

Riverside Academy

Newbold Road, Newbold-on-Avon, Rugby, CV21 1EH

Inspection dates 13–14 May 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.

- Since the school reopened as an academy in November 2012, there has been a relentless and effective drive to eradicate a legacy of underperformance and poor teaching.
- Pupils achieve well. Most make good progress from starting points which are often low and they reach standards which are above average in reading and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Teaching is good because teachers question pupils well and plan tasks in English and mathematics that rapidly build on what the pupils are already able to do. Leaders regularly check teaching and take swift action to coach and train staff who need it.
- The many pupils who join the school after the Reception Year are well supported and settle quickly.
- Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage because staff set activities for them which effectively develop children's language and communication skills. The teaching of early writing skills is outstanding.
- Pupils' good attitude in lessons contributes well to their improved rates of progress. Pupils feel safe in school and their behaviour around school is good.
- Pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those learning English as an additional language make good progress because of the good-quality support they receive.
- The headteacher is strongly supported by leaders at all levels, a knowledgeable and challenging governing body and an excellent partnership with the Academy Trust.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Attainment in writing is not as high as in reading and mathematics. A few older pupils lack confidence with sentence construction, punctuation and spelling.
- Within the overall picture of good achievement, there are some variations between year groups, particularly in writing.
- The new approach of responding to teachers' marking, in order to move pupils' learning on quickly is not used consistently in all classes.
- Subject leaders, other than in English and mathematics, are not yet ensuring that learning builds on previous work and what the pupils are already able to do.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 17 lessons involving eight teachers. Two of the lessons were observed jointly with school leaders.
- The inspectors held discussions with school leaders, staff, governors and a representative of the Academy Trust.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including improvement plans, the systems for tracking pupils' progress, the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and samples of pupils' work. They heard groups of pupils reading and spoke with pupils about behaviour and safety arrangements at the school.
- Account was taken of the 13 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and the views expressed by those parents and carers who spoke with the inspectors at the start of the school day. The inspectors also considered 21 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Michael Bartleman, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Susan Tabberer

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This academy is an average-sized primary school.
- The academy joined REAch2 Academy Trust in November 2012. The academy has seen a large number of staff changes in the four terms it has been open, including the appointment of a new headteacher in January 2013.
- Previously the academy was known as Newbold-on-Avon Primary School. When the school was last inspected in June 2011 when it was judged to be satisfactory.
- Around two thirds of pupils come from a White British background. The remaining third come from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds, the largest of which are of East European heritage. A small minority of pupils are learning English as an additional language.
- One pupil in 12 is disabled or has special educational needs supported through school action. This is average. Around one pupil in 10 is supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, which is above average.
- About a third of all pupils are supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or who are in the care of the local authority). This is above average.
- The governing body manages a daily before-school club.
- A high proportion of pupils start at the school after the Early Years Foundation Stage, and they often join partway through the school year.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of one part-time Nursery class with morning and afternoon sessions and one full-time Reception class.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching in order to raise attainment, particularly in writing, and to close gaps between groups of pupils by ensuring that:
 - activities in lessons develop older pupils' spelling, punctuation, sentence construction and basic mathematical skills, so they are able to complete more challenging tasks successfully
 - teachers always use checks on pupils' skills and understanding in lessons to make sure that work is challenging enough for all pupils, particularly more-able pupils
 - pupils have opportunities to practise and apply their mathematical skills in other subjects
 - the new approach of responding to teachers' marking and comments is used consistently in all classes so that pupils make good or better progress.
- Develop the role of subject leaders in checking what is taught in subjects other than English and mathematics so that learning builds on previous work and what the pupils are already able to do.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The achievement of pupils has improved significantly in the short time the academy has been open. There is a legacy of low attainment among the older pupils but this is being addressed robustly. The proportion of pupils attaining at or above the levels expected for their ages is improving quickly due to the improvements in the quality of teaching.
- Children join the academy with skills that are much lower than those seen typically for their ages, particularly in communication and language. By the end of the Reception Year in 2013, over half of children reached a good level of development which is similar to the national average. This represents good achievement. Children are well prepared for learning in Year 1.
- Pupils learn the sounds that letters make (phonics) quickly and use this knowledge when reading unfamiliar words. In the national phonics screening check in 2013, a greater proportion of pupils than that seen nationally reached the expected level.
- In 2013 national tests, the proportion of Year 6 pupils attaining the expected Level 4 in reading and mathematics was above average, although few pupils achieved the higher Level 5. In writing, standards were below average.
- The work seen in pupils' books, in lessons and the school's own records of pupils' progress show that the vast majority of pupils, including those who are most able and those from minority ethnic groups, are making good progress. Gaps in attainment between groups of pupils are closing.
- The academy's records show that, over the last year, the quality of pupils' writing has improved but standards are still lower than in reading and mathematics. This is because a few pupils lack confidence with spelling, punctuation, and sentence construction. A few older pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise and apply their mathematical skills in other subjects so that gaps between their attainment and that of their classmates are not closing as rapidly as they might otherwise.
- Children who join the school after the Reception Year are quickly assessed and supported. Although most children are making similar progress to their classmates, many are working at levels below those expected for their age.
- Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language are identified early and make good progress because they receive well-targeted support. Pupils are helped with their work both in class and in small groups or on a one-to-one basis. This work is well-planned to boost their progress.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to provide additional teaching assistants and a wide range of support activities. In 2013, the attainment of Year 6 pupils supported by the pupil premium was the equivalent of six terms behind their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics. Currently the vast majority of these pupils are now making good progress. Although gaps still remain in some year groups, they are closing quickly. As a result these pupils are approximately one or two terms behind other pupils.

The quality of teaching is good

- Good-quality teaching is enabling most pupils to achieve well, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Inadequate teaching has been eliminated.
- Disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs, those known to be eligible for the pupil premium and those who have recently joined the school are supported effectively. Additional support for small groups of pupils managed by teaching assistants has helped to accelerate progress rapidly.
- Teachers plan tasks that rapidly build on previous work and what the pupils are already able to do. Teachers make sure that all pupils know what they should be learning by explaining 'steps to success' so that pupils can check how successful they have been. Teachers and teaching assistants question pupils effectively, securing good understanding.
- A few older pupils have gaps in their knowledge and lack confidence with spelling, punctuation and mental calculations because, previously, teaching was not good enough to ensure that basic skills were developed well enough.
- Writing, reading and mathematics are now taught effectively. Pupils make use of vibrant displays and examples of work on walls, which they refer to when working in class. Teachers encourage pupils to write in many different contexts. For example, in the Reception class, children used a story map and their good knowledge of phonics to write their own version of *The Gingerbread Man*. After watching a video clip, Year 6 pupils wrote the start of a story to engage a reader.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, all staff provide a stimulating and caring setting where children are confident learners and make good progress. Adults step in at appropriate points to help with and extend children's learning and to regularly assess and record their progress. Children make outstanding progress in writing and in their knowledge and application of phonics due to highly effective teaching in the reception class.
- Reading is promoted effectively by the school. Reading logs, shared texts, a well-resourced library and additional support for pupils who do not read regularly outside the academy develop pupils' reading skills and interest in books well. Standards in reading are above average in Year 6 and average at Year 2.
- Teachers' comments in marking clearly identify what pupils have done well and what they should do next to improve their work. Pupils are given time at the start of the school day to correct or improve their work, referred to in the academy as 'R and R' – read and respond. However, the practice is not yet applied consistently in all classes, and as a result, some pupils' learning is not moved on quickly enough.
- Occasionally, work does not demand enough of pupils at differing ability levels because teachers' checks in lessons have not correctly gauged pupils' understanding. Pupils' progress, particularly those who are most able, is not as rapid in these lessons when some of them are given work that is too easy or too hard.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the academy.
- Academy records show that the good behaviour seen during the inspection is typical of behaviour over time, which pupils and parents say has improved markedly since the formation of

the academy.

- The academy's approach to managing behaviour is having a positive impact and incidents of inappropriate behaviour have reduced as a result. Pupils respond well to the system of rewards and sanctions, and understand that good behaviour helps them learn well.
- The academy successfully promotes positive relationships and pupils are proud of their academy. They are polite, considerate and respectful to each other and adults. They demonstrate this in the way that pupils from a diverse range of backgrounds, cultures and beliefs work and play well together, and in the caring and considerate way in which they welcome new pupils to the academy.
- Pupils play an active role in ensuring a happy, well-organised academy. They feel that their views are listened to. Opportunities to be reading buddies, councillors and monitors have a positive impact on pupils' personal development.
- Behaviour and safety are not yet outstanding because a few pupils need adult support to ensure that their behaviour does not hamper their learning or that of others.
- The academy's work to keep pupils safe is good. All statutory arrangements for safeguarding are met. There are rigorous systems for the recruitment of new staff.
- Pupils say they feel safe in the academy. Almost all parents who gave their views agree that children feel safe and most agree that their children are happy, are well looked after and behave well.
- Pupils have a good awareness of all the different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying. They say that, although there are incidents of inappropriate behaviour or bullying in academy, these are quickly and fairly dealt with by staff.
- The academy works hard to promote regular attendance and punctuality. Attendance has risen and is currently in line with the national average.
- Pupils who attend the breakfast club get a good, healthy and sociable start to the day. The breakfast club has helped to improve the attendance and punctuality of some pupils.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides strong and effective leadership. With effective support from the Academy Trust, governors and other leaders, she has successfully raised expectations and ensured that achievement is rising rapidly.
- The accurate evaluation of the academy's strengths and weaknesses, combined with the record of improvement, show that leaders have a strong capacity to improve the academy further. Plans for improvement are realistic and focused on appropriate aspects. The headteacher has managed developments and staff changes well so there is a common sense of purpose and staff morale is high.
- Senior leaders check the quality of teaching rigorously by regularly observing lessons, examining pupils' work and providing constructive feedback. Staff also benefit from additional training, which has resulted in a marked improvement in teaching since the academy's formation.

- The systems used to check how well individual pupils are doing are very thorough. This enables leaders to evaluate how different groups and individuals are achieving. Those who need extra help are quickly identified and supported.
- Leaders manage the performance of staff well by setting challenging targets based on the progress of pupils. This means that teachers are held to account and any promotion is justified.
- Leadership of English, mathematics, special educational needs and the Early Years Foundation Stage is strong. Leaders are aware that a few older pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise and apply their mathematical skills in other subjects and have taken rigorous steps to address this. However, other subject leaders have not ensured that pupils do as well as they can in their subject or that learning builds on what pupils can already do.
- The curriculum fosters a love of learning and contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There is a significant focus on literacy and numeracy which are key priorities for the school. However, the potential to develop pupils' numeracy skills more extensively through work in other subjects is not strongly developed and, at times, the thematic approach does not allow the development of subject skills effectively. Extra-curricular provision is good.
- Sports funding is being used to extend staff's expertise in teaching sport, to increase opportunities for inter-school competition and to offer more after-school sports clubs. The headteacher has plans to closely monitor the impact of the funding.
- The Academy Trust has provided highly effective and regular support for the academy. Very good use is made of this expertise and training provided which has supported the improvements to teaching since the academy's opening, and ensured that leaders' view of the school's effectiveness is accurate.
- Partnerships with parents are good and have developed well since the academy's formation. The views shared with inspectors during the inspection and on Parent View are positive, although a few parents feel leaders do not respond quickly enough to their concerns.
- The academy successfully promotes equality of opportunity, fosters good relationships and tackles discrimination.
- Leadership and management are not outstanding because initiatives to improve pupils' achievements have not yet been translated into higher attainment across all year groups.

■ **The governance of the school:**

Governors and representatives from the Academy Trust visit the academy regularly and know it well, including its strengths and areas for development. This is because they have a good understanding of the information showing pupils' progress and use it to hold the headteacher to account for the quality of teaching and standards in the academy. They have effective procedures to manage the performance of the headteacher and make sure pay rises for staff are deserved. They know the actions taken by leaders to improve the quality of teaching. Governors undertake training to help allow them to successfully fulfil their roles, including for checking the impact of the academy's work on raising pupils' achievement. They carefully monitor the progress of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding and make sure that this extra resource is being spent wisely to raise achievement. They also have suitable procedures for monitoring the impact of the new sports funding on pupils' health, well-being and sporting achievement.

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	138914
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	440069

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	225
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Linda Thomas
Headteacher	Susan Dutton
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01788 544096
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