

Acre Hall Primary School

Irlam Road, Urmston, Manchester, M41 6NA

Inspection dates 20–21 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.

- Pupils make good progress throughout the academy from their various starting points. Rates of progress are improving rapidly for all groups of pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs in the mainstream academy, and within the small specialist classes, make good progress and achieve well as the result of effective teaching.
- The quality of teaching is good and improving as the result of high quality professional development and training for all staff.
- Children in the early years achieve well due to good teaching and interesting activities which motivate them and help them to learn.
- Leaders and governors have an accurate view of the academy's performance through regular checks on how well pupils are achieving.
- The executive headteacher and the head of school have high ambitions for pupils and these are shared by all staff, who strive to ensure that all pupils achieve well.
- Pupils' behaviour is good; pupils are well motivated and are keen to learn.
- The academy's work to keep pupils safe is good. Pupils say they feel safe and good safeguarding procedures are in place, which meet statutory requirements.
- The academy makes an effective contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through a rich and varied curriculum.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A slightly smaller percentage of the most able pupils reaches above average standards at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 than in most schools.
- Although pupils' work is regularly marked, the marking does not always help pupils to improve their work because they are not always given the opportunity to respond to teachers' comments.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors gathered a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching over time, including by looking at pupils' work in books and observing teaching.
- The inspectors observed 16 part-lessons taught by 12 different teachers. Of these, two lessons were observed jointly by an inspector and the head of school. In addition, the lead inspector observed the head of school giving feedback to staff.
- The inspectors met with two groups of pupils, talked to pupils informally at break and lunchtime and listened to pupils reading. Inspectors observed the teaching of reading through phonics (the sounds that letters make) and talked to Key Stage 2 pupils about how the academy helps them to read well.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, including the Chair, senior leaders, subject leaders and teachers.
- The inspectors took account of parents' views from the 14 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). In addition, one inspector talked to several parents prior to the start of the school day.
- Inspectors also took account of the 20 responses to the staff questionnaire completed during the inspection.
- The academy's work was observed and the inspectors looked at a number of documents, including safeguarding records, the improvement plan, the academy's data for tracking pupils' progress, internal and external reports on the quality of teaching and teachers' planning.

Inspection team

Andree Coleman, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Halford

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Acre Hall Primary School opened as an academy on 1st July 2013. It is part of The Dunham Trust which consists of two academies, Acre Hall and Elmridge Primary School. There is an executive headteacher who provides leadership to both academies and, in addition, Acre Hall Primary School has a head of school who is responsible for the work of the academy.
- The executive headteacher is a national leader of education (NLE) and she provides support to Acre Hall Primary School to improve the quality of teaching and to raise standards in particular.
- Acre Hall Primary School is smaller than most primary schools.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is above the national average.
- Within the academy, there is specially resourced provision comprising three small specialist classes catering for 30 pupils aged from five to 11, each with a statement of special educational needs. The provision's specialism is for pupils with complex needs and social, communication difficulties. In addition, there is a small number of pupils in the mainstream provision within the academy who have a statement of special educational needs.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average. These are pupils supported through pupil premium funding, which is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- Children in the early years attend full-time provision in the Reception class and part-time provision in the Nursery class.
- In 2014, the academy did not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The governing body provides a breakfast club for pupils who attend the school.
- Urmston Children's Centre is located on the Acre Hall Primary School site but is not managed by the academy. It is inspected separately and the report is available on the Ofsted website.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching, so a greater proportion of the most able pupils reaches above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - ensuring that teachers' high expectations for pupils are clearly communicated in all classes so pupils know what they have to do to reach above average standards
 - guiding pupils as to how they can judge the quality of their own work so they can improve it themselves.
- Increase the impact of teachers' marking on pupils' progress by giving pupils more opportunities to respond to teachers' marking and feedback.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The executive headteacher and head of school have rapidly improved the quality of teaching so that pupils' progress is good and improving. They set high expectations for pupils' achievement and make regular checks on pupils' progress and attainment to ensure that these are good. As a result, current attainment is much higher than at the end of last academic year, particularly in Key Stage 2 in reading, writing, mathematics and in English grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- The academy's ethos is supportive of pupils but also expects a high degree of commitment to learning. Pupils work hard to achieve this and this is evident in the pride they take in their work and in their very good attitudes to learning.
- The pupil premium funding is used effectively to support disadvantaged pupils and data show their achievement is in line with that of other pupils in the academy. Some of the funding is used well to provide more staff to support pupils' learning within class and in small groups.
- Leaders' careful tracking and comparison of how well different groups of pupils progress ensure all pupils have equal opportunities to succeed. These groups include disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs, both within the mainstream academy and within the small specialist classes.
- Good leadership of the specialist small classes ensures that all pupils achieve well from their various starting points. All leaders and staff throughout the academy work hard to create a harmonious atmosphere in order to foster good relations and tackle discrimination.
- Middle leaders lead their areas effectively so that pupils make good progress in a range of subjects. The subject leaders have contributed to establishing a broad and balanced curriculum.
- The academy's curriculum is rich and interesting. High-quality work in art and design and technology is evident in displays and in pupils' sketchbooks. Pupils speak warmly of the range of subjects they enjoy and, in particular, about the numerous extra-curricular clubs on offer. The academy also prepares pupils for life in modern Britain very well through a variety of activities, such as learning about the democratic process whilst electing pupils to become members of the school council.
- The academy's curriculum makes a very effective contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A good example of this is pupils' work in art to create poppies in preparation for an assembly to celebrate Armistice Day.
- Safeguarding arrangements are good and statutory requirements are met. Records are thorough and staff training is regular and up-to-date.
- The Dunham Trust, through the executive headteacher, provides highly-effective support for the academy which has led to a rapid improvement in the quality of teaching and in the standards reached by pupils.
- Careful use of the new primary school sport funding has increased the opportunities for pupils to take part in a range of sports and sporting competitions. More pupils are taking part in sport and expert sports coaches are working with teachers to train them to help pupils reach the performance levels of which they are capable.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body provides good support to the academy but is also rigorous in checking that pupils are achieving well and making good progress as the result of good or better teaching. Members of the governing body have a good grasp of pupils' assessment data and therefore, the academy's performance. They oversee performance management arrangements and reward teachers where performance is good or better. Underperformance is tackled swiftly and effective support put in place.
 - Governors track finances well and keep a close watch on spending. They ensure that funding, such as that to support disadvantaged pupils, is spent wisely and there is a positive impact on eligible pupils' achievement.
 - The governing body carries out its statutory duties well, including ensuring that safeguarding requirements are met.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the academy, such as in the dining room and on the playground. Key Stage 1 pupils have a considerable distance to walk to reach the

playground, due to building work, yet do so in a calm, sensible and orderly fashion.

- Pupils' learning in some classes is enhanced by their excellent attitudes and independence, which teachers work hard to foster through their high expectations. Year 1 pupils were observed working on a range of practical mathematics activities with good concentration and independence. On completing each activity, they sensibly moved to the next, showing a high degree of self-motivation.
- Most pupils take a great pride in their work which is well presented across a range of subjects and in writing books in particular. Pupils in Year 6 were observed proudly reading aloud their character descriptions for their classmates to evaluate.
- Pupils' behaviour is not yet outstanding because the exemplary attitudes to learning and diligence are not as well embedded in all classes.
- Pupils say they enjoy school and that bullying is rare. They know about different types of bullying and feel confident to report any concerns to adults. They show caring attitudes and are supportive toward those with disabilities or special educational needs.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe and parents spoken to, or who completed the online questionnaire, confirm this view.
- Pupils say the academy teaches them how to keep themselves safe and they demonstrate a good knowledge of how to use the internet safely.
- Attendance rates vary, but are broadly in line with national figures. The academy has successfully reduced the amount of persistent absence.

The quality of teaching is good

- Swift and decisive action by leaders has improved the quality of teaching. This is shown through the school's data, work in pupils' books and in the excellent learning environment in classrooms. Teaching is consistently good and some is outstanding.
- Teachers ensure that pupils know what they need to do to be successful. In some lessons, this information is very clear and detailed and pupils know exactly what is expected of them. In Year 6, pupils know precisely what features to include in writing to reach an above-average level and they are given opportunities to assess their own work and their partners' writing in order to improve it. In some other lessons, this information is less clear and so pupils, especially the most able, are not able to challenge themselves as much in order to reach the highest levels.
- The teaching of mathematics is particularly effective; pupils make impressive progress because they are given opportunities to tackle problems through cooperative working in pairs and small groups. In upper Key Stage 2, pupils were observed sharing their strategies with the rest of the class as they grappled with first adding and then multiplying fractions. They had an excellent grasp of the appropriate mathematical vocabulary and how to tackle the work as the result of the teacher's excellent subject knowledge and clear explanations.
- The teaching of phonics is good. Pupils in Year 2 were observed learning strategies to help them spell words with a suffix on the end, such as 'biggest.' As well as teaching pupils spelling patterns, common mistakes made by them in their writing are identified and pupils are given support in spelling words they use regularly, but find difficult to spell, such as 'when.'
- Assessment information is used very well to identify what pupils know and can do already. This information is used to plan future learning so that pupils make good progress. The academy is implementing a new system to assess pupils' attainment and progress in response to national changes in how pupils' attainment is measured.
- Teachers regularly mark pupils' work and give praise where it is due. The most effective marking clearly guides pupils as to how they can respond to improve their work and time is given for them to do this. This is not consistently the case in all classes.
- Teaching in the small specialist classes and that for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs in the mainstream part of the academy is good. Learning programmes are personalised so that pupils' needs and starting points are taken into account. Other adults are deployed very well to give appropriate support where required.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' progress is good and improving rapidly.
- Attainment is higher in reading than in other subjects, with almost half of the most able pupils in Year 6 on track to achieve above-average standards. This proportion is in line with the 2014 national figure. Just under one-third of pupils are on track to achieve above-average standards in writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2. These proportions are a little lower than national figures for 2014.
- Improving pupils' writing is a high priority and assessment data and work in books show that pupils are making rapid progress in all classes. Attainment in both writing and English grammar, punctuation and spelling for pupils in Year 6 is on track to be broadly in line with standards achieved nationally in 2014. From pupils' below average starting points, this represents good progress.
- In 2014, Year 6 pupils' achievement did not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This was due to a legacy of underachievement. This year, most Year 6 pupils are already working at the level expected of them by the end of Key Stage 2, with some working above this level in reading, writing and mathematics
- In Key Stage 1, standards are rising in reading, writing and mathematics with a greater percentage of pupils on-track to achieve the standards expected of them compared with the percentages reached nationally in 2014.
- Standards in Key Stage 1 are highest in reading and mathematics, compared with writing, with about half of pupils expected to reach above-average standards by the end of Year 2. This percentage is higher than the national figures for 2014. In writing, the percentage of pupils on track to reach above average standards is lower than the 2014 national figure.
- An increased percentage of pupils reached the required standard in the national screening check in phonics in 2014. Over three-quarters of pupils attained the required standard and this was higher than the national figure.
- In 2014, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 measured in average point scores, in reading, writing and mathematics was below other non-disadvantaged pupils nationally by about two terms, although their overall attainment was slightly higher than that of other pupils in the academy. Both groups made similar rates of progress, which were mostly below those made by pupils nationally from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2. This year, however, progress rates are much greater and both disadvantaged pupils and other pupils are making good progress. Where the attainment of disadvantaged pupils has been lower than of other pupils, this has been addressed and progress rates are greater, ensuring that any gaps in attainment are closing.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs in the mainstream part of the academy make good progress, particularly in writing. An effective team of teaching assistants is deployed, along with class teachers, to support these pupils and help them to overcome any difficulties. Pupils receive very good support within class and through small group activities in separate teaching areas.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs in the specialist small classes are mostly working at levels below those typical for pupils of their age, but make good progress, often from low starting points. Their specific learning needs are carefully identified and skilfully planned activities designed to meet their needs are highly effective in helping them to make good progress.

The early years provision is good

- Children's starting points vary from year to year and they enter the early years with skills and knowledge that are below, and sometimes well below, those typical for children of their age. Children's skills in communication, language, numbers and personal and social development are particularly weak. By the end of the Reception class, the percentage of children reaching a good level of development (the skills which ensure that they are ready to start Year 1) varies. In 2013, about three-quarters of children achieved a good level of development and in 2014 about half did so. Despite this variation, both classes of children made good progress. In 2014, 60% of children nationally reached a good level of development.
- Good leadership ensures that children's progress is checked regularly and that activities are pitched as just the right level to support their learning and development. For example, some children in the Nursery class were observed learning about numbers one and two and putting out objects to match the numbers. Other children worked on counting to 20 and were seen using equipment to help them learn about larger numbers.
- The quality of teaching is good and very good use is made of equipment and resources both indoors and

outdoors. Children take part in activities which inspire them to learn and find out about the world in which they live. For example, Reception children were fascinated to learn about how salt is used to melt ice. They thoroughly enjoyed sprinkling salt on pieces of ice and watching them melt. Activities such as these are typical and, as a result, children behave well, are highly motivated and keen to learn.

- Staff ensure that children are safe and that they are happy and settled in the early years.

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	138977
Local authority	Trafford
Inspection number	449823

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	236
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Vanstone
Headteacher	Ashlea White
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	0161 748 4356
Fax number	0161 749 9701
Email address	admin@acrehall.trafford.sch.uk

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