

Langer Primary Academy

Langer Road, Felixstowe, Suffolk, IP11 2HL

Inspection dates

29–30 January 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement. There are notable gaps in their learning due to significant under-achievement in the past.
- Improved results in Year 6 in 2013 were not matched in other classes. Weak teaching and assessment restricted pupils' progress, especially in reading and writing.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) is ineffective. Too few pupils join Key Stage 1 able to read and write well.
- Pupils' use of grammar, punctuation and spelling is not regularly reinforced and common errors in their work are not always corrected.
- The quality of teaching requires improvement. Not all teachers regularly check that pupils are learning well, or that they are using teachers' feedback to improve their work.
- Pupils feel that minor bullying incidents are not always fully resolved to their satisfaction.
- Staff who teach classes during teachers' planning and preparation time make less of a contribution to raising pupils' achievement than class teachers.
- Procedures to monitor pupils' progress and manage teachers' performance are not firmly embedded.
- Leadership and management require improvement. Past changes in leadership and governance have hindered improvement in pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching.

The school has the following strengths

- A newly appointed headteacher is driving improvement. Evidence shows that progress is beginning to improve. Pupils say 'she has lifted the school; it is a much happier place to be'.
- Pupils mostly behave well and are kept safe.
- The appointment of new leaders, teachers and governors adds further capacity to improve.
- Support from the sponsor is aiding the academy's improvement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 13 lessons taught by six full-time teachers and five other staff employed to teach classes during teachers' planning and preparation time.
- They met with the headteacher, other staff, the chair of the governing body and a representative from the Academies Enterprise Trust.
- They looked at a range of other evidence including the academy's improvement plan, self-evaluation, attainment and progress data, headteacher's monitoring of lessons and external reviews of the academy's performance.
- They heard pupils in both key stages read; they met with two groups of pupils and talked with pupils on the playground at lunchtimes.
- They took account of 15 responses to questionnaires completed by staff and 15 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire.

Inspection team

John Mitcheson, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Josephine Lewis

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Langer Primary Academy is smaller than average with 155 pupils.
- Langer Primary Academy converted to become an academy school in May, 2012. When its predecessor school, Langer Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to require special measures.
- It is sponsored and supported by the Academies Enterprise Trust.
- A new headteacher joined the academy in April 2013. Five teachers left the school and five new appointments were made in September 2013.
- The majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of them that speak English as an additional language is lower than that found nationally.
- The percentage of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs, mostly speech, language and communication needs is above average, and the proportion supported by school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium (extra funding provided by the government for children eligible for free school meals) is higher than the national average.
- The academy meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good in all key stages by:
 - making regular checks in lessons of how well pupils are learning in all subjects
 - taking every opportunity to reinforce pupils' use of grammar, punctuation and spelling during lessons and by correcting errors when marking pupils' work
 - ensuring that pupils use teachers' comments about their work to improve it
 - ensuring that teaching assistants and staff employed to cover teachers' planning and preparation time contribute fully to raising pupils' achievement
 - use the most effective teachers to model best practice and monitor the impact this has on improving the overall quality of teaching.
- Raise achievement throughout the school by:
 - checking that the new resources and training for all staff in how to teach phonics systematically become firmly established throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1
 - embedding newly-introduced procedures to check on the progress of individual pupils so that gaps in their knowledge, skills and understanding are filled and they receive the support they need to achieve well.
- Improve pupils' behaviour and safety by:
 - ensuring that minor incidents of physical bullying and name-calling on the playground are fully resolved to the satisfaction of pupils.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - rigorously managing the performance of all full and part-time staff including teaching assistants, and take prompt action when teaching does not enable pupils to make good

progress

- routinely check the work of assistant headteachers and leaders of subjects to ensure that they carry out their leadership duties effectively and contribute fully to raising achievement
- providing new governors with regular training so they develop a thorough understanding of the academy and provide effective support and challenge for the headteacher
- an external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved
- an external review of the academy's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Overall achievement has fluctuated since this school opened as an academy. Pupils' current progress is rising in reading, writing and mathematics, but attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is below national averages for all groups of pupils, other than a few pupils that speak English as an additional language.
- Pupils join the Reception class with skills and aptitudes that are below those typical for their age. Results in the national phonics screening check over the past two years show that too few pupils gain a firm grasp of the basics in reading and writing. New procedures have been introduced to improve the teaching of phonics this year but are not firmly embedded.
- In 2013, all Year 6 pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and those eligible for the pupil premium, achieved national expectations in English and mathematics. A higher than average proportion of them attained higher Level 5 in mathematics. However, this masked some notable underachievement across all key stages. Weak teaching and ineffective monitoring of how well all pupils were progressing led to gaps in their learning, especially in reading and writing.
- Attainment is higher in mathematics than in reading and writing because phonics are not taught systematically from an early age to give all pupils a firm understanding of letters and sounds. Inspectors listened to pupils read. Younger pupils are hesitant readers because they are unsure of the strategies to 'sound out' difficult words. Older pupils read fluently and confidently, but not all of them read regularly at home. New resources to teach phonics, additional staff training and regular guided reading are in place to improve this but this is at an early stage of development.
- Last year's improved results in national tests in mathematics, reading and writing were not matched by results in pupils' use of grammar, punctuation and spelling, which were below the national average. In all classes, pupils' work contains basic spelling and grammatical errors but not all teachers point this out when marking their books.
- The newly-appointed headteacher has acted swiftly to address this. Every pupil has been assessed to gain an accurate overview of what they know, understand and can do. New monitoring and marking procedures have been introduced. Teachers are using assessment data to plan learning that fills the gaps in their knowledge and understanding, and to target additional support towards those who need it most. Older pupils recognise the added challenge, saying that they are now 'being pushed hard to get them ready for SATs'.
- Improved teaching in the Reception class is ensuring that pupils acquire the communication, language and literacy skills they need to enjoy learning and achieve well. Assessment data and observations of them at work and play confirm that currently pupils are making the progress expected of them.
- The pupil premium was used effectively last year to boost the achievement of those it is intended for, in Year 6. The standards reached by these pupils were the same as for other pupils and were above national averages. Funding also provided an additional member of staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage but this had little effect on ensuring they met the expected standards. These arrangements continue this year. They are being monitored much more closely to ensure that they have a significant impact on pupils' achievement.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Senior leaders view the quality of teaching as requiring improvement and inspectors agree. It varies too widely from class to class. Inspectors observed some high quality teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in upper Key Stage 2 but this is not shared throughout the academy to spread good practice more widely.
- Not all teachers make regular checks of how well pupils are learning. Pupils work steadily at their own pace, unaware of whether or not they are doing tasks correctly or that the quality of their presentation, handwriting, spelling and punctuation meets the expectations of teachers. At times, learning is superficial because pupils' work is not checked to ensure their learning is secure enough to move on to the next task.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and provide good advice on how to improve their work. However, teachers do not always make sure pupils act on this good advice to improve their work. Marking is not used well enough to tackle common weaknesses in the use of grammar, punctuation and pupils' spelling. Inspectors saw some good approaches to help pupils structure their writing using imperative verbs and time connectives, but their writing was riddled with basic errors that were not corrected.
- New teachers joining in 2013 are providing the academy with a new impetus to improving the quality of teaching. Regular staff training is suitably focused on raising teachers' expectations of pupils, ironing out inconsistencies in managing their behaviour and planning learning that stimulates and engages all pupils. Periodic reviews of pupils' progress between teachers and the headteacher are holding them to account for the progress made by their pupils.
- The teaching of full-time teachers, including two newly-qualified teachers is often good and at times, outstanding. They quickly capture pupils' interest by making learning enjoyable and interesting. Good questioning and work displayed on interactive whiteboards encourage pupils to contribute their ideas and 'have a go' even when work is challenging. They know their pupils well, enabling them to provide extra challenge for the most able and additional support for those who need it. Teachers are expert in demonstrating what they want pupils to do and modelling good work to show the standards they expect from them.
- These features are not always sustained when part-time staff take-over to enable teachers to do their preparation and planning. The quality of teaching in most other subjects is not as effective as it is in English and mathematics. These lessons are not planned well enough to capture pupils' interest and engagement. Opportunities to explore new vocabulary and reinforce basic literacy and numeracy skills are not always taken.
- Last year, the quality of support for disabled pupils and those that have special educational needs was not good enough to ensure that they made similar progress to others. This has improved. Pupils' needs are known and individual plans are in place to ensure that they get additional help with their learning, including one-to-one support. However, the support provided by teaching assistants varies. It is most effective when teachers plan for them to teach individuals or groups of pupils and assess their progress. They have little impact when used only in a supervisory role or spend too long sitting inactive, listening to the teacher.

The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Not all pupils display positive attitudes in lessons and some are not eager to learn. During the inspection, pupils were respectful, courteous and keen to share their views about the academy. They say that the headteacher is 'firm but fair'

and that 'behaviour is much better now'.

- Pupils wear their new uniforms with pride. No pupils have been excluded over the past year and records show few incidents of poor behaviour. Determined action to reduce high persistent absence and promote regular attendance is working. Currently attendance is broadly average. Rewards, including stickers, certificates and a cup for the class with the highest attendance are all highly valued by pupils.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement. Pupils feel that when minor incidents of name-calling and physical bullying occur in the playground, they are not always resolved to prevent it happening again. Safeguarding arrangements, including the single central record and child protection training for staff are kept up to date. Pupils are taught the importance of keeping safe using computers and mobile phones and know who to report to if they have concerns. Risk assessments to keep pupils safe in the academy and on off-site visits are in place.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The turbulence caused by regular staffing and leadership changes is being overcome. The new headteacher is providing coherent leadership and stability for the academy. Expectations of pupils and staff are much higher, data are becoming more secure and ambitious plans are in place to raise achievement. All staff who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire confirmed their overwhelming support for the headteacher.
- The headteacher 'meets and greets' pupils and their parents and carers on arrival each morning and this sets the tone for higher expectations of behaviour and punctuality. Over the past year, more parents and carers have engaged with staff and take a stronger interest in the academy's work.
- The evaluation by the headteacher of the academy's strengths and weaknesses is accurate. It recognises that it requires improvement. New senior leaders, several new teachers and a new governing body are now in place to enable this to happen. Senior leaders and subject leaders have clear roles and responsibilities but the headteacher and governors do not make regular checks of the quality and impact of their work on raising achievement.
- Enhanced monitoring shows that teaching is not consistently good and the standards achieved by pupils are not high enough. The most effective teaching has not been widely shared to spread good practice throughout the academy. Wholesale changes to the academy's previous leadership and governing body mean that there is little evidence to show how effectively teachers' performance has been linked to their salary scale in the past.
- Measures taken to monitor the performance of staff and improve the quality of teaching are not firmly embedded. New procedures with personal targets for improvement have been introduced to hold all teachers to account. Plans are under way to extend these procedures to include teaching assistants and part-time staff.
- The headteacher is using most of the new funding for physical education (PE) and sport to energise pupils and get them motivated and engaged. Free, after-school clubs in football, netball, basketball, dance and multi-sports provided by an external coaching company are attracting pupils' interest and increasing numbers of them are staying behind after school to participate in sport. Some of the funding is also being used to train midday supervisors to support playground activities led by pupils. Currently, there are too few opportunities for teachers to observe and work alongside these new coaches to learn how to improve their own

teaching of PE and sport.

- Weekly religious education lessons and assemblies provide opportunities for pupils to learn about and celebrate religious and cultural festivals. Regular visitors to the academy and visits to local places of interest enrich pupils' understanding of the local area and wider world. This makes an important contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.

- The governance of the school:
 - All governors are new to the academy this year, including the chair of governors. They are at an early stage of rebuilding the governing body and are working closely with the headteacher and the academy sponsor to strengthen governance and begin to play a key role in the academy's improvement. Regular consultancy brokered by the sponsor provides support and guidance to help the headteacher and governors achieve this. Currently they do not have sufficient grasp of how to use pupil performance data to monitor the academy's work or reward effective teachers. On-going training is in place to enable governors to gain a thorough understanding of their roles and responsibilities and carry out these duties that until recently have been done by the academy sponsor. This includes overseeing the performance of the headteacher. They know where most of the strengths and weaknesses lie in the quality of teaching, and know what the pupil premium is being used for, but are unaware of the impact it is having. They are also unaware of how new funding for PE and sport has been allocated, and the initial impact it is having.

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	138117
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	408820

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	155
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robert Hinsley
Headteacher	Elizabeth Bartholomew
Date of previous school inspection	29 January 2014
Telephone number	01394 283065
Fax number	01394 275015
Email address	admin@langerprimaryacademy.org

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