

Headlands Primary School

Bushland Road, , Northampton, NN3 2NS

Inspection dates 2–3 July 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 becoming an academy two years ago, pupils have made increasingly good progress.
- Pupils' achievement is improving steadily because of consistently good teaching and the pupils' good attitudes to learning.
- The gap in attainment between pupils supported by additional government funding through the pupil premium and their classmates has narrowed considerably.
- The work of the special unit supports pupils attending it very well; they make good progress and are well-prepared for their future lives.
- The school's self-evaluation and improvement planning are sharply focused on pupils' learning and on accelerating their progress.
- Parents hold the school in high regard. They feel their children are happy and safe, well looked after, and make good progress.
- Teachers' consistent support for pupils' personal and academic development results in their good behaviour and thoughtful understanding of how to be and stay safe.
- Leadership at all levels is good, from the senior leadership team and subject leaders, to the governing body and the Academy Trust. This has led to improvements in teaching and achievement across the school.
- There is a very robust system for monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress; the school's systems are seen as examples of good practice across the Academy Trust.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all teachers consistently challenge the more-able pupils sufficiently, or ask them probing questions, in order to accelerate their progress.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills in subjects other than English.
- Teachers do not always insist on the very best standards of handwriting and presentation in pupils' work.
- A few teaching assistants do not yet have the full range of skills needed to help teachers develop pupils' work on letters and sounds, particularly those working in Key Stage 1.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning and teaching in 29 lessons; in total, 18 teachers and their teaching assistants were seen. Eight lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher and his three assistant headteachers. Registration times were also observed.
- Inspectors looked at examples of pupils' work, and heard a sample of pupils from Key Stages 1 and 2 reading.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils selected at random by the lead inspector. In addition, many informal opportunities were taken to talk with pupils.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of school documents, including improvement plans, policies and reports on the school's strengths and aspects for development, monitoring records and reports, safeguarding records and curriculum materials, information provided for families, and documents from the Academy Trust and the governing body. The school's data, including records of pupils' progress, were reviewed.
- Discussions and conversations were held with the headteacher and assistant headteachers, one of whom is the special educational needs coordinator and inclusion manager and manages the designated special provision.
- In addition, discussions were held with subject leaders, class teachers, administrative staff, and members of the governing body. A meeting was also held with the four headteachers from the partner schools who act as representatives of the Northampton Primary Academy Trust (NPAT).
- The 47 responses to the online questionnaire, *Parent View*, were taken into consideration. Inspectors also took account of the 38 responses to an inspection questionnaire for school staff.

Inspection team

Michael Miller, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Nicola Irwin-Morris	Additional Inspector
Enid Korn	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The school converted to become an academy in November 2012. Its predecessor school, also known as Headlands Primary School, was last inspected in January 2010 when it was judged to be satisfactory.
- As an academy, it is part of the Northampton Primary Academy Trust (NPAT). The headteacher is on the Board of the Academy Trust.
- The Trust is a partnership between five local schools including: Abington Vale, Headlands, Lings and Ecton Brook primary schools, with a formal partnership agreement with Weston Favell Primary School.
- The large majority of the pupils at Headlands Primary School come from White British backgrounds; most speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- A few pupils come from other heritage backgrounds, mainly from Asian or Asian British heritage, Black or Black British backgrounds, and a few pupils come from Mixed heritage backgrounds; a very few originate from other ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who join the school in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and continue their education at the school from the Reception year until they leave at the end of Year 6, is average. Typically, only between a third and a half of the pupils starting in the Nursery transfer to the Reception year.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding for particular groups, including, in this school, those known to be eligible for free school meals) is average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is above average. Such pupils have moderate learning difficulty, speech, language and communication needs, behaviour, emotional and social difficulties, and specific learning difficulties.
- The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average. The school offers specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs (DSP) for up to 28 children aged 3 to 11 with severe and/or significant learning difficulties and communication difficulties including autism. All pupils attending the DSP unit have a statement of special educational needs.
- The school manages the DSP unit on behalf of the local authority and takes children from Northampton itself and from across the south-west of Northamptonshire. There are currently 27 pupils attending the unit.
- The school works in partnership with the Headlands Children's Centre, which is situated on the same site. Childcare provision for the school's pupils is also available on the site through the privately run 'Acorn Child Care UK'. Both of these facilities are inspected separately by Ofsted.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of pupils by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching further, and enhance pupils' achievement, by:
 - providing additional challenge for the school's most-able pupils by setting them increasingly testing tasks more consistently in lessons in order to accelerate their progress
 - extending the opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their writing skills across a wider range of subjects
 - encouraging pupils to maintain the best standards of handwriting and presentation in all their work
 - ensuring a more consistent approach to the use of questioning by teachers in lessons, not only to check pupils' understanding but to provide that extra element of challenge to their thinking
 - implementing the school's plan to provide additional training for teaching assistants to help maximise the support they can provide for pupils in the teaching of letters and sounds (phonics), particularly in Key Stage 1.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils joining the school in either the Nursery or Reception years do so with levels of skills and development below, and sometimes well below, those typically seen at their age, across many of the expected areas of development. This includes their ability to communicate and their literacy and numeracy skills. Throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage, good attention is paid to the children's personal, social and emotional development so that they are increasingly ready for learning when they transfer to Key Stage 1.
- The school's nationally published results, which show below average attainment, do not reflect the progress which individual pupils in the main part of the school and in the DSP unit make by the end of Years 2 and 6, or the standards being attained by most pupils in the main school. Provision for pupils in the DSP unit is good, and this enables them to cope with the challenges they face and make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, given their individual special educational and learning needs. The school publishes an analysis of the school's results on its website which more accurately reflect the successes achieved in both the DSP and the main school.
- School data and the inspection evidence show that, in the main part of the school, pupils' attainment overall is currently broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils who are not being supported for learning difficulties are now attaining at levels around half-a-term ahead of their peers nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The teaching of reading has improved this year, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and in Key Stage 1. This has proved a weakness in the past, but most pupils are now reaching expected standards in reading by the end of Year 2. Pupils use their learning about letters and the sound they make effectively when tackling new vocabulary. The school has a welcoming library, run well by a permanent librarian. This not only helps significantly with the teaching and learning of reading but also helps develop in the pupils throughout the school a respect for, and love of, books.
- Most pupils have made more progress between Years 2 and 6 than is typical nationally and their achievement is now good. Pupils currently in the school are now making between a term and a half to two terms more progress than expected by the end of Year 6. Pupils from minority heritage groups, including those who speak English as an additional language, are making similarly good progress.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs in the main school are also making good progress overall, because the pupils' specific needs and starting points are properly identified and they receive appropriate support. Good working relationships between such pupils and the adults supporting them also aids well their progress and achievement.
- Those pupils currently supported through the pupil premium have made good progress this academic year, but slightly faster in reading and mathematics than in writing. In 2013 the gap between the standards they reached and those achieved by classmates in reading, writing and mathematics was some four terms. School data shows this gap has now closed significantly to around a term. This represents a considerable improvement over the past year.
- The school recognises that pupils' attainment in writing, although broadly average overall, is weaker than in reading and mathematics. The school's improvement planning is focused well on this, and on training for staff to help raise further pupils' standards in writing. However, although this is an increasing focus for the coming academic year, there are currently too few

opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills across a wider range of subjects other than in English.

- Nevertheless, much has been done to improve pupils' writing, and particularly the more creative aspects, for example through linking writing with drama. In a Year 4 English lesson, pupils showed just what they are capable of in developing descriptive vocabulary when re-telling and acting out the story of an illegal killing of an African elephant. This played an important contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is mainly good, both in the main school and in the DSP unit, and sometimes outstanding; this helps lay the foundations for secure learning right from the Early Years Foundation Stage. Most teachers are very clear about what they want pupils to learn. Teachers and their assistants develop positive working relationships with the pupils; this helps to underpin effectively the pupils' good attitudes to learning.
- Most teachers have become good at using the extensive data on pupils' progress to plan their lessons and are very clear about what they want pupils to learn. Teachers regularly ask themselves 'What does this tell us?' about their pupils' performance. This helps teachers to design lessons that pupils find interesting and supportive. Work overall is matched well to pupils' abilities.
- The school's systems for setting targets for its pupils are very effective. The consistent use of 'Target Books' for each individual pupil ensures they understand what they need to do to improve. This plays a large part in encouraging pupils' positive attitudes to learning because they understand what they are aiming to achieve, and why teachers set them their various challenges.
- In most classes, teachers pay careful attention to ensuring work suitably challenges the more-able pupils in their classes. Where this is the case, the more-able pupils are keen to learn; consequently, they make improved progress year-on-year and are currently achieving well. However, not all teachers are planning work that extends more-able pupils sufficiently all the time in order to accelerate their progress even further. Most pupils show that they are keen to explore problems which extend their skills.
- Teachers generally show that they are skilled at asking questions of their pupils, not only to check on pupils' understanding, but also to encourage them to express and explain their thinking and ideas. This approach enables pupils to take an active part in lessons, and also keeps pupils on their toes as they never know who is going to be asked the next question. However, a few teachers do not yet use questioning consistently enough in all lessons to maintain that extra element of challenge.
- Most teaching assistants work effectively in their support for the pupils in their care and generally receive helpful direction from the teaching staff. However, not all yet possess the skills necessary to support teachers fully in the teaching of letters and sounds (phonics), particularly in Key Stage 1.
- Teachers' management of pupils' behaviour is consistently good across the school, and the expectations that staff and pupils have of each other are usually high. In discussions with pupils a number commented on the fact that their teachers were 'strict but fair'. Pupils know where they stand; this helps well to build pupils' good attitudes to learning. However, not all teachers

insist that pupils always present their work as neatly or carefully as they should.

- There is some outstanding practice within the school. For example, high quality teaching enabled some outstanding learning in a Year 1 mathematics lesson on exploring ways of giving directions. Pupils made excellent progress, and worked very effectively in pairs, when using indoor and outdoor facilities to give map directions to a 'pirate' and use programmable toys to direct their movement. Great fun was had by all, and pupils showed high levels of concentration on their various tasks.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils want to come to school, and attendance rates this academic year have improved significantly from below average to a point where they are currently above average. Pupils respond well to the school's core principals 'D.A.R.E.' (Determination, Achievement, Respect, Enjoyment).
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good, but not yet outstanding. This is because not all yet maintain the very best standards of presentation in all their work, or appreciate fully the need for consistently high quality handwriting in all subjects.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Older pupils know about the implications of bullying; younger pupils understand the importance of not being 'nasty' and being kind to each other. Pupils know that their teachers will act quickly to put things right if pupils do not get on for any reason.
- Pupils appreciate that there are a few who may be 'naughty' at times, or find it more difficult than most to stick to the rules consistently well. However, because behaviour is managed well across the school, pupils are helped to control themselves effectively and not disrupt learning.
- The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are encouraged and enabled to reflect not only on their own learning but also on other's achievements. The ways pupils celebrate and appreciate their classmates' successes reflects well their sense of the school as a community and the strength of their social development.
- Pupils in the DSP unit are given good opportunity to work in mainstream classes, when appropriate, during the course of each week. Most also join their peers for play during breaks and at lunchtime. This not only reflects the school's strong commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity, but also provides good opportunity for all pupils to understand that the needs and approaches of others may be very different from their own, and develop mutual understanding.
- Inspectors' discussions with parents and pupils, and the results of the 'Parent View' on-line questionnaire, confirm that pupils are happy at the school and feel safe and well cared for. Discussions with pupils show that they are clearly used to discussing things with adults, and being listened to when explaining their thoughts and ideas. One Year 2 pupil described most of the adults at the school as being 'superstars' in this respect.

The leadership and management are good

- Leadership is good at all levels, including that of the DSP Unit. Leaders are committed to raising the achievement of all pupils. They monitor teaching carefully to ensure it is uniformly at least good and provide support where necessary and ensure the school is a caring and supportive place where all pupils can thrive. Leadership of the special provision is particularly good and ensures pupils here have the same opportunities to enjoy school and achieve academically as

other pupils in the main school.

- The school focuses effectively on reviewing the quality of pupils' learning, and the teaching which underpins this. Effective processes are in place to ensure further improvement. Leaders, at all levels, have ensured that the school is well-placed to consolidate its pupils' good achievement, and help them to move to become outstanding. Shared lesson observations show that all in the senior leadership team evaluate the quality of teaching accurately.
- One of the school's strengths is the way leaders collect and evaluate data on pupils' performance. The tracking of pupils' progress is effective, and enables timely interventions to avert any potential underachievement. Final data to enable the school to assess the attainment and progress of its pupils during the current academic year was due in on the first day of the inspection. It is a testament to the school's effectiveness that the school was able to provide inspectors, on the second inspection day, with an up-to-date analysis of pupils' performance.
- The steady and secure progress pupils make, in both their personal and academic development, reflects the positive teamwork amongst the staff. All staff who returned their questionnaire indicated that they are proud to be on the staff of the school and appreciate what it is aiming to achieve. This is echoed by parents, the very large majority of whom recommend the school.
- Pupils enjoy what is being taught at the school. This is because both senior and subject leaders ensure that learning is planned well, both in the main school and in the DSP Unit. This plays an important part in ensuring that learning meets the needs of each individual pupil, and particularly where pupils are identified as requiring additional support to boost their learning.
- Good use is being made of the primary school sports funding. This is enhancing the opportunities for pupils to participate and do well in sports and physical education; Headlands is totally committed to developing the sporting provision it offers its pupils. The school uses qualified sports staff effectively to help lead sports development, and this has also enabled the school to increase its participation in local sports activities and competitions.
- As part of an academy trust, the school chooses to use the Trust's advisory services rather than those of the local authority. These provide the school with an excellent level of support. The Trust also makes good use of the local authority's legal services, and provides some advisory and training services on behalf of the local authority, particularly in relation to the improvement of learning and teaching in other local schools.
- There is close liaison between the headteachers of the five Trust schools; this enables excellent, mutual support. Staff from all the Trust schools are involved in regular monitoring visits, and participate in the sharing of good practice. The Trust is particularly effective in enabling the independent moderation of the school's assessments; portfolios of pupils' work confirm the accuracy and value of this moderation across all key stages.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body and its partners through the Academy Trust contribute substantially to the school's effectiveness. Governors work very closely with staff to secure continued improvement. Their monitoring and their firm grasp of the school's data ensure that they know and understand how the school is performing in relation to others nationally. The governing body also ensures that teachers' salaries are linked to pupils' progress, teaching quality and the national *Teachers' Standards*.
 - The governing body places a clear priority on ensuring the school's legal requirements are met in full, including those for safeguarding. Governors are well informed about their roles and responsibilities. They monitor closely the work of the school, including the DSP unit, and check that pupil premium funding has a good impact on the achievement of eligible pupils. Such funding is being used effectively, particularly in ensuring additional, specialist staffing and resources to provide extra tuition and to ensure that no pupils are disadvantaged.

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	138954
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	411230

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	445
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lesley Easton
Headteacher	Andrew Lakatos
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected.
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