governors ensure that safeguarding requirements are met and that the site is secure. They regularly undertake training regarding their role and are presently aware of the need to update their safer recruitment training. The governing body ensures that the school's budget is well managed and individual governors are not averse to questioning the school regarding funding allocations. Governors have carried out the appraisal of the Chief Executive Officer appropriately and understand the links between the pay and performance of staff well. They understand and have supported the school in tackling underperformance effectively. The governors have an understanding of how pupil premium funding is used to improve the progress of the pupils eligible for it.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	136275
<b>Local authority</b>	Milton Keynes
<b>Inspection number</b>	413243

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Academy converter
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	485
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Paul Ayres
<b>Chief Executive Officer</b>	Warren Harrison
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not inspected previously
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