

# Tame Valley Academy

Chillinghome Road, Birmingham, West Midlands, B36 8QJ

**Inspection dates** 22–23 May 2014

<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.

- Effective leadership and governance have quickly established good teaching and learning, and good achievement.
- Outstanding provision in the Nursery and the Reception classes, give children an excellent start to their education.
- Good teaching, and some that is outstanding, help pupils make good progress overall and achieve broadly average standards.
- Teachers make accurate checks on how well each pupil is doing. They use this information well to provide pupils with work that helps them make good progress.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They have positive views about their school.
- Pupils enjoy school and are safe.
- The academy leaders regularly carry out detailed checks on the quality of teaching and learning. They use this information well to help teachers improve their teaching.
- Governors have a high level of involvement with the academy. They understand the needs of the community and challenge senior leaders effectively to improve the life chances of all pupils.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all teachers show they have a clear idea of what makes teaching good and outstanding.
- Marking of pupils' work is not consistent in helping them improve their work.
- Pupils' progress in writing is not as good as it is in reading and mathematics, particularly at Key Stage 1.
- There are limited opportunities for pupils to write at length in other subjects.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons. All lesson observations were jointly with the headteacher or the deputy headteacher.
- The inspectors heard pupils read and looked at the work in their books.
- Meetings were held with members of the local advisory board, senior leaders and some other staff with leadership responsibilities. Inspectors spoke to pupils both formally and informally during lesson observations and around the school.
- An inspector met a representative of the academy’s sponsor, Education Central Multi Academy Trust (ECMAT).
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation, including the school’s own judgements on its strengths and weaknesses, and the data it collects on pupils’ progress. Documents detailing the school’s arrangements for safeguarding were reviewed.
- Questionnaire responses from 19 members of staff were analysed.
- Inspectors took account of the 21 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View.
- This is the academy’s first inspection since it opened in December 2012.

## Inspection team

David Speakman, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Chris Wheatley

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Tame Valley Academy converted to become an academy school in 1 December 2012. When its predecessor school, Tame Valley Community School, was last inspected by Ofsted. It was judged to be satisfactory. The academy is sponsored by Education Central Multi Academy Trust (ECMAT), based in Wolverhampton University.
- The academy is an average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are White British. A minority comes from minority ethnic groups. When they start school, almost all pupils who speak English as an additional language are at the early stages of learning English.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is above average. In this school, this additional government funding is for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or in the care of the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by:
  - sharing examples of teaching that have led to rapid learning so all staff have a clear idea of what makes teaching good and outstanding
  - ensuring that marking of pupils' work is consistently helpful to them in improving their work.
- Raise standards in writing by:
  - making sure that pupils make the same good progress in writing as they do in reading and mathematics, particularly at Key Stage 1
  - extending the opportunities for pupils to write at length in different subjects.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- The school reports that an initial assessment of attainment at the time the academy opened showed that pupils had been underachieving. Attainment for pupils at all ages was below their age-related expectations. Now pupils make good progress and from low starting points, achieve average standards.
- When children start school, their levels of knowledge and understanding are low when compared to those typical for their age. Children make excellent progress in Nursery and Reception. In reading, writing and mathematics, outcomes at the end of the Reception Year exceed the national average.
- In Nursery and Reception classes there is a strong emphasis on children developing good communication skills, which are effective in enabling further good learning. Children stay on task for extended periods, both in teacher-led activities and those they choose for themselves. They talk a lot with adults, helping their confidence grow. They make a rapid start in learning to write in the Nursery, which is developed effectively in the Reception Year. This gives them a good grounding for developing their communication and literacy skills in the future.
- Achievement at Key Stage 1 is good in reading and mathematics, but is lower in writing. At the end of Key Stage 1, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is average but the number of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 in writing is less than in reading and mathematics.
- Progress in reading, writing and mathematics at Key Stage 2 is good. In 2013, attainment was average in reading, writing and mathematics and in grammar, punctuation and spelling. Scrutiny of pupils books confirm that pupils at all levels of attainment now make good progress and achieve well from their different starting points.
- The school's detailed analysis of pupils' progress shows pupils throughout Key Stage 2 are achieving well. The school sets high expectations for pupils' progress which most pupils meet, and some exceed. Progress in reading and mathematics is good, but in writing it is slower. Overall, progress is currently good.
- The school teaches reading well. Children are taught phonics (letters and the sounds they make) from the Nursery upwards. This gives them a secure start and pupils read confidently and fluently. The few pupils who did not reach the required level in the Year 1 phonics screening check have been given extra support, including one-to-one tuition or small group teaching in phonics. As a result, their reading is improving steadily.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are making good progress against their individual targets and in reading, writing and mathematics through effective and targeted support. Most are on track to meet their targets in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve well. With targeted support, those who are at the early stages of learning English soon acquire enough English to access the full curriculum. From this point they make good progress and their attainment compares well with that of other pupils.
- The most-able pupils make good progress. The proportions achieving the higher levels by the end of Key Stage 2 are above the national average in reading and mathematics and in grammar,

punctuation and spelling. In 2013, the number reaching the higher level in writing was not as high as in the other subjects, but it was still in line with the national average.

- Pupils supported by pupil premium funding make similar progress as other pupils and the gap is less than that nationally. By the end of Year 6 in 2013, qualifying pupils were about a term behind the others in reading and writing, and in mathematics, they were about half a term ahead.
- The academy uses its primary sports funding to commission a sports coach to teach physical education to all pupils and to take sports clubs after school. This also provides class teachers with good quality professional development. As a result, pupils demonstrate physical skills and ability better than expected for their age. During the inspection, Year 1 pupils, for example, were observed taking part in different types of activities with good coordination and evaluating the impact of exercise on their bodies.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage engages children's interest and enthusiasm. In Nursery, inspirational teaching helps children learn about letter sounds and read simple words confidently and with great enthusiasm. The teacher's high expectations could easily be seen through children writing, as a teacher-led group, about their trip to a local country park on the previous day. They were aiming to persuade the Year 1 teacher to take her pupils to the local park.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, adults are fully aware of how well children are doing and what they need to do next. Adults use pre-programmed 'tablets' which enable them to record children's achievements instantly. This frees them up to have high levels of interaction with children, carefully guiding their learning through asking appropriate questions.
- Progress is best when teaching responds to pupils' learning and teachers adjust the levels of challenge accordingly. In a Year 4 mathematics lesson on problem solving, for example, the teacher increased the level of challenge as the lesson progressed. Because work extended pupils' thinking and problem solving skills well, they made good progress. In a Year 3 writing lesson, the teacher explained any misunderstandings so pupils could continue to learn well.
- Teaching assistants support pupils' learning well. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, they work effectively with all groups of children. Throughout the academy they effectively support disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs so they make the same good progress as other pupils. Some are especially skilled in activities that support pupils' emotional well-being and behaviour. They have a significant impact in such areas.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly but marking is not consistent in its effectiveness in helping pupils improve. Often, teachers point out what pupils have done well and identify key points for improvement. However, this quality is not common to all marking.
- There are occasions when teachers benefit from the expertise of other staff. Specialist physical education teaching is having a significant impact on improving teachers' skills. However, there is still some untapped opportunity to share best practice, so that teachers have a clear idea of what makes teaching consistently good and outstanding.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils of all ages, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage, have positive attitudes and approach their learning with enthusiasm. They take on work with vigour and are self-motivated to improve. Older pupils are acutely aware of their responsibilities and do not take them lightly. For example, they made an excellent job of leading the end of half-term rewards assembly in front of a good number of parents.
- Pupils are proud of their school and speak highly of it. 'We are one big family in this school,' commented one pupil. They talk with pride about how they help each other. They gave an example of one pupil who could not speak any English when he joined the school, saying, 'He can now, we helped him.'
- Pupils speak well about behaviour. This view is backed up by parents. Pupils fully understand how rewards and sanctions help them behave well, saying that these are having a positive impact on behaviour. They say, 'behaviour has improved over time and everybody gets on.' They mentioned that house points help, but most of all, teachers, the deputy headteacher and the headteacher manage behaviour well.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. All parents responding to Parent View feel their children are safe in the academy. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe at school and are confident that any issues that worry them would be dealt with promptly and effectively. They show a good understanding of internet safety.
- Pupils are aware of the different forms bullying can take and know what to do if they ever need help. They say bullying 'occasionally happens, but it is soon sorted out by teachers.'
- Pupils do not always show initiative in their work and there are a few occasions when pupils do not get on with their work without the advice and support of an adult.

**The leadership and management are good**

- Checking the quality of teaching and learning is effectively managed by senior and subject leaders. Lesson observations, work scrutiny and drop-in observations take place regularly. Teachers are expected to account for the progress of their pupils at progress review meetings. As a result, teaching has improved since the academy opened and there is an increasing amount of good and outstanding teaching. Academy leaders set rigorous targets for the work of all adults in the school. These have been effective in improving teachers' work.
- Academy leaders introduced 'Assertive Mentoring' to involve pupils and their parents in planning each pupil's targets and next steps. Close scrutiny is kept on the progress of all pupils, which is regularly discussed with them and, on some occasions, with parents. Pupils are involved in deciding upon their targets and they have to justify why, if they fail to reach them. Pupils find this exceptionally helpful. This process helps establish good attitudes to learning and improve pupils' achievements.
- Leadership at all levels is strong. On opening the academy, some staff took on new leadership roles. The headteacher and governors have made sure that those taking over are appropriately skilled to step into their roles. New leadership in the Early Years Foundation Stage is very capable, resulting in rapid improvement in provision in the Nursery and the Reception Years.
- Leadership of special educational needs support is good. Small group and one-to-one support is

well organised and closely matched to the needs of pupils. Provision and outcomes are regularly checked to ensure effective quality and good pupil progress.

- The curriculum is carefully planned to meet the particular requirements of the pupils in the academy with an appropriate emphasis on developing literacy and mathematics skills from the very earliest age.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively. 'Forest School', where pupils work in adjacent wooded areas, is well developed and is used effectively to promote pupils' spiritual development. Responsibilities such as house captains and membership of the school council help pupils develop their social understanding well. Good social and moral development is shown through pupils' good behaviour and by the way pupils of different ages get on well. The school actively celebrates a range of cultures, encouraging a healthy respect amongst pupils from different backgrounds.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to improve the progress of individual qualifying pupils through funding them to attend school clubs, and purchasing learning resources for one-to-one or small group support. The school has made effective arrangements for spending the primary sports funding to improve and widen opportunities for pupils to take part in sports activities, develop their physical well-being through exercise and improve teachers' expertise.
- The link person from ECMAT, the academy's sponsor, knows the school and staff well. The sponsor is fully involved with the quality of provision and in how well the school is doing. The support provided is good and the sponsor has worked with the school closely, for example on developing a suitable curriculum. The sponsor has played an important part in establishing a good start for this academy.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Members of the advisory board systematically challenge senior leaders over the effectiveness of the academy. They are knowledgeable and able to ask searching questions, using robust measures to hold senior leaders to account. They are effective in dealing with important issues identified through regular monitoring. Some governor training and development has taken place and has had a positive impact on school improvement. However, there is still some capacity for governors from within the community to increase their level of challenge to school leaders.
  - Governors visit the academy regularly to decide for themselves how well it is doing. They have a good knowledge of how well teachers are doing their jobs through first-hand experiences and through discussions with senior staff. They are fully aware of how the achievement of pupils compares with other schools.
  - They challenge senior leaders on school improvement. They set clear targets in managing the performance of the headteacher and staff, making sure teachers' pay increases link to competence.
  - They make sure statutory requirements are met, including for safeguarding.

## 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>	139011
<b>Local authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	440124

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	230
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	John Sullivan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Peter Higgins
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 464 4497
<b>Fax number</b>	0121 464 3323
<b>Email address</b>	enquiry@tamevall.bham.sch.uk

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