

Briscoe Lane Academy

Briscoe Lane, Manchester, M40 2TB

Inspection dates 16–17 September 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy
	This inspection:	Good 2
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Early years provision	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- This popular and successful school is the heart beat of the local community. It lives and breathes its motto of, 'Together Everyone Achieves More.'
- The highly inspirational Executive Principal, ably assisted by the Principal, provides excellent leadership in improving the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils.
- Staff, trustees and governors work well together for the benefit of all the pupils, their families and the local community. Morale is exceptionally high.
- The broad range of subjects is well organised and promotes pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development outstandingly well.
- The school has excellent relationships with parents, the wider community and other schools.
- Trustees and governors are passionate about continually improving the school. They offer rigorous challenge and support to senior leaders.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and sometimes outstanding. They have positive attitudes to learning and are proud of their school. Pupils feel safe.
- Pupils' exceptionally positive relationships with staff help pupils to grow in self-confidence and develop mutual respect.
- Teaching is usually good and sometimes outstanding. As a result, pupils are now making faster progress.
- Pupils in the majority of year groups make good progress. By the end of Year 6, they reach standards that are above average, and rising, in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children in the Early Years achieve well from their different starting points due to good teaching and very caring staff.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress in some year groups is variable and achievement is not as good in writing as in reading and mathematics.
- Sometimes pupils, in particularly the most able, are not always given more demanding work quickly enough.
- Pupils do not use and extend their writing skills in a wide enough range of subjects.
- Leaders' plans to improve teaching and achievement of pupils are not always clear in how impact will be measured.
- Leaders do not always held well enough to account for pupils making at least good progress.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 23 parts of lessons, looked at pupils’ work in books and on display around the school and examined records of their attainment and progress. They also listened to pupils read in Years 2 and 6 and discussed with them their views about reading.
- The inspectors observed the school’s work and reviewed a wide range of documentation, including the school’s view of its performance, the school improvement plan and documents related to pupils’ behaviour and attendance and safeguarding.
- The inspectors met with groups of pupils, teachers and senior leaders, members of The Wise Owl Trust and governing body, including the Chairs of the Trust and the Governing Body and an external consultant. A telephone conversation was also held with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors took into account the views expressed by staff in the 30 voluntary questionnaires they returned.
- Inspectors considered the school’s own surveys of parents’ views and spoke to several parents around school. There were not enough responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire to be considered.

Inspection team

Chris Maloney, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Christine Addison	Additional Inspector
Sheryl Farnworth	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is significantly above average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority.) These pupils are referred to in the rest of the report as 'disadvantaged'.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- Significant numbers of pupils join the school from other schools in different year groups.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school sponsors Seymour Road Academy in Clayton, Manchester and is a partner in the Greater Manchester Family of Schools, in the 'everyone learning @Teaching School Alliance'.
- Briscoe Lane Academy converted to become an academy school on 1 September 2012. When its predecessor school, Briscoe Lane Primary School was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school is led and managed by a Principal and an Executive Principal. The Executive Principal is a Local Leader of Education.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to outstanding and so accelerate progress and further raise attainment, particularly in writing at the higher levels by:
 - ensuring that all teachers plan tasks that stretch the abilities of all pupils, especially the most able, and move them on to harder work as soon as they are ready
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to practice and extend their writing skills in other subjects.
- Improve leadership and management further by ensuring that:
 - plans produced by leaders at all levels are crystal clear in how they will improve the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils
 - teachers are more rigorously held to account for pupils making good rather than expected progress.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The exceptional and highly motivational executive headteacher has been successful in ensuring that the whole school community shares his high ambition for making the school the best it can be. He has received particularly good support from the headteacher and from other senior leaders in making improvements in the quality of teaching and to the achievement of pupils. He has galvanised the whole school community to support the all-round development of each child. This focus is a real strength of the school.
- The training and development of staff is strong and many excellent opportunities are provided for teachers and support staff to learn from and share expertise with staff in other schools. Teachers have a good range of local and national opportunities to develop their leadership skills and to work with external consultants to further improve their work. The high levels of morale reflect the school's commitment to developing the staff. A typical teacher comment was, 'I feel really very valued in my role.'
- Senior leaders regularly check on the performance of teachers and support staff and work closely with middle and other subject leaders to improve teaching and the achievement of pupils.
- Rigorous checks are made on the progress of individual pupils and different pupil groups. This ensures that decisive actions can be taken quickly to support any who are in danger of underachieving, underlining the school's commitment to equal opportunities.
- Senior leaders have been successful in addressing inconsistencies seen in the progress of pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. However, they acknowledge that more needs to be done to eradicate the few remaining weaknesses in teaching and inconsistencies in progress in some classes.
- Senior leaders use their accurate understanding of the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils to plan actions to bring about improvement. However, plans are not always precisely measurable in how they will impact on improving the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils.
- The curriculum is well designed to meet the needs of pupils and to raise aspirations of what they achieve now and in their future lives. The curriculum links subjects together well and provides rich and memorable experiences for pupils to enhance their learning. However, the enhancement of pupils' writing skills is not yet fully embedded across subjects. The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well. The promotion of British values and pupils' understanding and respect for other faiths is also strong in school. The school ensures that the many exciting educational visits are provided free of charge to all parents, reflecting the commitment to pupils and their families.
- Outstanding partnerships exist with a wide range of outside agencies and other schools. Particularly strong links exist with the Greater Manchester Family of Schools everyonelearning@Teaching School Alliance and with Seymour Road Academy which is sponsored by Briscoe Lane Academy, helping to strengthen teaching and learning.
- The school has excellent links with parents. A typical parental comment was, 'The school makes sure that every child has the opportunities they need to develop. Any support the child needs will be provided.'
- Good use has been made of additional physical education and sports funding to improve the quality of sports teaching with sports coaches and the increase in the range of clubs and competitions. This is having a positive impact on the well-being of pupils.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Trustees and governors are passionate about continually improving the school for pupils, families and the local community. They visit regularly and receive good information from staff to help them hold senior leaders to account. The Chair of the trustees and the Chair of the Governing Body are particularly impressive in ensuring that the school always strives to be the best it can be. All finances are carefully spent, including pupil-premium and sports funding and their impact on pupils' learning is carefully tracked. Trustees and governors have an accurate understanding of how well the school is doing and ensure safeguarding meets requirements. However, they do not hold teachers rigorously enough to account via their pay progression for the proportion of pupils who make good rather than expected progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy learning. They generally behave well in lessons and move calmly around the school. Pupils play harmoniously together at break times and show consideration to others whether outside or in the lunchtime 'Friends Club'. Sometimes

their behaviour is outstanding.

- Pupils are polite, courteous and welcoming to visitors. They were keen to tell inspectors about their pride in their school. A typical pupil comment was, 'This is a cool and awesome place to learn.'
- Their enjoyment and positive attitudes to learning are shown in the attendance of pupils which is improving securely. Although attendance is still below average, senior leaders are working extremely effectively in addressing the needs of families, and pupils are now attending more regularly.
- Excellent relationships exist between pupils and staff. This boosts pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem extremely well. Pupils know that staff care about them as individuals. A typical pupil comment was, 'A member of staff is always there to help you even if it's not about school.'
- Pupils are highly respectful and demonstrate a good understanding of other cultures and faiths and the similarities, differences and challenges faced in a rapidly changing world.
- Pupils say they enjoy doing hard work that makes them think and try their best. However, when learning does not fully meet their needs, some pupils lose interest in their learning and this hinders the progress that they make.
- Good opportunities exist for pupils to take responsibility. They eagerly told inspectors how much they like being on the school council or a Junior Warden who help other pupils who are having difficulties.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. They know to stay safe and have a secure understanding of different types of bullying, including prejudice-based.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is typically good and occasionally outstanding. A particularly strong aspect of teaching is that teachers and support staff do all they can to get to know pupils exceptionally well as individuals. This clear focus on developing the whole child helps to boost pupils' confidence and self-esteem.
- Where teaching is most effective, all pupils are given work that challenges them to concentrate hard and stretch their thinking so learning is at least good. Teachers and support staff use their good subject knowledge to ask searching questions to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding. They make regular checks on how well pupils are learning and waste no time in moving them on to more challenging work. For example, in Year 6, pupils were fully engrossed in using the stimulus of a crime scene in developing their writing skills. Pupils were fully motivated and expectations of what could be achieved were high. Probing questions challenged pupils' thinking and excited their interest in identifying the things that good quality writing needed and checking their own work and that of their peers to identify ways of improving. Pupils of all abilities progressed well as they were continually guided and challenged to improve.
- The quality of marking is good. Pupils are given clear guidance on how to improve their work further and then given time to respond so that teachers and support staff can check whether they have fully understood the advice given. Senior leaders have worked particularly hard to ensure that this practice is consistent throughout school and this is clearly evident in the wide range of books seen by inspectors.
- Teachers do not always use the information they have on how well pupils are learning to plan tasks that meet their different abilities. Sometimes work is too easy or too hard and pupils have to wait too long to move on to more demanding work, especially the most able. This hinders the progress they make.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children generally start the Early Years with skills and abilities significantly below those typically expected.
- In 2013, standards by the end of Year 2 were significantly below average in reading and mathematics and below in writing. However, standards rose in 2014 to closer to the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, fewer pupils gained the higher Level 3, particularly in writing in comparison to the national average.
- In 2013, although the standards in writing improved, the standards by the end of Year 6 declined in reading and particularly in mathematics. Although pupils had achieved well at the average Level 4 compared to the national average, the proportions reaching the higher Level 5 were below average in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils making better than expected progress was above average in reading and writing but below in mathematics.
- However, due to highly effective work undertaken by senior leaders to improve teaching and learning, standards rose in 2014 with above average proportions of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 and the higher Level 5 in reading, writing and mathematics. The work of current pupils in school and inspectors' checks on records of their progress show that these improvements have been consolidated. Most pupils throughout school are making good progress and some are making outstanding progress from their

different starting points.

- Although the most able pupils are now making better progress because they are being given more demanding work to challenge their thinking and stretch their abilities, this is not consistent in all classes. The writing of some of the most able pupils lacks the quality of vocabulary and richness of ideas expected.
- There is no significant gap between the progress of boys and girls. In addition, the school was able to demonstrate that the large numbers of pupils who join them from other schools also make good progress from their starting points.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are making good and sometimes outstanding progress, due to the high quality support and well-targeted additional help they receive.
- Standards in reading are rising due to skilled teaching, the extra focus on developing early reading skills and a love of reading throughout school. In the 2013 Year 1 check on reading, pupils attained higher than is expected by pupils nationally reflecting their increasing understanding of the sounds that letters make. Pupils eagerly told inspectors about their love of reading at home and school and their favourite authors such as Jacqueline Wilson.
- Writing standards in all classes are rising, especially spelling, punctuation and grammar, but fewer pupils are reaching the higher levels than in reading and mathematics. Although writing skills are well promoted in English, pupils are not given enough opportunities to practice and extend their writing skills across a wide range of subjects.
- In mathematics, pupils are now achieving well due to the development of basic skills, calculation and problem-solving skills through school.
- Pupils from minority ethnic groups, including those who speak English as an additional language make good and sometimes outstanding progress because of the skilled and sensitive support they receive.
- In Year 6 in 2013, the gap in the attainment of disadvantaged pupils, compared to their peers, closed significantly. Their attainment was approximately four and half terms ahead of the others in their year group overall and one and a half terms behind others nationally. They were four terms ahead of others in school in writing, three and a half terms ahead in reading and five terms ahead in mathematics. Compared with other pupils nationally, they were a school term behind in writing and reading and one and a half terms behind in mathematics. Across the year groups in 2014 and current pupils in school, the gaps in attainment of disadvantaged pupils and the other pupils in school are closing or non-existent. This reflects the school's commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity for every pupil.

The early years provision

is good

- Children usually start the Early Years with skills and abilities that are significantly below those typically expected for their age, particularly in their language and personal development. Children, including those with special educational needs and the more able make good and sometimes outstanding progress from their different starting points and are increasingly well prepared for Year 1.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and sometimes outstanding. Staff are caring and nurture children's love of learning well. The range of stimulating activities helps children to be purposefully involved in learning through play and to take risks in a safe environment. Some of the outside area for learning is currently under construction as part of newly built classrooms.
- Children's learning is captured well through skilled assessments and stimulate their interest through probing and sensitive questioning. Staff model language well. Staff have high expectations and track children's learning well to check how well they are learning.
- Outstanding relationships exist with parents through home visits, daily communications and discussions. Parents are encouraged to play an active role in their child's learning and to contribute to the information held in school as to how well children are learning at home and in school. Stay and play sessions enable staff to identify children's needs and any additional support needed before children start.
- There are strong links with outside agencies such as Sure Start so that children's needs are identified early and any extra help targeted quickly such as speech therapy or self-help skills. Families are offered training opportunities and significant numbers signed up for the 'Ready for School Project' to aid their child's learning.
- Leadership and management of the Early Years is good. The leader is experienced and shows clear drive and enthusiasm. She ensures that all the staff receive regular and updated training on paediatric first aid, child protection and safeguarding. The leader has a clear understanding of strengths and areas for further improvement like the newly formed outside area. Clear channels of communication exist with parents, outside agencies and other school leaders.

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	138653
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	448881

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	352
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Savage
Executive Principal	Christopher O'Shaughnessy
Principal	Peter Collopy
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	0161 6811783
Fax number	0161 6821545
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