

Timberley Academy

Bradley Road, Shard End, Birmingham, B34 7RL

Inspection dates 22–23 January 2014

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		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Children have a good start to their education during the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Pupils make good progress in Key Stages 1 and 2. Standards in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 are rising, and on course to be above average in this year's tests.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs have good support and do well. Pupils for whom the academy receives the pupil premium make good progress.
- Teaching is usually good. The work in lessons motivates pupils and helps them learn well.
- Pupils' work in their books shows that they make good progress in their learning.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. Their positive attitudes help them do well in their lessons.
- The school is good at keeping its pupils safe and secure.
- Attendance is improving, and most pupils arrive in good time for the start of the day.
- The Principal, fully supported by other leaders and governors, takes a strong lead in driving improvement. Leaders know the academy's strengths and the areas to develop.
- Pupils enjoy a wealth of experiences to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding, and a small amount requires improvement.
- The more-able pupils typically make good progress, but occasionally they are not challenged enough when the work given to them is too easy.
- Occasionally teachers do not explain work clearly enough, so not all pupils understand what they have to do.
- Pupils' handwriting is not always clear, making it harder for them to present their work well.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 27 parts of lessons taught by 15 teachers. Five lessons were observed jointly with senior leaders. In addition, inspectors made shorter visits to a number of lessons, the dining hall and the playground. They listened to pupils read and attended an assembly.
- Inspectors met two groups of pupils and talked to other pupils in lessons, in the playground and as they moved around the academy.
- Inspectors saw pupils' written work during lessons and, with academy leaders, looked in greater depth at a selection of their books.
- Meetings were held with the Principal, other leaders and staff, and with four members of the governing body. Inspectors considered the responses to the questionnaires completed by 56 members of staff.
- Inspectors spoke with an external consultant who works regularly with the academy. Inspectors also met a representative of the local authority services for pupils who have special educational needs and a speech and language therapist employed by the academy.
- The inspection team considered the views given in the 45 responses to the online survey (Parent View). They spoke informally to parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors looked closely at a number of documents, including the academy's checks on how well it is doing and its plans for improvement. They checked information about pupils' progress over time, and looked at records about the quality of teaching and minutes of governing body meetings. Inspectors scrutinised how the school keeps its pupils safe and looked at records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- During this inspection, inspectors asked additional questions designed to find out how prepared the academy is for the implementation of the new national curriculum from September 2014. This information will contribute to a Department for Education survey.

Inspection team

Elizabeth Cooper, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Anthony Green	Additional Inspector
Terence Payne	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Timberley Academy is a larger-than-average primary school. It provides for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage through a Nursery as well as Reception classes.
- Most pupils come from White British backgrounds.
- Timberley Primary School converted to become an academy school in May 2012. When its predecessor school of the same name was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good. It is not linked to a wider trust and uses some of the services of the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who join partway through their primary school education is higher than average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium (additional government funding that in this school applies to looked after children and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals) is well above the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported by school action or school action plus is above the national average. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- There is a specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs. This is a local authority funded unit for physically disabled pupils, with places for 13 pupils. The pupils are taught for most of the time in mainstream classes, supported by teachers or other adults.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - giving more-able pupils consistently demanding work
 - making sure all pupils understand what they have to do in their work
 - helping pupils to improve the quality of their handwriting and the presentation of their work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the Nursery and Reception classes with skills that are well below those typically expected for their age, especially in language and communication. They get off to a good start, particularly in developing their social and physical skills. Most pupils join Year 1 with a level of development which is still below that expected for their age, although this represents good progress due to good teaching in all areas.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2013 was broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. Most pupils, including the more-able pupils, made good progress from the end of Reception to the end of Year 2. The results for the Year 1 screening check in phonics (the sounds that letters make) were much lower than the national average in 2012. Good teaching of phonics has helped pupils to link letters and sounds more confidently, and results in 2013 were close to average. The academy makes sure that pupils catch up in phonics during Years 2 and 3.
- By the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6, the proportion attaining the expected Level 4 in reading, writing and mathematics is above average. Pupils did exceptionally well in mathematics, with seven more-able pupils reaching Level 6. Almost half the year group had joined late, and these pupils did as well as their classmates who had been at the academy from the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The academy's information about how well current pupils are doing shows that pupils in Year 6 are making good progress and on course to reach above-average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of this year.
- The academy makes sure that pupils do well throughout Key Stage 2. Its information for Year 4 shows that pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Gaps have narrowed between boys and girls in Year 3.
- Reading is well taught. Key Stage 1 pupils who read out loud to an inspector knew how to break down and build up more difficult words. Pupils enjoy reading and helping in the academy library.
- Pupils supported through the pupil premium do well. It has been used well to provide extra support to pupils in all years, as well as paying for academy trips and clubs. Pupils enjoy free access to online homework activities at home as well as in school. In 2013, the attainment gaps between Year 6 pupils eligible for the funding and their classmates reduced from nine months to seven in reading, and from nine months to six in mathematics. The gap widened slightly in writing but is set to reduce in 2014.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well. Pupils supported at school action and school action plus alike do particularly well in mathematics, and their progress in reading and writing is not far behind. Leaders are skilled at judging when pupils no longer need extra support and can cope on their own. Specialist speech and language support is used well to help pupils develop skills and confidence.
- The physically disabled pupils in the resource base make good progress. They do well because teachers and teaching assistants provide them with personalised work that challenges them, as well as giving them support when needed.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good in most classes, and, on occasions it is outstanding. The work in books shows that pupils across the school make good progress because they are well taught. Parents who completed the online survey (Parent View) or spoke to inspectors agreed that teaching is good.
- Lessons begin promptly and pupils are ready to learn from the start. Teachers have good subject knowledge which they are keen to share, sparking enthusiasm among pupils. In a Year 3 lesson, pupils quickly became interested in finding out how food cooks in a microwave. By the end of the lesson, they could use language accurately to describe the cooking process.
- Where teaching is at its most effective, pupils know their targets, understand what they are learning and have plenty of challenge. In a Year 4 lesson on the academy-wide topic of space travel, the teacher spurred pupils on to discuss Neil Armstrong's feelings when landing on the moon. As a result, pupils wrote in great detail and depth, making outstanding progress.
- Teachers and other adults often act as a team, helping pupils to develop their ideas. In a Year 1 lesson, pupils had prepared some questions they wanted to ask their teacher, in the role of Christopher Columbus. The teacher and her assistant took turns to check with pupils whether their questions would be sensible ones to ask. This helped pupils rethink what they wanted to find out from their visitor from the past.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teaching is consistently good or outstanding. In the Nursery class, children were eager to talk about the chalk pictures in the outside area. The teacher and other adults helped them to develop their speaking and listening skills extremely well.
- Physically disabled pupils in the resource base learn well, because staff make sure they take a full part in lessons. In a Year 1 physical education (PE) lesson where pupils worked in teams to throw and catch balls, disabled pupils were fully involved in the activities. One said PE was his favourite subject.
- At times, teachers do not give the more-able pupils work which is sufficiently difficult to extend their learning. When they have to do the same work as everyone else, pupils complete the tasks willingly enough, but do not show the same eagerness to learn as when they are fully challenged with work that stimulates them to think harder.
- Occasionally, pupils do not know what to do when they get stuck and they are not always able to find out information for themselves. As a result, a few pupils start to chat with their classmates instead of getting on with their work.
- The quality of handwriting in pupils' books is not consistently good. Pupils do not always write neatly, and this spoils the presentation of their work, although the content is usually good and teachers' marking is helpful in giving pupils pointers on how to improve their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are polite, welcoming and friendly. They wear their blue academy jumpers with pride. The academy is orderly because pupils move sensibly around the site and behave well. During the well-supervised break times, pupils mix sociably in the dining hall and playground. Pupils care for each other, so no-one is left out. They look after the site, with not a scrap of litter seen at any time. Displays created on the corridors by disabled pupils are treated with great respect. In the

assembly observed, pupils behaved well and were keen to applaud each pupil receiving an award.

- Pupils enjoy their lessons and are keen to be involved, often moving eagerly to start an activity after their teachers have explained the work. Most pupils' attitudes to learning are good. In a Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils were using dominoes to solve problems. All were highly absorbed in the activity and relished the challenge. Occasionally, pupils concentrate less well when they do not understand what they have to do, or when they do not find the work as interesting. Pupils understand the traffic-light system for managing behaviour, responding quickly where their name is at risk of being moved to the 'yellow circle'.
- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. When asked by inspectors what was best about the academy, pupils put safety at the top of their list. Parents and staff agree that pupils are safe. Bullying is rare, and pupils are confident that there is always a member of staff to turn to, if they need any help. Older and younger pupils know how to use the internet safely.
- Pupils like being consulted on how to improve the academy. They can see their wishes fulfilled in the gardens for each class and the new after-school basketball and hockey clubs. The eco-team are keen helpers on the academy farm, collecting eggs and looking after the animals.
- Taking care of pupils' well-being is a strength at Timberley. The academy supports pupils and their families well through regular contact with home. Parents appreciate the ease with which they can get in touch with academy leaders. Several parents told inspectors: 'I can't fault the school.'
- Attendance is rising, and is close to the national average. The attendance posters on classroom doors and the 'Grand National' attendance display stimulate pupils' competitive spirit. The popular breakfast club and the weekly 'Early Bird' class awards help to boost pupils' punctuality.

The leadership and management are good

- The Principal and staff are united in their belief that all pupils can succeed, no matter what barriers have to be overcome. All staff who completed the questionnaire said they knew what the academy is trying to achieve for its pupils. As one wrote: 'All members of Timberley staff always put the children first.' Good leadership has a considerable impact on pupils' learning and behaviour, with rising results and only rare instances of pupils not being allowed to come to school for a short period because of poor behaviour.
- Leadership and management of the resource base are good. Its leaders have given good training to staff in how to make their classrooms more user-friendly for disabled pupils. As a result, disabled pupils are making good progress because they are learning alongside their classmates.
- Leaders are accurate in their judgements about the strengths of the academy. The improvement plan has the right priorities to move the academy forward, which match the areas for improvement found during the inspection.
- Senior leaders and teachers in charge of areas of the academy's work check the quality of teaching regularly by looking at teachers' planning and pupils' books, as well as observing lessons. Teachers' targets link closely with the academy improvement plan. Teachers only receive extra pay when their class makes good progress because of their good teaching.

- Staff speak with enthusiasm of how training has improved their teaching, for example when teaching letters and sounds and planning interesting ways of teaching science in the new National Curriculum. Teachers work with other primary schools to agree marks for pupils' writing tests and to talk about how they teach writing at Timberley Academy.
- Leaders are thoroughly challenged by an external consultant who checks the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.
- Pupils learn the different subjects of the curriculum through varied and interesting topics, such as during the history week and the Inspire workshops in mathematics for pupils and parents. They have good opportunities to develop skills in speaking and writing and in using mathematics. In their mathematics lesson, Year 3 pupils confidently explained the difference between the words 'group' and 'grouping' in division equations when their teacher checked for understanding. In the Nursery, an adult taking the register used mime to explain to the class that 38 children were present.
- Pupils' education is enriched through the farm, clubs and visits. Academy pupils mixed well with pupils from a school in another community who were invited to the 'forest school'. The Timberley Academy Life Learners (TALLER) programme where Year 5 and 6 pupils apply for jobs, including Spanish cooking, first aid, and fashion from recycled materials, help pupils develop cultural and moral understanding and skills for the future. The brass tuition for all pupils in Years 3 and 4 and the inspiring watercolour paintings created by Year 5 pupils with the artist in residence contribute well to pupils' spiritual development. Pupils are proud to graduate from the Birmingham Children's University after attending activities including mathematics and sports clubs.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors make the most of training, to keep up to date. Joint training with another primary school has helped them understand their responsibilities as academy governors. Following training on RAISEonline performance data with an external consultant, governors do not hesitate to challenge leaders about how well Timberley is doing compared to similar schools nationally.
 - Through their visits to the school, when they go into lessons, talk to pupils and look at their work, governors know that the quality of teaching is good. One told inspectors: 'I would have liked my children to have gone to this school.' Governors use their knowledge of teaching and pupils' progress to agree whether teachers should be rewarded. When teachers take on more responsibilities, governors check that pupils will still be taught well. Governors have given their full support to senior leaders in dealing with any weaker teaching.
 - Governors are fully involved in strategic planning and setting priorities. As one said: 'We don't just accept what we are told.' They check the budget regularly, including the pupil premium, to make sure that money is well spent. Governors know that the pupil premium has already helped to raise attendance and to narrow gaps in reading. They have used the primary school sport funding for staff training in physical education and to pay for more after-school clubs. Take-up in sports clubs has risen because pupils are now offered more choice.
 - Governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet current national requirements, so that pupils are kept safe.

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	138104
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	440425

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	525
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Cheshire
Principal	Maggie Rose
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01214 642002
Fax number	01214 646911
Email address	enquiry@timberly.bham.sch.uk

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