

Preston Hedges Primary School

Wootton Hope Drive, Wootton Fields, Northampton, NN4 6BU

Inspection dates 26–27 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Outstanding leadership by the headteacher and senior leaders, a very effective governing body and all staff working together ensure that pupils receive an excellent education.
- Senior leaders set high expectations. Consequently, teaching has improved. Much of the teaching over time is outstanding. It is never less than good.
- Leaders and staff ensure that all pupils are making excellent progress. Their achievement is outstanding. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 6 continue to rise and are, currently, exceptionally high.
- Effective action has been taken to ensure pupils' reading skills in Key Stage 2 improve rapidly. However, not all pupils tackle books that are more demanding for the reader. Pupils tend to be too narrow in their choice of themes and do not explore the work of different authors.
- More-able readers do not always reflect sufficiently on the meaning of the text.
- Teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly and give pupils clear advice on how to improve it. They do not consistently check that all pupils have acted on that advice and improved their next pieces of work as directed.
- Pupils enjoy school. Their behaviour is exemplary. They have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Their attendance is well-above average.
- Governors have managed the conversion to an academy very well. They are actively taking the academy forward and set challenging targets for the headteacher.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons, of which two were observed jointly with the headteacher. In addition, the inspectors made a number of shorter visits to lessons and attended two assemblies. They heard some pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 read.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, staff, groups of pupils and an external consultant.
- Inspectors observed the academy's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including the data the academy has collected on pupils' attainment and progress, procedures for keeping pupils safe and the development plan.
- In making their judgements, inspectors took account of the 154 responses to the Parent View online questionnaire, discussions with parents and the 32 questionnaires returned by members of staff.

Inspection team

David Wynford-Jones, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Robert Bourdon-Pierre	Additional Inspector
Isobel Randall	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Preston Hedges Primary School converted to become an academy school in December 2012. When its predecessor school, of the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- The academy is much larger than the average primary school.
- Most of the pupils are of White British origin. The remainder come from a number of different minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is much lower than average. None are at the early stages of learning English.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well-below average. The proportion identified for additional support through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average. Most of these pupils have speech, language and communication needs.
- Very few pupils are supported through the pupil premium. This is additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, and those who are looked after.
- In 2013, the academy met the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The governing body manages the 'Breakfast and After School clubs' which operate during term time.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress in reading and raise standards in this skill further by:
 - encouraging pupils to choose more demanding reading material
 - helping the more-able pupils to explore the text for deeper meaning.
- Make certain that teachers' marking makes reference to the advice given in earlier work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Most children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge similar to those expected at their age. They settle quickly and form excellent relationships with their classmates and adults. By the end of the year, most are well prepared for Year 1 and are working above typical levels in all areas of learning.
- The children make excellent progress because the teachers know them well. They build on the children's ideas and interests. Support staff are used effectively to work with small groups and individuals. As a result, the children respond positively and work hard in lessons.
- In Years 1 to 6, pupils continue to make rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics. By the end of Year 2, standards are above average. Standards in Year 6 are rising and are, currently, exceptionally high in reading, writing and mathematics. This standard represents excellent progress.
- Senior leaders have taken swift and appropriate action to address the average outcomes in reading at the end of Year 6 in 2013. Standards have risen considerably. Year 6 pupils read confidently and can explain clearly their reasons for their choice of book. They read with expression and good pace, and seldom hesitate over words. However, some pupils have yet to adopt a more adventurous approach to their reading. They tend to be a little restricted in their choice of reading material and do not explore the richness of materials offered by a wide range of authors. More-able readers do not always interrogate the text for deeper meaning.
- Pupils in Year 2 read well and use their phonic knowledge (the sounds that letters make) confidently to tackle unfamiliar words. The proportion of pupils reaching the national standard in the 2013 Year 1 phonics check was above average. Provisional data indicate that nearly all the Year 1 pupils have reached last year's national standard.
- Pupils writing skills are developing rapidly. Pupils use language effectively to bring their work to life. Pupils have a good understanding of punctuation and how to construct complex sentences by using a range of connecting words. Older pupils frequently use similes, metaphors and alliteration to sustain the interest of the reader. Pupils strive to achieve their challenging targets. Expectations for what they can achieve are high and reflected in their work. For example, in Year 4, there are many pieces of writing which compare favourably with the level expected of Year 6 pupils.
- Pupils' work in mathematics is impressive. In Year 5 and Year 6, some pupils are already working well above the levels usual in primary schools, and covering work typically found in secondary schools. Pupils throughout the academy undertake calculations confidently. They can explain the process clearly and use mathematical terminology correctly. Pupils are confident when they apply their mathematical knowledge in other subjects.
- Pupils' work and the academy's assessment records show that most pupils in all year groups are currently making excellent progress. Effective support for pupils who speak English as an additional language, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs enables them to make similar progress to that of their classmates.
- There are too few pupils in the academy entitled to additional support from pupil premium funding to make a reliable comment on their attainment. Academy data confirm these pupils are making progress similar to that of their peers in reading, writing and mathematics.

- The primary school sports funding is used effectively. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how sporting activities contribute to healthy living and are eager to take part in the wide range of sporting competitions. Staff are confident in teaching a range of sports, which encourages greater pupil participation.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teaching is consistently good and much is outstanding, including the teaching of literacy and mathematics. Teachers make sure that pupils successfully build on their earlier learning. As a result, all groups of pupils are making rapid and sustained progress.
- Expectations are high for what pupils can achieve. Learning is well planned and work is challenging for all pupils. Teachers check carefully and regularly that pupils understand the work they are given and can make the progress intended. However, not all teachers make sure that pupils extend the breath of their reading and the more able question what they read for deeper meaning.
- Excellent leadership in the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures that staff use the outdoor and classroom areas imaginatively to help the children learn successfully in a safe and secure environment.
- Resources are used well. For example, information and communication technology was used effectively to enhance learning. In a Year 4 class, pupils were able to find information on the internet and to respond to a range of questions. They undertook the task confidently and worked with sustained concentration.
- Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well. Consequently, pupils share their ideas confidently with each other and with the adults. This practice promotes their social skills and their ability to communicate clearly with others. The emphasis placed by the academy on developing positive relationships between pupils and supporting each other is excellent provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The academy is committed to equality of opportunity. Staff ensure that all pupils' progress is checked carefully and where there is any danger of the pupils slipping behind they are given effective support from the class teacher and the very able teaching assistants.
- The marking of pupils' work in their English and mathematics books is good. Pupils are given clear guidance on what they have to do to improve their work. This helps them to make rapid progress and reach their challenging targets. However, teachers rarely comment on the developmental points they give to the pupils in subsequent marking. As a result, some pupils do not take the advice on board and improve their work as teachers intend.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils work with sustained concentration and have a very positive attitude towards learning. They want to do well and please their teachers. They clearly enjoy their work. Their attitudes contribute considerably to their rapid progress.
- Pupils' attendance is well-above average. They behave well at all times and are proud of their

school. They show respect for the environment. Displays and equipment are valued. There is no litter. Pupils move around the buildings sensibly. They interact well over lunch, and play amicably on the playground and the school field. They look after one another and are polite in the way they speak to each other and to adults.

- Incidents of inappropriate behaviour or racist incidents are very rare. Pupils say that should an incident occur, they are confident it will be dealt with fairly and swiftly by the senior leaders. They know about different types of bullying, for example name-calling, fighting, racial bullying, or religious intolerance.
- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Leaders make sure the building is secure and staff are rigorously checked for their suitability prior to appointment. Pupils' understanding of how to keep themselves safe is excellent. They know who to turn to if they are worried, and are confident they will be listened to. Staff ensure that pupils understand the dangers when using the internet and what to do if they are concerned. Pupils know about potential dangers when undertaking sporting activities and talking to strangers. Pupils enjoy attending the well-organised breakfast and after-school clubs.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher sets high expectations for the quality of education provided and pupils' behaviour and achievement. Senior staff and subject leaders are supporting the headteacher effectively in ensuring teaching is of a high standard and pupils make excellent progress. All staff undertake their roles well and contribute much to the development of the academy. They have a clear view of what they need to do to secure improvements and help the academy improve further.
- Senior leaders know the academy well. Based on a detailed self evaluation, they have correctly identified the academy's strengths and the key areas for development. These are set out in their improvement plan.
- Subject leaders are very effective managers of their areas of responsibility. They check on teaching and achievement in their subjects and contribute very well to the strong track record of improvement seen in the academy.
- The headteacher and staff have worked closely with an external consultant to improve outcomes for pupils. Teachers have responded well to initiatives to improve their teaching. The headteacher undertakes regular observations of teaching and evaluates its impact on pupils' learning. Teachers have attended courses to help them to improve their skills and have regular meetings with the headteacher to discuss their teaching and pupils' progress. Teachers are asked to explain if any pupil is not on track to reach their challenging targets. The information is shared with the governing body and used to decide if the teachers should receive a salary increase.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted exceptionally well through the extensive range of learning opportunities provided. Pupils are given many opportunities to enrich their education, for example through educational visits and celebrating festivals from different countries and religions. In all classes, there is a strong focus on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Whole-school themes and special events help draw the academy together and aid pupils' learning. Staff are working together effectively to incorporate the changes required by the revision of the National Curriculum.

- The academy has retained some links with the local authority. Support from the local authority has been bought in so as to help improve teaching and results for pupils. At the request of the local authority, the academy is helping other schools which are not performing as well.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors have overseen the transition to an academy very well. They are working closely with the headteacher and senior leaders to ensure that the academy moves forward and that pupils' progress accelerates. They have set the headteacher challenging targets and check on the academy's performance regularly. Governors attend courses and also arrange training sessions for themselves and the governors of neighbouring schools. Governors have a secure understanding of performance data and are able to compare the academy's results with national and local data. They know how targets are set for teachers to improve, and apply the process for rewarding good teaching based on pupils' achievement. Governors are keen to promote good relationships within the academy and the local community and will not accept discrimination of any sort. Members of the governing body check to make certain that procedures to keep pupils safe are followed and that academy meets the requirements for safeguarding.
- The academy's finances are monitored well. The governing body checks the academy's spending at least twice a term and makes sure that the primary sports funding and pupil premium allocation are spent as intended. They are satisfied that the pupil premium funding is being used effectively on additional staffing and resources to narrow any gaps between eligible pupils' achievement and that of the others. The sport funding is being used to employ specialist sports staff, train teachers, to extend the range of sporting activities and clubs and to enter various sporting competitions and is having the beneficial impact intended on pupils' physical fitness and well-being.

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	139039
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	440158

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	419
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Neal Prescott
Headteacher	Paul Watson
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01604 665860
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