

Seymour Road Academy

Seymour Road South, Manchester, M11 4PR

Inspection dates 15–16 October 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	Outstanding	1	

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- This new academy is making a successful start under the inspiring leadership of its Executive Principal and Principal. With the active support of trustees, governors and staff, they are driving improvements forward at a brisk pace.
- This is a happy school where pupils feel safe and secure. They behave well, are proud of their school and enjoy trusting relationships with all of the adults in school. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive.
- Most pupils make good or even better progress. They reach nationally expected standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Growing numbers are reaching the higher standards in English and mathematics, reflecting the increasing success of the school's work to support its most able pupils to do as well as they possibly can.
- Children make very rapid progress in the outstanding early years provision, often from very low starting points. This gives them an excellent start to their education.
- Disadvantaged pupils are achieving increasingly well. Any gaps that remain between their achievement and that of other pupils in the school are being addressed and are closing rapidly.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve well as a result of the very effective support the school provides for them.
- The academy has strong and effective systems for checking the quality of teaching and its impact on the progress that pupils are making in each class throughout the year. Leaders have been quick to identify and address any problems and, as a result, teaching is good overall. In some classes, it is outstanding.
- Trustees and governors are involved in all aspects of the academy's work. They hold the academy to account exceptionally well.
- Parents express great confidence in the academy and in its leaders and staff. A successful partnership between home and school is reflected in attendance figures that are now above average.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A very small minority of teaching requires further improvement.
- Pupils' progress rates are variable in some year groups.
- Work to improve the curriculum in Year 1 is currently at an early stage and has not yet had time to impact positively on pupils' achievement in the year group.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 22 lessons. Two observations were carried out jointly with the Principal. The inspectors listened to pupils read in Years 2 and 6 and discussed with them the books they have enjoyed and those they are currently reading.
- The inspectors met with a group of trustees and governors, with senior and middle leaders, with a group of pupils, with an independent consultant and with a representative of the local authority.
- There were too few responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) for an analysis to be carried out. However, one inspector met with a group of parents and spoke with individual parents at the start of the school day to hear their views about the academy. Inspectors also took into account the academy's most recent survey of parents' views.
- The views that staff expressed in the questionnaires they completed were also taken into account.
- In observing the school's work, inspectors looked at and evaluated the work in pupils' books, including books from the last school year as well as their latest books from this term. They also reviewed a wide range of documentation including safeguarding documents, the school development plan, records of pupils' attainment and progress, and documents relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Diane Auton, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Colleen Taylor	Additional Inspector
Juliet Demster	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The academy is larger than most other primary schools.
- While around half of the academy's pupils are White British, an above average proportion of pupils belong to a wide range of other ethnic backgrounds. More than 30 different home languages are spoken by pupils. A small minority of pupils are at an early stage of learning to speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium is considerably above average and constitutes a large majority of the pupils in the academy. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the academy at times other than the usual transition points is above average.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The academy opened in February 2013. Its predecessor school, Seymour Road Primary School, was placed in special measures when it was last inspected by Ofsted. The new academy is sponsored by Briscoe Lane Academy under the auspices of the Wise Owl Trust. The two academies work in partnership and share an Executive Principal.
- The Principal took up her post in the academy in September 2013; she leads and manages the academy in partnership with the Executive Principal, who is a Local Leader of Education.
- The academy operates a breakfast club and an after-school club each day.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching is good or better in every class so that pupils' progress in English and mathematics accelerates at a consistently good or better rate in every year group by:
 - continuing to check regularly on the quality and impact of teaching
 - continuing to guide and support improvements through sharing expertise and good practice.
- Further develop the curriculum in Year 1 to ensure that it supports pupils' successful transition from the early years into Key Stage 1 and enables them to make consistently good or better progress in Year 1.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders, staff, trustees and governors are fully committed in their support for the drive for the highest levels of achievement and personal development for every pupil. Teamwork is strong. Everyone's contribution is valued and morale is high.
- The Executive Principal, the Principal and the Vice Principal have set out a clear agenda for ongoing improvement. They are positive role models, leading by example.
- Support for teaching is effective, with excellent systems in place to check on the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' progress. Able middle leaders contribute very well to this process both through lesson observations and very regular analysis of pupils' work and through sharing the best practice with colleagues. All of this has quickly ensured that teaching is good or better in most classes. Leaders understand that there is still more to do to eliminate a small residue of less effective teaching and to iron out the remaining inconsistencies in pupils' progress that have resulted from weaker teaching.
- Additional funding to support the learning of disadvantaged pupils and of vulnerable pupils has been used wisely, as shown by their good and improving achievement. This illustrates the academy's success in promoting equal opportunities for all of its pupils.
- Staff performance management targets are challenging, reflecting the school's high expectations of everyone. They are supported by high-quality training and are linked closely to the school's priorities, as set out in its well-crafted development plan.
- The curriculum takes full account of the skills and knowledge pupils need to learn, with a clear focus on developing the key skills of literacy and numeracy. Activities to promote pupils' personal, social and health education are of very good quality and this results in a positive impact on their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It also prepares them well for their future lives in modern Britain. The academy is currently re-shaping the curriculum for pupils in Year 1, to ensure that it is more closely matched to pupils' needs. It aims to build as effectively as possible on children's excellent learning and progress in the outstanding early years provision but this is still a work in progress.
- The academy uses its additional funding for school sport to good effect. A wide range of activities are on offer and there are many opportunities for pupils to access sport and physical education after school and to take part in competitive events. The academy's analysis of the impact of this shows enhanced staff skills and good levels of pupils' participation and enjoyment.
- In addition to its strong and productive relationship with its partner school in the Wise Owl Trust, the academy has forged partnerships with the local authority and with a number of neighbouring schools and academies. These mutually supportive links are helping to strengthen teaching and learning.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Trustees and governors have helped to ensure good teaching in the academy. They have worked with the Principals to check and review the quality and impact of teaching and they have taken prompt, decisive actions to challenge and address areas of underperformance. Appropriate plans are in place for the steps that need to be taken next in order to secure full consistency in teaching quality.
 - Trustees and governors are well informed. They receive regular, accurate and comprehensive reports on pupils' progress and on the quality of teaching from senior and middle leaders. They hold the academy rigorously to account.
 - Trustees and governors make sure that checks of staff performance are thorough and that leaders and staff are set challenging targets linked to pupils' progress and academy priorities.
 - Trustees and governors make sure that safeguarding policy and procedures are fully in place. They are fully informed on how the pupil premium funding is spent and the difference that it is making to disadvantaged pupils. They ensure that primary school sport funding is spent wisely and make regular checks on the impact of the expenditure for pupils in the academy.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- They behave well in lessons, around the school and at playtimes. They say how much they enjoy coming to school and they are polite and considerate of the feelings of others.
- Pupils of all ages show positive attitudes to learning and this contributes well to the progress they make. In most lessons, they organise themselves well, listen carefully to instructions and work well with a

partner or in a group.

- Pupils' books show that they are increasingly taking a real pride in their work and that they usually try hard to do the best work they can do and to present it neatly.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils say that there is always someone to turn to for help if they have a problem. Parents express confidence in the care that the school provides for their children.
- Pupils' understanding of different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying, is developing well. They say that bullying incidents are almost unheard of and that when pupils fall out with each other staff always help them to sort matters out quickly.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to take on responsibility and to contribute to making the academy a happy and safe place for everyone. The school council, the head girl and head boy are active and influential, representing the pupil voice well in their regular meetings with the academy's leaders. Older pupils are involved in a community scheme to provide visits and practical help, such as picking up litter and sweeping paths, for senior citizens.
- All necessary checks on adults are carried out and staff training in child protection is updated regularly.
- Good quality support is provided for potentially vulnerable pupils and the academy works well with external agencies to ensure that support is targeted appropriately.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching quality has improved rapidly over the period since the academy was established. It is now mostly good and sometimes outstanding. This improvement is having a very positive impact on pupils' learning and progress.
- Where teaching is most effective, teachers know the pupils well and ensure that each pupil is given the correct levels of challenge and support that they need to help them learn successfully. In a literacy lesson in Year 2, for example, pupils made improvements to a nonsense poem they had written together with their teacher by adding their own new adjectives. Although they were well supported in this writing activity by skilled and watchful adults, they were also encouraged to work independently and to think for themselves. As a result of this, and because the activity was interesting and fun, pupils of all abilities met their learning targets for the lesson.
- Reading is taught well. Year 2 pupils who read to an inspector used their knowledge of the sounds that letters represent (phonics) to work out unfamiliar words and they read with interest and expression.
- The work in pupils' books shows that teachers create opportunities for pupils to write within a range of subjects and for different purposes. This has contributed well to the academy's successful and ongoing drive to raise standards in writing.
- Marking procedures have been improved in the current year and pupils' workbooks show that the quality of marking is now more consistent. Teachers now give clear feedback to pupils through marking which points them to the 'next steps' in continuing to improve.
- Pupils who need extra help in lessons, such as those with special educational needs, some disadvantaged pupils or some of those with English as an additional language, are supported well by teachers and teaching assistants. Additional small group or individual support is provided by well-trained staff for those pupils who need it and this ensures that they make good progress.
- Teaching usually supports the learning and progress of the most able pupils well by ensuring high levels of challenge in the activities that are planned for them.
- Very occasionally, work in lessons is too easy or too hard for different groups of pupils, or the teacher's explanations are not clear enough. This means that pupils' progress in the lesson is not as rapid as it could otherwise be.

The achievement of pupils is good

- At the end of Key Stage 1, the majority of pupils reached nationally expected standards in 2014. The proportion of most able pupils who reached the higher standards in both English and mathematics was considerably greater than in 2013 and was similar to the national proportion.
- In Year 6 in 2014, the majority reached the expected standard in English and mathematics. The

proportion who reached the higher standard in reading was well above average; it was above average in mathematics and broadly average in writing. This represents a considerable improvement in higher level attainment during the academy's first year.

- The proportions of pupils in Year 6 in 2014 who made more than expected progress in English and mathematics were above average.
- Across the year groups, pupils make good overall progress from their starting points. Their rate of progress in both English and mathematics was a little uneven, however, during the last school year. Pupils did a little better overall in Year 2 than in Year 1 and progress was a little faster in Years 5 and 6 than in Years 3 and 4. The academy is currently taking appropriate actions to even out these inconsistencies.
- Disadvantaged pupils are a majority group in the academy and so their overall achievement is similar to the overall achievement figures for all pupils. At the end of Year 6 in 2014, there was a gap between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and that of other pupils in the year group and nationally. Disadvantaged pupils were about four terms behind in reading, writing and mathematics. However, disadvantaged pupils made the same excellent progress from their starting points as everyone else in the year group.
- Pupils achieve well in reading. Successful teaching of phonics ensures that a large majority of pupils achieve the required standard in the Year 1 phonics check. Pupils of all ages show a genuine interest in books and enjoy reading. By the end of Year 6 most can read at the expected standard for their age, with an increasing number of mature and capable readers.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good and sometimes outstanding progress from their starting points and achieve well. Disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs also achieve well in relation to their starting points.
- Those pupils who join the school at various points during the key stages are helped to settle in quickly and they achieve well.

The early years provision

is outstanding

- Children thrive and progress rapidly in the early years. They settle in quickly and are soon happy and secure and ready to learn. Starting points are often exceptionally low. Most children join the early years with skills in all areas of learning, but especially in speaking and listening, that are below those typical of their age group; a small minority are at a very early stage of learning English. The academy's comprehensive and accurate assessment data as well as inspection evidence show that children make excellent progress from these starting points.
- A large majority of children reached a good level of development by the end of the Reception class in 2013 and in 2014, showing consistently outstanding achievement. This is the result of excellent teaching and care combined with carefully planned activities which are interesting and fun for the children, ensure that they stay safe, and which support their learning extremely well.
- Outstanding leadership ensures that children enjoy school and make excellent progress. Their behaviour is excellent and the staff team ensures that learning is fun. Excellent assessment procedures are in place to ensure that all groups of children achieve equally well.
- The home visits made by staff prior to children starting Nursery ensure that they know the children and their parents well and plan for particular needs. In this way they help the children make the best possible start in their learning. The academy reaches out to parents in the early years and involves them in a range of well-attended events that support their children's learning, including workshops on reading and number and craft days.
- Teamwork is strong and effective. Staff plan and review together to ensure that activities are well matched to children's ever-changing needs and interests. A vibrant environment, indoors and out, supports children's learning and progress very effectively.

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	139078
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	447849

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	433
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jim Battle
Headteacher	Sophie Murfin
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy
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