

Strand Primary Academy

Strand Street, Grimsby, Lincolnshire, DN32 7BE

Inspection dates 24–25 June 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

- Learning and progress has not been good enough in two year groups. Achievement in writing is a weakness in certain year groups. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is low.
- Difficulties in recruiting good teachers and the use of temporary staff led to weak teaching and discontinuity in learning in Years 1 and 4.
- Tasks are not always matched closely enough to the range of pupils' needs. The purposes for writing are not exciting enough or wide-ranging. The teaching of reading does not make sufficient use of questioning and discussion. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to respond to marking.
- A few pupils do not always demonstrate positive attitudes to learning, especially where teaching is weaker. A few pupils have a high level of need and challenging behaviour, which are obstacles to learning.
- More strategies are required to meet the full range of specific needs of vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs.
- Senior and middle leaders are new to their roles. Their practice in coaching staff, implementing improvements, and checking impact requires development.

The school has the following strengths

- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Year 6 pupils are on track to make at least expected progress from their starting points at the end of Key Stage 1.
- Teaching, behaviour and attendance have improved.
- The Principal and Executive Principal, well supported by governors, have brought about significant improvements since the academy opened.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 12 part-lessons, including joint observations with the Executive Principal.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, middle leaders, lunchtime staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and two representatives of the academy trust.
- Inspectors met with pupils and talked informally with others in lessons and around the school. Inspectors also listened to pupils read.
- The amount of teaching seen in Year 6 was limited because of Year 6 end-of-year activities and a trip.
- Inspectors examined samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with a group of parents.
- A wide range of documents were scrutinised including the academy's improvement plan, evidence about the work of the governing body, data relating to pupils' attainment and progress, records of behaviour and attendance and monitoring and evaluation records about the quality of teaching.
- There were 23 responses to the staff questionnaire. There were too few responses to Ofsted's on-line questionnaire, Parent View, to be published.

Inspection team

Bernard Campbell, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Stephen Fisher

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school was formerly Strand Community School. It became an academy in October 2012 sponsored by the School Partnership Trust Academies.
- An interim Principal led the academy during the first term. The Executive Principal took up post in spring 2013 and currently supports the leadership for two days a week. An Associate Principal was appointed in spring 2013. She became Head of Academy in April 2013 and the Principal in February 2014.
- The majority of teachers were not on the staff of the predecessor school.
- This is a smaller than average primary school.
- The high proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is more than twice the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportions of pupils supported through school action, at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are well above average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below average.
- The Children's Centre on the same site is managed separately.
- The academy provides a breakfast club.
- In 2013, the academy met the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress.
- When the predecessor school was previously inspected in December 2011 it was judged to require special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education. After the school became an academy, one of Her Majesty's Inspectors carried out a monitoring visit to check its progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and the progress of pupils by:
 - overcoming the difficulties in recruitment that contribute to instability in staffing and discontinuity in teaching and learning
 - matching tasks more closely to the range of pupils' needs
 - extending opportunities for pupils to write for more varied and exciting purposes
 - improving the teaching of reading, including skills in questioning and discussing the meaning of texts
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to respond to marking.
- Improve attitudes to learning and the quality of behaviour by extending strategies to meet the specific needs of pupils with challenging behaviour or with special educational needs.
- Develop the practice of senior and middle leaders in coaching staff, implementing improvements and monitoring impact.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- The 2013 end of key stage results formally belong to the predecessor school.
- In 2013, end of Key Stage 2 attainment was low. In 2014, the academy expects attainment by a weaker Year 6 group to decline in reading, to improve in writing and to be similar in mathematics. Overall, the academy expects half the pupils to achieve Level 4 or above in all three subjects, compared to a third in 2013. Last year's spring assessments proved to be accurate. Current assessments show that the improved progress in reading and mathematics, seen in 2013, has been sustained. This is in line with national averages for progress from Key Stage 1.
- In 2013, progress in writing by Year 6 was weak. In 2014, as a result of improved teaching, it has improved significantly and is in line with progress in reading and mathematics.
- In the five terms since the academy opened, the progress of pupils at Key Stage 2 is in line with the amount of progress expected over this time. However, progress is uneven due to weaker teaching in Year 4. In the spring term, the Year 4 class was split to mitigate the effects of weaker teaching. Those that joined Year 5 made better progress but the others continued to receive weak teaching by temporary staff and made slow progress. This situation has begun to improve very recently with the permanent appointment of a new teacher.
- At Key Stage 1, in 2013, attainment improved and, for the first time in many years, attainment in reading and mathematics was not significantly below average. Although writing also improved it remained significantly below average. In 2014, results are similar in reading but lower in mathematics and writing.
- In Year 2 and Year 3, the proportions that reached nationally expected levels at the end of Year 2 was higher than the proportion that attained a good level of development at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. This represents at least expected progress from the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, current Year 2 pupils have made slow progress in writing.
- In Year 1, pupils have made expected progress in writing but not enough progress in reading and mathematics. Learning of Year 1 pupils has been limited by weak teaching and disruption in learning caused by changes in staffing. Year 1 lacks access to outdoor learning.
- In 2013, an exceptionally low proportion of Year 1 pupils met the required standard in their understanding of letters and sounds. In 2014, as a result of well-organised and effective teaching of letters and sounds, the proportion of Year 1 meeting the required standard is expected to more than double and to narrow the gap with the national average.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children enter with very low levels of development. Most attend the children's centre before they enter the academy. Children make good progress and are below average by the start of Year 1. In 2013, their skills were similar to those typical for their age in literacy and expressive arts and design but were behind in other areas, especially in their knowledge and understanding of the world, communication and language, and physical development. This represents a marked improvement from the predecessor school where the Early Years Foundation Stage was judged inadequate at the last inspection.
- In 2013, the most able in Year 6 made expected progress in reading and mathematics but not in writing. The most able are not always allowed to work more quickly because they wait for the whole-class presentation to finish.
- In 2013, pupils eligible for the pupil premium performed in line with similar groups nationally in reading and mathematics at Key Stages 1 and 2. In writing, their attainment was lower than for similar pupils nationally. Across the year groups, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals sometimes make more, and sometimes less, progress than others.
- The progress of disabled students and those with special educational needs is variable. Case studies provided good examples of pupils with special educational needs improving their behaviour and learning. Whole-school systems for planning provision and monitoring the impact on the learning of pupils with special educational needs are at an early stage of development.

The quality of teaching**requires improvement**

- Year 1 and Year 4 have been affected by weaker teaching and disruption to learning caused by difficulties in recruiting good teachers and temporary staffing.
- A new, permanent teacher has recently started in Year 4 and arrangements are in place to strengthen the quality and stability of teaching in Year 1.
- On occasion, tasks are not matched closely enough to the range of pupils' needs.
- Teachers and teaching assistants do not consistently ensure that talk is used effectively to plan and rehearse writing. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children who had been well motivated to write a story lost their focus and momentum by unnecessarily going to assembly. Pupils' written work provides limited evidence of imaginative and sustained writing for different purposes.
- The teaching of reading sometimes lacks questioning and discussion of character, narrative and the meaning of texts.
- Pupils' work is generally marked well by permanent staff but not by temporary staff. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to respond to marking by making improvements to their work.
- In better teaching, teachers' good relationships, well-structured sequence of tasks and methodical management of behaviour result in positive attitudes and purposeful learning.
- Well-designed practical activities and resources provide a strong framework which enables pupils to take incremental steps in constructing their writing and developing their vocabulary.
- Teachers make good links with previous learning and use information from assessment well to teach aspects pupils have not understood, especially in mathematics.
- The teaching of early reading skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 1 is good.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children engage well in practical and purposeful activity, which develops their ability to work and learn independently.

The behaviour and safety of pupils**requires improvement**

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. A few pupils do not always demonstrate positive attitudes to learning, especially where teaching is weaker.
- A few pupils have a high level of need and challenging behaviour which are obstacles to learning. The learning mentor supports pupils well and enables pupils who are withdrawn from the classroom to return to the class. She has good links with families and external agencies.
- Incidents are dealt with well. Incident records are not sufficiently formal or rigorous.
- A proposal by leaders to shorten lunchtime to reduce opportunities for misbehaviour is being reconsidered in the light of improved provision of lunchtime activities, the impact of training for lunchtime supervisors to manage behaviour more effectively, and responses from parents.
- Observation of lunchtime showed pupils engaged in purposeful play, well supported by lunchtime supervisors who supported group activities in different zones, such as skittles and netball, and engaged pupils in conversation.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have good attitudes to learning.
- Pupils and teaching and support staff agree that behaviour has improved since the school became an academy.
- Attendance has improved since the school became an academy. This is the result of more rigorous procedures and prompter action by staff to follow up absence. Attendance is in line with the national average.
- There are fewer instances of bullying. Pupils say that making pupils who bully stay in at lunchtime or lose some of their 'golden time' has worked effectively.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.

- Pupils say they feel safe in all parts of the school. Play areas are safe. Access to and from the site is controlled tightly. Pupils learn about the risks of cyber-bullying.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- The difficulty in recruiting good teachers to fill vacancies has limited the pace of improvement. Leaders have worked creatively to mitigate the effects of weaker or temporary teaching. However, unstable staffing has limited progress in Years 1 and 4. Although better, behaviour requires improvement.
- The Principal, well supported by the Executive Principal, has brought about significant improvements since the academy opened. The Early Years Foundation Stage now makes good provision for children's learning. Improved management and teaching of letters and sounds has improved outcomes. The weakness in writing at Key Stage 2 has been combatted by introducing common approaches to teaching writing, supported by effective professional development. Standard methods for teaching calculation in mathematics have been established and carefully checked to ensure consistency. Attendance has improved as the result of more rigorous systems for following up absence. Behaviour has improved as a result of introducing better rewards for good behaviour and making more effective provision for dealing with challenging behaviour.
- Leaders frequently review the pupil progress and identify actions teachers can take to improve teaching or provide additional help. A few action plans lack detail but are improving in the light of the better models provided by other staff. Review meetings take account of the findings from regular checks of pupils' work and lesson observations.
- Regular lesson observation and feedback have been used effectively to improve the performance of staff. Where this has not been successful action has been taken to move staff on. Teachers have received pay awards for meeting targets and awards have also been held back when targets have not been met.
- The Principal is new to headship and has benefited from the wisdom and experience of the Executive Principal who has led a school in similarly challenging circumstances. As the Principal has developed her role, her reliance on external support has reduced. Nevertheless, in a situation where all senior and middle leaders are relatively new to their roles, continuing support from the Executive Principal remains valuable.
- The curriculum has appropriate breadth and balance. It lacks inspiration and excitement. There are some, but limited, opportunities for pupils to participate in clubs and sports outside the school day. Primary school sport funding has been used to widen pupils' experiences of archery, rock climbing and outdoor pursuits.
- In the week of inspection, three quarters of Year 6 were leaving primary school to start secondary school in June. However, a quarter will remain at primary school and will not start secondary school until September. Different academy trusts have different timescales for transfer to secondary school. The inconsistency of these arrangements makes some Year 6 pupils feel left behind and that they have not been treated equally.
- Relationships with parents have improved and more attend assemblies and special events such as 'maths day'. Parents spoken to welcome the improvements in teaching and behaviour brought about by the current leadership.
- Safeguarding meets requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors on the Education Advisory Board have a good understanding of variations in the quality of teaching and achievement and understand the actions being taken to manage performance. They know about the spending and impact of pupil premium funding. They are supportive and challenging in checking progress and seeking solutions to staffing and resource issues.
 - Governors are willing to challenge the academy trust on issues. Regular meetings ensure that they are accountable to the trust.
 - The academy trust acted effectively to recruit and develop academy leaders and to appoint and

retain new staff. Actions to recruit teachers and maintain the stability of teaching have been less successful.

- Professional development and advice from the academy trust have improved the use of data, attendance and the teaching of writing. Links with other academy schools have been used effectively to check the accuracy of assessment.
- Through regular visits academy trust officers have increased their understanding of the particular challenges faced by this academy. Formal meetings to review progress have provided useful support and challenge. The checking of attainment and progress at Key Stage 1 is not as sharp as at Key Stage 2.
- The budget, which was in deficit, is now in balance. Systematic monitoring ensures that management systems run smoothly.

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	138866
Local authority	North East Lincolnshire
Inspection number	440128

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	203
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nigel Parish
Headteacher	Jenny Morrell
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01472 354605
Email address	info@strandPA.org.uk

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