

Minerva Primary Academy

The Greenway, Hillfields Park, Bristol, BS16 4HA

Inspection dates

8–9 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.

- Pupils' achievement has improved since becoming an academy. The commitment to improving standards in reading and writing has resulted in pupils making good progress from their very low starting points.
- Teaching is good. There is a consistency of approach within lessons of checking what pupils know, can do and understand, and reshaping the activities to ensure all pupils makes progress.
- Groups of pupils, including those eligible for the pupil premium and those who are disabled and have special educational needs, achieve as well as, and often better than, other pupils.
- The school celebrates individual differences. Pupils are taught to respect all cultures and religions. These strong values can be seen in the way pupils respect staff and each other. Pupils feel safe and enjoy school.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is a strength of the school. Provision is good.
- Determined and resolute leadership by the headteacher has ensured that all adults are clear about expectations and how they contribute to improvement. She has created an environment where good teaching can flourish.
- Leaders track the progress of every pupil meticulously. A comprehensive range of support is put in place for pupils to help to tackle any underachievement.
- The academy council knows the school's strengths and weaknesses well and provides appropriate challenge to ensure an unrelenting drive for improvement.
- The wider governance from the Cabot Learning Federation has created a culture which promotes excellence. It provides training and development for all staff which are appreciated by all. Rigorous development of staff skills is put into place to achieve the federation's ambitious vision for the future.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching. Pupils are not always given opportunities to respond to teachers' marking and feedback. As a result, not all pupils make sufficiently accelerated progress.
- There are inconsistencies in the teaching of mathematics which result in lower attainment than in reading and writing.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 12 lessons and conducted additional short visits to all classes. Three joint observations were undertaken with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with the Chief Executive Officer, headteacher, senior leaders, teachers with subject and pastoral responsibilities, members of the governing body, and groups of pupils.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read in Years 1, 2 and 6.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including information on pupils' achievement, the school's self-evaluation and development plan, minutes of meetings and records relating to the monitoring of teaching, behaviour and safety.
- Inspectors took account of 20 responses to the online Parent View survey and 27 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Tracy Hannon, Lead inspector	Seconded Inspector
Dale Burr	Seconded Inspector
Colin Lee	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- In September 2012, Minerva Primary Academy became a sponsor-led academy, becoming part of the Cabot Learning Federation.
- Numbers on roll are increasing and pupil mobility is high.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is well above the national average. This is extra government funding given to the school for children known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well above average.
- The number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school manages a breakfast club and after-school club.
- The school meets the government's floor standards.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Draw on the existing strengths within the school and the broader academy partnership to increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - ensuring that all teachers follow the school's marking policy and give regular opportunities for pupils to respond to teachers' marking and feedback
 - ensuring a regular and systematic approach to the teaching of mental mathematics and problem solving.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Achievement is good because pupils have a positive attitude towards their learning. They enjoy coming to school and learning, and most respond enthusiastically in lessons. For example, in a Year 4 mathematics lesson, pupils were wide eyed and eager to carry out their 'mission impossible' mathematics activity.
- Children join the Nursery class with skills and levels of knowledge well below the typical level of development, particularly in personal, social and emotional development. As a result of good teaching, children develop their academic and social skills quickly.
- Not all pupils who attend the Nursery enter the Reception class. Those who have received the good teaching in the Nursery enter with skills below, rather than well below, the typical level of development. Constant emphasis on social and moral development permeates all aspects of Reception, so that by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage pupils have made good progress.
- Phonics (letters and the sounds they make) are taught well and systematically. As a result, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in the phonic screening check in Year 1 has risen since 2013 and is now broadly in line with the national average.
- In 2013, pupils in Key Stage 1 did not attain as well as those nationally, particularly in reading. Leaders have made a concerted effort to ensure that this is not repeated. All pupils in Key Stage 1 have made at least good progress in reading this year and the proportions of pupils achieving expected levels have improved to broadly in line with their national counterparts.
- Similarly, at Key Stage 2 in 2013, pupils' attainment was not good, particularly in reading and grammar. Improvements to the quality of teaching have resulted in at least good progress for all pupils in reading and writing. The proportions achieving expected levels in reading and writing are set to be above national figures.
- Standards and progress in writing remain good. Good quality teaching has ensured that pupils continue to make good progress in writing and standards are rising. Progress in mathematics is not as good as in reading and writing. This is because teaching is not consistently strong in this area.
- The school uses the pupil premium extremely well to support eligible pupils through a range of activities and high-quality support from highly trained staff. As a result, these pupils make at least good, and some, outstanding, progress. For example, in 2013, they were around four terms behind other pupils in reading. In 2014, this gap has been eradicated and many of these pupils are making better progress than their peers.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds all make at least good progress. The school employs a meticulous system supporting pupils' individual needs. Very accurate records are kept which closely match pupils' learning needs. Personalised, high-quality support from well-trained staff ensures equality of opportunity for all.
- The most able pupils are now benefiting from good teaching, particularly in writing. As a result, they are making good progress.
- Pupils enjoy reading and apply their phonic knowledge well to read unfamiliar words. They are very clear about their reading levels and what they need to do to improve. Older pupils speak enthusiastically about reading daily at home and at school. They enjoy reading challenges set by the school and appreciate their reading rewards.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is mostly good across the school. A particular strength is the consistency of approach within lessons of checking what pupils know, can do and understand. The strongest progress is seen in Year 2 where teachers' high expectations result in high levels of pupil engagement and

an increase in pupils' knowledge and understanding. For example, in the Enquiry Unit on Brunel, pupils spoke passionately about the new facts they gained.

- The Early Years Foundation Stage is a strength of the school. Teachers' very clear explanations to children, together with the carefully-designed learning, are particularly effective in creating a purposeful, stimulating and orderly environment in which children can thrive. A particular strength is the development of writing skills. Children are keen to write independently and show secure knowledge of letters and the sounds they make. For example, when learning about Noah's Ark, the children chose to write animal names.
- Teaching assistants play a key part in the school's success. Teachers share planning and dialogue about individual pupils' achievement in a lesson which contributes to good progress. Their skilful questioning promotes good progress for all abilities.
- Standards in reading have improved significantly since 2013. Teachers plan daily opportunities for pupils to read and share books. The reward system put in place motivates pupils to read at least three times a week at home. This focuses support for those who are struggling with reading. It has resulted in the proportion of pupils achieving better than expected progress in reading being high.
- The teaching of writing is well structured and supports pupils in achieving a good standard. When pupils write they write to engage the reader. Where effective, for example in Year 6 when writing about a character from the book *Kensuke's Kingdom*, pupils use a well-developed range of vocabulary and descriptive phrases to create a picture in the reader's mind.
- The very personalised support for individual pupils with particular behavioural needs has resulted in marked improvement of behaviour over time. The school's 'Opt into learning' approach is embedded in school procedure and is effectively used by staff as a reminder to pupils.
- In mathematics, some teachers do not place enough emphasis on teaching mental mathematics skills. Consequently, many older pupils find calculating with large numbers difficult because they cannot quickly apply their knowledge of multiplication tables.
- Pupils are aware of their targets and monitor their progress towards them well. At its best, marking and feedback inform pupils about the quality of their work, what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. The best practice is where teachers provide pupils with opportunities to respond and act upon this advice. This good practice is not evident in all classes in all subjects.
- The quality in presentation of work is better in writing than in mathematics. Not all teachers demonstrate the school's vision for consistently high standards of expectations for neatness and accuracy. As a result, some pupils do not take sufficient pride in their work, which sometimes prevents the teacher gaining an accurate picture of their understanding.
- Homework is set regularly and is used well to extend and reinforce the learning that takes place in the classroom. The 3:15 homework club is well attended and has been very effective in engaging pupils who did not previously engage in homework activities. Most parents who spoke to inspectors or responded to the online Parent View survey felt that their children are taught well. Inspectors agreed with that view.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. One child told inspectors that this school was 'a school built on respect'. The strong emphasis placed on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development can be seen in displays around the school. Cultural and religious diversity is celebrated and, as a result, the school is a friendly and welcoming place where individuals feel valued and respected.
- The school puts great emphasis on pupils coming to school ready to learn and in correct uniform. This creates a clear expectation that all pupils follow.
- In lessons, pupils demonstrate an eagerness to learn and respect for adults and each other. They are keen to learn and work well together in class, supporting each other. Teachers and pupils speak of the 'Minerva Mindset', recognising good attitudes to learning. Some pupils in Year 6 were delighted to be able to share their progress in writing and celebrated each other's

achievements as well as their own.

- At lunchtimes, the good use of space and extensive range of play equipment provide a safe and happy experience for all pupils. The combination of high levels of supervision by school leaders and mealtime staff ensures friendly and purposeful playtimes. Supervision is high and staff, along with Year 6 play leaders, are skilled in their interactions with pupils. This contributes to a harmonious atmosphere.
- Pupils are generally respectful of their environment and move sensibly around the school. Occasionally, pupils run in corridors and are not calm when they enter the school after a lunch or play time. There are some inconsistencies in the expectations of staff in terms of reminding pupils how to behave at these times. Once in the class, pupils are quick to settle to their learning.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong and a clear understanding of bullying. They are clear that bullying rarely occurs and that adults deal with unkind behaviour quickly. Inspectors scrutinised school records related to pupils' behaviour and found that staff went to great lengths to support pupils and resolve issues. Incidents of behaviour have reduced since the last inspection.
- Pupils have a good understanding about internet safety and how to keep safe on social networking sites.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is passionate and resolute in her vision of excellence for the school. She leads with humility and clarity, taking the school on a transformational journey. Her uncompromising approach to school improvement is enabling all to thrive in a culture of mutual support and respect. All staff say they are proud to be a part of the school.
- There has recently been a successful drive to broaden the leadership in the school. Newer leaders have quickly grasped a thorough understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are in the early stages of putting plans in place to address these areas. For example, the leader of mathematics has planned a number of staff training sessions next term on progression in calculation skills in mathematics.
- Detailed records of staff performance reflect the headteacher's unfaltering desire to support teachers in achieving the best outcomes for their pupils. Underperformance is tackled robustly. Progress is clearly demonstrated in that most teaching is now good and some better than good. Developmental feedback by all senior leaders builds on previous targets and is helping staff to develop rapidly a repertoire of teaching skills.
- Every pupil's progress is tracked meticulously and all staff are well informed about their pupils' progress and particular needs. The school acts swiftly in putting in additional support to tackle any underachievement.
- The support provided for pupils eligible for additional funding is highly effective. Leaders have created a comprehensive plan to ensure all of these pupils receive timely and appropriate support. Progress is rigorously monitored and this is having a positive impact on pupils' behaviour and achievement.
- Leaders recognise that the curriculum does not yet provide a range of quality activities across all subjects to promote pupils' enjoyment. They have been extremely successful in raising standards of literacy in the school and have plans in place to develop their 'Enquiry' learning programme to create further purposeful links between the arts and English, mathematics and science.
- Staff work closely together and morale is high. They know that their opinions are valued and most recognise and appreciate the bespoke training they receive within school and as a part of the Cabot Learning Federation. This training has brought about significant improvements in the teaching of reading and writing over the past two years.
- Sport premium funding is used to good effect in enhancing the extra-curricular provision with a wide range of sporting activities including dodgeball, fencing and cricket. Take up for these sports has been high. More staff are now offering further clubs in dance, football and plays

activities, specifically aimed at increasing the engagement in sport for all pupils. There has been an increase in engagement of competitive tournaments and local leagues in tag rugby and other sports. This is contributing to improved well-being of the pupils and encouraging pupils to work alongside those beyond their own school.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The academy council knows the school's strengths and weaknesses well and provides appropriate challenge to ensure an unrelenting drive for improvement. For example, when reading standards were lower than expected in 2013, governors supported the leadership in undertaking a review which resulted in a reading recovery programme being replaced by more intensive support for individuals. Governors speak knowledgeably about the progress of specific groups in relation to the national picture. They administer additional funding for pupils effectively and monitor the impact of expenditure well. They regularly check how the additional funds for pupils eligible for pupil premium are being spent to close the gap for these pupils. All safeguarding policies and procedures meet statutory requirements. The school develops leaders equally as well as it provides for individual pupils. Under the framework of the Cabot Learning Federation, the wider governance has supported the culture which promotes excellence. It provides a clear structure of accountability of headteacher and staff performance, linked to salaries. The training for all staff has been key in supporting the school's transformation and ambitious vision since becoming an academy.

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	138789
Local authority	The City of Bristol
Inspection number	440108

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	313
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Nicola McAllister
Headteacher	Miss Gemma Jackson
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	0117 377 2990
Email address	info@minerva.clfacademies.net

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