

Battle Primary Academy

Cranbury Road, Reading, RG30 2TD

Inspection dates

22–23 October 2014

| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Not previously inspected as an academy | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|--|----------|
| | This inspection: | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Leadership and management | | Good | 2 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Quality of teaching | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Early years provision | | Outstanding | 1 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Despite improvements since the academy opened, teaching is not yet consistently good. There remains some teaching where pupils are not sufficiently well supported, nor are they fully challenged by the work they are given, particularly in Key Stage 1.
- Strategies to improve the way writing is taught are recent. They are not having as much impact as those to improve reading and mathematics.
- There are too few reading resources to support pupils' understanding of different writing styles, particularly for older pupils.
- The progress of pupils is not yet consistently good. Slower progress in writing and in other subjects in Key Stage 1 mean that not all pupils achieve as well as they should.
- Pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable do not make up as much ground in their writing as they do in their reading and mathematics. Strategies to tackle this have not had sufficient time to ensure pupils achieve better in their writing.
- Behaviour is not consistently good over time. A few pupils find it difficult to maintain their focus, particularly when tasks are not as challenging as they could manage.
- Routines for ensuring pupils' safety require improvement. A few pupils still have concerns that occasional bullying or nastiness is not stopped quickly enough.

The school has the following strengths

- The principal and senior leaders have ensured that teaching continues to improve. Many previous weaknesses have been remedied quickly. Leaders and managers are setting the right direction and expectations for improvement.
- Pupils' achievement in reading and mathematics has improved considerably since the school became an academy.
- Early years provision is outstanding because there is a rich and diverse range of activities which ignite children's curiosity to achieve extremely well.
- Governors have a very accurate view about the issues the academy faces. They ensure senior leaders have the backing they need to tackle these issues quickly.
- The work with and support from the academy sponsor is sustaining rapid improvement.

Information about this inspection

- Three inspectors carried out this inspection over two days. They spent most of their time in lessons, watching pupils learn, talking to them about their work, and looking through what they had done in their books over time.
- Inspectors gathered evidence from a wide range of sources, including: the school’s records about pupils’ learning; plans to bring about improvements; recent and current pupils’ books; senior leaders’ monitoring of the quality of teaching; and external evaluations about the school.
- The inspectors held meetings with pupils, middle and senior leaders at the school, with members of the governing body, and with the academy sponsors.
- To gather the views of parents, inspectors analysed the results from a survey the school undertook at the parents’ evening that took place after school on the first day of the inspection. There were too few responses to Parent View, the online survey for Ofsted, to be considered. Inspectors also spoke informally to parents attending the parents’ evening, and before school. The 24 responses to a survey for staff working at the school were also taken into account.
- This inspection included a visit from one of Her Majesty’s Inspectors, as part of the ongoing quality-assurance process for Ofsted.

Inspection team

Andrew Saunders, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Linda Rowley

Additional Inspector

Clair Harrington-Wilcox

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Battle Primary Academy converted to become an academy school on 1 January 2013, sponsored by the NET Academies Trust. When its predecessor school, Battle Primary School was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged inadequate.
- This academy is larger than average. There are two classes in each year group. There is a Nursery which operates as part of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision, where children attend either a morning or afternoon session.
- Pupils come from a wide range of ethnicities. The largest groups are White British, Pakistani and Polish. About half of pupils are known to speak English as an additional language, representing a very wide range of other languages spoken at home.
- Far more pupils than average join the academy other than at the usual times. Of these, the large majority speak little or no English when they arrive at the academy.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action is above average. The proportion of pupils who receive additional support from partners outside the school or with statements of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of vulnerable pupils who receive additional support through the funding known as the pupil premium is above average.
- There has been considerable turnover in staffing since the academy opened, although the leadership has been stable. The principal was appointed as deputy headteacher and then acting headteacher of the predecessor school shortly before becoming an academy. She was appointed as the principal shortly after the conversion. Currently, five teachers are at the early stages of their career in education.
- The opening of this academy as a new school part-way through the academic year of 2012/2013 means that there is not sufficient progress information to indicate whether the academy met the floor standards. These are the minimum expectations for the progress and attainment of pupils set by the government.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better, by:
 - making sure all pupils benefit from high quality written feedback and that they have sufficient opportunities to improve their work in response
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils in Key Stage 1 are capable of doing, particularly in their writing
 - making sure that all teachers expect pupils to produce high quality work in lessons.
- Increase pupils' rate of progress, particularly in writing, so that it is consistently good in all year groups, by:
 - giving pupils more opportunities to experience a range of styles of writing
 - providing pupils with more access to a wider range of reading materials to build up their vocabulary for writing
 - providing the most able pupils with more challenging work and opportunities to practise their advanced skills.
- Improve the behaviour and safety of pupils so that both are good, by:
 - working with the few pupils who are occasionally disruptive to help them understand the consequences of this on their own and other pupils' learning
 - making sure that pupils understand the actions that are taken to address any concerns they have and feel more confident about their safety.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Since taking on the role, the principal has very quickly identified the many issues facing the academy and tackled the most urgent of these with vigour. She has brought together an effective team of senior leaders who share her vision and determination to improve. This has established a culture of improvement across the academy.
- The role of middle leaders is also developing well. While some of them are new to their roles, they understand what they need to do to bring about improvements within their areas of responsibility. They have been particularly effective in developing the range of subjects taught (often known as the curriculum), so that it meets new requirements. They have been particularly effective in making sure teachers feel confident teaching mathematics and that teachers in different year groups follow a consistent approach to teaching mathematics.
- Senior leaders have been highly effective in establishing outstanding practice in the Early Years Foundation Stage, which has had exceptional impact on the progress of these children.
- Leaders have worked hard to develop a clear, effective approach to managing behaviour which is used consistently across the academy. Many pupils and parents said that behaviour has improved a great deal, but this has not yet ensured it is consistently good.
- While senior leaders have improved teaching, turbulence in staffing has hampered their efforts at times to ensure teaching is consistently good. However, their very high expectations of staff are now beginning to take effect. Robust systems ensure that leaders closely monitor the progress, attendance and behaviour of pupils, and how these are influenced by the quality of teaching.
- There is a very strong emphasis on promoting equality of opportunity, tackling discrimination and helping pupils from many different backgrounds to get along well. Pupils have good opportunities to express their views, and to discuss moral dilemmas. They enjoy the many positions of responsibility they can aspire to or in voting about particular issues. This helps them get a wider view of life in modern Britain.
- The additional funding to support vulnerable pupils, known as the pupil premium, has been carefully used and closely evaluated. Consequently, it has had a good impact in narrowing the gap between these pupils and other pupils in the academy and nationally in reading and mathematics. Strategies to hasten the progress of these pupils in writing are more recent and have not yet had a full impact on pupils' achievement. These pupils reach levels which are close to similar pupils nationally in reading and mathematics, but not in writing.
- The funding to help develop pupils' participation in sports, and teachers' confidence in delivering high quality physical education has been used effectively. Many pupils say that these lessons are one of the best aspects of the academy.
- The academy chain offers effective support to leaders and has been highly supportive in tackling the issues facing the academy. As a result, improvements have been rapid.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have worked closely with senior leaders to guide the academy through its early days. They help set out clearly the priorities for improvement. They gather lots of information about the performance of the academy. They use their considerable understanding of the community and education to help them make decisions that benefit the pupils. Governors have whole-heartedly supported senior leaders in taking decisions to rapidly eliminate inadequate teaching.
 - Governors and senior leaders make sure that all statutory requirements are met, and that all the appropriate procedures are in place to check that adults working with pupils are safe to do so. Together they make sure teachers understand their responsibilities and the procedures to keep pupils safe.
 - Governors keep a close check on the way the finances of the academy are spent for the benefit of pupils. This has led to a restructuring of staff and the support pupils receive in classes. New systems put in place mean that the performance of teachers is now carefully evaluated and is used to help them make decisions about pay, so that the best teaching is rewarded.

The behaviour and safety of pupils require improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement because a few pupils allow themselves to be distracted, particularly when work is not challenging enough. Occasionally, a few pupils allow their focus to slip and this low-level disruption impacts on the work other pupils are trying to do. However, pupils say that

behaviour has improved a great deal since the school became an academy.

- The behaviour of a very few pupils remains extremely challenging at times, and the academy has developed good procedures and helpful partnerships to help these pupils deal with the complex issues they face. However, this does not always stop such incidents from disrupting the learning of others.
- Pupils from a wide range of backgrounds usually get along well. They are particularly understanding of those who are learning English and often help these pupils learn new words. Staff work hard to make sure pupils understand more about each other's different beliefs, and that there is a harmonious community within the academy.
- Leaders have introduced well-organised systems to make clear the expectations across the academy. These are being implemented well by teachers and are starting to improve pupils' behaviour over time.
- Parents also said there had been great improvements in behaviour. There is a much better understanding, by parents, pupils and staff, of how the academy tackles behaviour of any kind, including encouraging good behaviour. This has reduced the impact of incidents on the learning and behaviour of pupils while they are at school.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement because too many pupils are still concerned that staff do not deal effectively enough with unpleasant incidents when they occur.
- Pupils acknowledge that bullying has been an issue in the past, and that some of this has included racist language. However, most pupils said that the situation is much better than it used to be, and that the academy will not tolerate racism or discrimination any more.
- Pupils feel that leaders have worked hard to make sure that they are kept safe at school, for example by providing the screening around the playground areas, which they feel has stopped some of the litter and damage that has happened in the past. They are well informed about how they can keep themselves safe, for example by telling an adult if they are worried, or how to stay safe when using the internet.
- The academy has worked very hard to develop positive links with the community and with parents, so that incidents which may happen outside of school have less impact on the pupils.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently good because some teachers' expect too little from pupils, particularly in Key Stage 1. The work these teachers plan for pupils does not develop their knowledge and skills quickly enough.
- Although pupils are making better progress in reading and mathematics, teaching in writing is still not as good as it should be. At times, some teachers do not set sufficiently high standards of the quality of work pupils are expected to do. The quantity of written work they produce in the time available is often limited in length.
- Senior leaders have been effective in improving the quality of teaching at the academy. Teachers know what is expected and are quickly helped to develop the skills they need to improve. Teaching in Key Stage 1 has not improved as quickly as in Key Stage 2, but the rapid support of senior leaders and in setting high expectations mean that the features of good or better teaching are clear to staff.
- Senior and middle leaders have worked with teachers to establish a clear policy about giving pupils guidance about their work, particularly through marking. While most teachers follow similar routines, there are still inconsistencies in the way pupils are expected to respond to the guidance given. Some comments are too general and do not explain what pupils can do to improve their work. There are times when pupils do not have enough opportunities to act on the guidance they have been given.
- The most able pupils are given some additional opportunities which help to engage and challenge them. However, the work teachers plan for them is not always hard enough.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage gives children a particularly excellent start to learning early reading skills. Children are eager to learn to read and write. The consistent approach to teaching phonics, the link between letters and their sounds, continues through the academy and means that pupils have good reading skills. However, there are not enough books for older pupils to widen their reading and strengthen their writing.
- Teaching assistants are usually well informed about the particular needs of pupils they are supporting. They make a positive contribution to the learning of pupils.

The achievement of pupils**requires improvement**

- The standards reached by pupils in 2013 were well below average. In 2014, standards rose considerably, particularly in reading and mathematics. From their starting points, this shows that most pupils made expected progress. However, too few pupils make better than expected progress, particularly in writing. Work in pupils' books, and the academy's records show that this remains typical. The proportion of pupils now making additional, good progress, however, is increasing.
- Progress in writing has not been as rapid as in reading or mathematics. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to see a wider range of examples of writing, because the range of books and other texts available to them is too limited. They usually read well because the academy has a well-organised approach to teaching phonics, and has invested in materials to support this approach. However, the lack of wider reading materials, particularly for older pupils, means their writing is not as good as it could be.
- Progress in Key Stage 1 is slower than in Key Stage 2. While pupils do make up ground as they move through the academy, this variation means pupils do not achieve well overall by the time they leave.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported. Most of them make similar progress to other pupils. However, some of these pupils have very complex needs. The academy supports these pupils well so that their attendance has improved and they are more able to cope with learning in their classrooms. However, for some of these pupils, their academic progress has been limited because leaders in the past have been slow to remedy weaknesses in their learning.
- The most able pupils are not always challenged as much as they could be. Some teachers do not yet expect enough of these pupils or give them work which is hard enough. This means they have limited opportunities to develop more advanced skills. Consequently, the progress of these pupils requires improvement.
- Vulnerable pupils who benefit from additional support have made up ground in reading and mathematics, but their progress in writing has been slower to improve. By the end of Year 6 in 2014, they were about six months behind other pupils in the academy in reading and mathematics, and about 12 months in writing. This is a substantially smaller gap than in 2013. The gap with pupils nationally has also reduced considerably although they remain below the national average, by about two terms in reading and mathematics, and about four terms in writing.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language are very well supported, particularly when they are at the early stages of learning English. This helps them to quickly develop the understanding and communication needed to be able to learn more widely. Their progress is often good.

The early years provision**is outstanding**

- This aspect of the academy's provision is much more effective than other parts of the school. This is because the early years is exceptionally well managed. Leaders have clear priorities and ensure that the highest standards are expected for every child. Leaders have also made sure there is a very strong sense of teamwork among the adults who work in the early years. Staff work hard to ensure every child thrives and feels safe.
- Despite the significant challenges many children face, leaders and teachers quickly identify their needs. They put in place an excellent range of activities to help them settle quickly, behave well and develop their language and communication skills.
- Most children join the Nursery with knowledge and skills which are well below those expected, particularly in communication. All adults are highly skilled in developing children's speaking and listening skills, and in helping all the children to participate actively in learning. This means children make exceptionally rapid progress. As a result many more children exceed the level of development expected for their age by the time they move into the next stage of their education.
- The exciting activities and resources available are closely matched to children's interests and they thrive on the chances to choose what they will learn, both indoors and outside. All the children are excited about learning their letters and numbers, and are keen to write lots of things down. They chatter about their learning, often helping one another, telling stories, or suggesting things to do.
- The opportunities for the youngest children in the Nursery to mix with and see the learning of the children in Reception help them to develop highly positive attitudes towards learning. At other times, where they benefit from more specific support from adults, their needs are extremely well met.

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 | 139066 |
| Local authority | NET Academy Trust |
| Inspection number | 447833 |

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 | 425 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Ruth Allen |
| Principal | Katy Peters |
| Date of previous school inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Telephone number | 0118 9375421 |
| Email address | admin@battleprimary.reading.sch.uk |

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

