

Carmountside Primary Academy

Woodhead Road, Abbey Hulton, Stoke-on-Trent, ST2 8DJ

Inspection dates 13–14 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	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.

- Leaders have brought good improvement to the school's work since converting to an academy. Teaching and learning are managed well resulting in a rise in standards at the end of Year 6 compared to 2013.
- Provision in the early years, where there is strong leadership, has also improved.
- Governors know the quality of the school's work well. They provide good challenge and support.
- Pupils enjoy their learning. Their good behaviour and positive attitudes contribute well to their good achievement. Pupils feel safe in school and say they are well cared for.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers provide well for their pupils' differing abilities. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are supported particularly well. Teaching assistants work skilfully alongside class teachers and contribute well to pupils' learning.
- Pupils achieve well from starting points on entering Nursery that are mostly significantly below what is typical for their age. They make good progress to reach average standards by the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Standards in mathematics and in writing, including handwriting and spelling, are not yet high enough at the end of Key Stage 1. The proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard in phonics (knowledge of letters and the sounds they make) in Year 1 is below average.
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 do not have enough opportunities to use mathematics skills in different ways to solve problems, or to record their work in their own way.
- Pupils' attendance is, although improving, still below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors saw learning in a range of lessons, two of which were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with school staff, members of the governing body, pupils, parents and a representative from the local authority.
- Too few parents responded to Ofsted’s online survey (Parent View) to provide a representative view. Questionnaires completed by members of staff were taken into account.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and examined a range of documents including: national assessment data and the school’s own assessments; minutes from governing body meetings; the school’s own view of its work; curriculum information; samples of pupils’ work and safeguarding documentation.

Inspection team

Kevin Johnson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Susan Davis

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Carmountside Primary Academy converted to become an academy school on 31 July 2013. When its predecessor school, Carmountside Primary School was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be good overall.
- This is a slightly smaller than average-sized primary school. Almost all pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is more than double the national average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.)
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is well above the national average.
- The school meets current floor standards, which are the minimum standards, set by the government, for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 6.
- There is full-time provision for early years in Nursery and Reception classes. The school has very recently opened a pre-Nursery class for two-year-old children. This provision is part time.
- The school provides a breakfast club during term-time.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in writing and mathematics further at Key Stage 1 by:
 - increasing the number of pupils who reach the expected standard in phonics by the end of Year 1
 - improving pupils' spelling and handwriting by the end of Year 2
 - allowing pupils more opportunities to use their mathematics knowledge to solve problems on their own in different ways and to record their work in a range of different ways.
- Continue to communicate to parents the importance of good attendance and take steps to improve pupils' attendance overall.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Since opening as an academy leaders have set clear aims for the school's future. These are communicated strongly to staff, pupils and parents so that there is a clear commitment to developing a school that is cherished by its community and makes a difference to pupils' lives.
- There is a very strong sense of care in the school where pupils know that they are valued, where there is equality of opportunity and discrimination is always challenged.
- The headteacher is well supported by a senior leadership team who work effectively as critical partners in planning the way forward and checking the school's work. Together they have an accurate view of how well the school provides for the pupils and what needs to be done to improve on that provision. They are aware, for example, that because most pupils' starting points in the early years are significantly below typical, despite the good progress made currently, standards at the end of Year 2 need to be higher.
- Leadership in the early years is good and effective management of children's development gives them a good start.
- Together, leaders gain a clear overview of teaching quality in the school and manage improvements well. Performance management of staff is well established with clear targets linked to the expectations set out in the Teachers' Standards. Productive links with the group of nearby schools mean that teachers share ideas and best practice regularly and continually improve their own skills.
- Middle leaders with responsibility for individual subjects have thoughtfully adapted the new primary curriculum to their pupils' needs and interests. Pupils enjoy learning and thrive on the new challenges that teachers' expertise, particularly in sport and music, have brought to the school. A wide range of educational visits and activities outside of lesson time nurture pupils' interests and enthusiasm well. The curriculum effectively promotes good spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness and prepares pupils well for a future life in modern Britain.
- The sports funding allocated to the school is used effectively. There are clear action plans for how this money is spent and the impact on pupils' fitness and well-being is closely watched. There is an increase of staff confidence due to their working alongside specialist sports coaches, and feedback from pupils about how much they enjoy lots of extra sports opportunities, both during and after school, is very positive.
- The pupil premium is used efficiently to ensure all pupils' needs are met. Additional staffing and resources are bringing good results. Those pupils supported by the funding achieve well and any gaps in attainment are closing.
- Leaders ensure that pupils are kept safe in school. There is clear guidance for staff and pupils on issues of safety and well-being and government requirements with regard to safeguarding are met.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have used their considerable expertise and management skills well to steer the school though its conversion to academy status. Systems are well established to take the school forward and there have been changes to the learning environment and the quality of what the school provides for pupils. Governors have reached out positively to meet the community's needs by extending provision for early years. As a governing body they are skilled at measuring the school's academic progress by checking national assessment data and they support the school's good links with other schools. Governors know where the school's strengths lie and what needs to be improved and offer good challenge and support to ensure that improvement. The overall quality of teaching is shared by school leaders, and governors know how increases in teachers' salaries are guided by progress towards performance targets. Finances are managed efficiently including the use of additional funding for sports and the pupil premium.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- All pupils enjoy school and are proud to be part of it. They enjoy their lessons and the challenges that teachers provide for them, although some say that they get too little variety in their homework!
- Behaviour and attitudes to learning are good, and sometimes exemplary in lessons. Pupils listen well, are keen to answer questions and settle to activities without fuss or time-wasting.
- Around the school they are sensible and very well-mannered. They have a natural curiosity, which adds to their charm and they are always friendly and polite. They know how to adjust their behaviour to suit

different circumstances such as during assemblies, or enjoying social time with friends in the dining room.

- The school council is active so that every pupil has the opportunity to put forward a view. Pupils are very willing to represent their school in sports or artistic activities in the wider community. They understand wider cultural influences that affect their lives and respect those whose backgrounds or circumstances differ from their own. Pupils have a clear perception of what is right or wrong.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and that the very rare bullying or name-calling that occurs is quickly dealt with by staff.
- Pupils understand the types of bullying they may encounter, including cyber-bullying, and have a good understanding of how to manage situations that may arise sensibly.
- Procedures for staying safe and safety rules are clearly understood.
- Parents are generally supportive of the school and what it does for their children. They appreciate the extra care provided through the breakfast club. They are increasingly strengthening their links with the school.
- Despite the positive steps that the school has taken to boost pupils' attendance, it is still below the national average. This is recognised by leaders as a significant aspect of pupils' behaviour to improve in order to raise achievement further.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is consistently good. New appointments have strengthened the overall quality since the school opened as an academy.
- Pupils' different abilities are well provided for through well-planned activities so that all groups make good progress.
- Teaching assistants work very effectively with teachers in classrooms, helping to check progress and support learning. Those who take groups of pupils with special educational needs outside of the class are skilled and confident. Their subject knowledge is good and they bring good pace to pupils' learning.
- English has been a recent focus for the school and new ways of teaching writing are showing positive results. Writing is made interesting and purposeful by well-chosen topics. For example, in one Key Stage 2 lesson it was linked to pupils' own values and how they thought about others. This encouraged some very thoughtful ideas as well as valuable personal development.
- In Key Stage 2, teachers prepare pupils well for writing with a good amount of time spent learning about grammar, punctuation and spelling, as well as vocabulary appropriate to the topic. However, this is not as successful in Key Stage 1 where there is still more ground to make up for pupils from their significantly below typical starting points. Although some good progress is evident in the way pupils develop ideas for writing the spelling and handwriting from many are holding the overall standard back.
- Phonics is taught skilfully in the early years. Teaching of phonics in Year 1 and the standards reached are improving due to the strengthening of teaching. This is having a good impact on their reading.
- Pupils get a sound grasp of number, shape and data handling and progress in mathematics gathers pace as pupils move through the school. Pupils are consistently challenged through good questioning, high expectation and well-matched work. Consequently, they are well behaved and learn well.
- Again the impact is more evident in Key Stage 2. Lower down the school, pupils do a lot of practice and make good progress in developing a secure understanding of how numbers work. However, there is a heavy reliance on published workbooks. This means that opportunities for pupils to explore mathematics to show how they can use their skills to think through and solve problems and work out their own ways of recording their work are too limited.
- There is good learning in other subjects, leading to good achievement in sports, science, music and art. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they plan thoughtfully to interest their pupils, enrich their learning and bring the best from them.
- Assessment is used well. In lessons swift intervention by teachers helps pupils to correct mistakes immediately and make progress. Marking is good in that it is understood by pupils and gives them clear guidance about how to improve.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make good progress from mostly significantly below typical starting points in the early years, to achieve well and reach average standards by the end of Year 6.
- When pupils enter Year 1 about one third of them are working at an expected level for their age with others not yet having achieved the expected levels. In 2014, many did not achieve the expected level in phonics. Standards in reading and writing were lower than in the previous year at the end of Year 2.
- Leaders have recognised the need to raise standards further at the end of Key Stage 1.
- There has been a big drive to improve these subjects and rates of progress have increased in the current year. School assessment and pupils' work show that most are working closer to expectations for their age, and reading particularly is improving well.
- Progress continues to gather pace in Years 3 to 6 where standards are in line with national averages in reading, writing and mathematics.
- A slight dip in standards occurred in 2014 at the end of Year 6. During that school year several pupils who had additional learning needs joined the year group, some of whom were unable to speak English.
- This has been quickly turned around and currently pupils' work and the school's assessments show that standards are on track to rise again by the end of this school year. Despite the slight faltering of standards in 2014, the proportions of pupils who made the progress expected of them and those who did better than expected from their starting points was very much better than the national proportion especially in writing, where they continue to achieve well.
- Pupils read regularly both in school and at home. They enjoy stories and recall those in their favourite books at home. They know the difference between fiction and non-fiction and use their skills at sounding out letters very well to read unfamiliar words. Reading regularly at home is something that the school has successfully encouraged and this has shown dividends in pupils' progress.
- Pupils in Year 6 have positive attitudes to reading. They read confidently, with good understanding and enjoyment. Pupils know how important it is to be able to read well for different purposes.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. Some parents made a point of letting inspectors know how well their children are supported by the school. The school uses a wide range of strategies and links with outside agencies to plan the right work for pupils. Parents are closely involved in the process and overall pupils' learning and progress are managed very well.
- The school increasingly identifies the most-able pupils throughout the school. In Year 6 most-able pupils are provided for well through special group teaching for mathematics and writing. These sessions are beginning to show impact. In 2014, the proportion of pupils who achieved the highest possible level (Level 6) in mathematics was similar to the national proportion. The proportion of pupils who made more than the progress expected of them in writing was slightly better than the national average. The number of pupils who reach the higher Level 3 at Key Stage 1, however, although improving in reading, is still acknowledged as an aspect to improve.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress from their varying starting points. When compared with all pupils nationally, disadvantaged pupils in the school are between one and two terms behind in reading and mathematics, but broadly similar in writing. The differences are similar in mathematics and reading when compared with others in the school, but disadvantaged pupils perform better than others in writing.

The early years provision is good

- Children enter Nursery with skills that are significantly below those that are typical for their age. In the past two years, none has been at a typical stage of development when starting.
- Language and communication skills and children's personal, social and emotional development are the key areas that staff have to work on initially, but skills and experiences in other areas are also lacking.
- A weekly visit to the early years by a speech therapist is providing valuable help for children with those particular needs.
- Children make good progress because they are taught well. Staff know the barriers that have to be overcome and know the children well. They provide exciting activities, both indoors and outside where children can learn to use materials confidently and solve problems for themselves during play.
- The importance of children learning to behave well is given high priority by staff members. Children quickly learn to share, to listen well and to follow their teachers' instructions.
- Teachers talk to children continually to extend their speaking skills and confidence to talk to others.
- Provision in Reception takes account of children's own ideas. They currently show an interest in outer

space, for example, so staff have created an environment where children can follow-up their interest and improve their language skills through role play.

- The teaching of literacy and number skills is well focused on children's individual needs. When learning phonics, children are carefully grouped according to their stages of learning so they build well on prior knowledge which helps them to make good progress.
- Children are very well cared for. There are good exchanges with parents about their children's well-being and children are kept safe in school. Staff are working very hard to encourage parents to become more involved with what their children do and how they develop their learning.
- Leadership of the early years is strong. The phase leader is very knowledgeable and experienced and leads the early years team very effectively. There has been good improvement over the past two years.
- Extra provision for early years was introduced at the beginning of the current term when the school opened a class for two-year-olds. This commendable action is helping to get these very young children off to a positive start. Those who attend mix well with Nursery and Reception children in the unit, pending an extension to the building where they will have their own space. They are very well looked after by staff and they develop their skills well alongside others.
- As a result of good provision, progress is good and improving. In 2014 about 30% of the children reached a good level of development by the end of Reception while others made measurable progress from their low starting points.

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	139846
Local authority	Stoke-On-Trent
Inspection number	449967

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	205
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ellie Walker
Headteacher	Philip McLauchlan
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01782 234676
Fax number	01782 236411
Email address	office@carmountside.org.uk

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