

James Elliman Academy

Elliman Avenue, Slough, SL2 5BA

Inspection dates

22–23 January 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well. They make good progress in mathematics and in literacy.
- The school's leadership works hard to ensure that teaching is good and continuing to improve.
- Pupils are appropriately challenged to make good progress in most lessons. The teaching of writing is a significant strength.
- Pupils at an early stage of learning English, the majority of pupils in the school, make good progress and achieve well.
- Early years provision is good and children make good progress.
- The school works hard to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Pupils show good attitudes to learning, feel very safe and behave well.
- Disadvantaged pupils are learning more rapidly so that the gaps between their attainment and that of their peers, both in school and nationally, are closing.
- School leaders have created a very cohesive community. At all levels, they are highly committed to the well-being of the pupils and constantly seek improvement in the opportunities they provide for them. Any weaknesses are rapidly addressed.
- Middle leaders fully share the school's vision for improvement and are increasingly effective.
- Governors are very involved in the school. They are well informed about the quality of teaching and make a significant contribution to driving improvement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Current good practice in the marking of writing is not as evident in the marking of other subjects.
- Pupils' individual targets are not used consistently across the school to fully boost their achievement.
- Pupils do not make as rapid progress in reading as they do in mathematics or in writing.
- Opportunities for pupils to deepen their knowledge of science are not as well developed as other areas of the curriculum.
- The targets set in relation to the managing of teachers' performance are not always closely linked to measurable outcomes.
- Leaders at all levels do not always use performance information rigorously enough to ensure staff are held fully to account for pupils' progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 31 lessons, four of which were seen jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors looked closely at pupils' written work for the current school year. They listened to some pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the Chair of the Academy Council and two other governors, the school's senior and subject leaders, and the Federation Principal.
- Inspectors took account of the 19 responses to the staff questionnaire and the 13 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. They also looked at the school's own survey of parents' views from 2014.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of academy trust and school documents, including plans for improvement and records of the school's checks on the quality of teaching. They also considered minutes of council meetings and records relating to behaviour, attendance, safeguarding and the systems used to check pupils' progress.

Inspection team

George Logan, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Michael Austins

Additional Inspector

Alison Botarelli

Additional Inspector

Alison Nettleship

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- James Elliman Academy is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The school serves an ethnically diverse community. Over 90% of pupils are from minority ethnic groups. Around half the pupils are of Pakistani heritage.
- Over 75% of the pupils speak English as an additional language.
- At about one in every seven, the proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is slightly below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is about one in every four pupils and is around the national average. This is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after.
- In the early years, children of Nursery age attend either a morning or an afternoon session. Children in the Reception Year all attend full time.
- The school shares a site with a children's centre. This is managed and inspected separately.
- The school offers a daily breakfast club. This is included in the current inspection.
- James Elliman Academy became an academy on 1 April 2013. When its predecessor school, James Elliman Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, on 20 June 2012, it was judged to be satisfactory.
- James Elliman Academy is part of the The Park Federation Academy Trust. This is a group of six large urban primary schools, three of which are located in Slough and three in Hayes, in the London Borough of Hillingdon. Each school has a local council, or governing body, which is, in turn, represented on the Board of Directors of the Academy Trust. The Academy Trust has a Chief Executive, who is also the Federation Principal, with oversight of all six schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that current good practice in the marking of writing is more evident in the marking of other subjects and that individual targets are used more consistently to enable pupils to accelerate their achievement.
- Build further upon pupils' improving achievement, by ensuring that:
 - pupils have more opportunities to develop their reading skills across a range of subjects and to extend still further their understanding of the use of language
 - pupils have access to better opportunities to develop depth of knowledge and understanding in science.
- Improve leadership, management and governance by ensuring that:
 - the targets set within the performance management system are clearly linked to measurable improvements in outcomes and are sufficiently challenging
 - leaders at all levels undertake rigorous analysis of performance information to ensure that staff are held fully to account.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The Principal and Vice-Principals receive effective support from the Federation Principal. Together, they form an ambitious team which communicates high expectations of staff and pupils alike. This strong sense of purpose has enabled the school to sustain the trajectory of improvement, particularly in pupils' achievement, which gathered momentum in the period prior to academy conversion. All senior leaders and staff are committed to improving pupils' educational opportunities, ensuring that they are well prepared for later education.
 - Senior leaders have access to the expertise and skills of staff in the partner academies and use this valuable resource well.
 - The leadership of teaching is effective, so that pupils experience mostly good teaching. Senior leaders tackle weaker teaching promptly in order to secure rapid improvement. Their evaluations of teaching are accurate.
 - Systems to manage teachers' performance are, overall, effective, using evidence from a range of sources to evaluate teachers' impact on learning. Teachers' targets are broadly linked to what pupils should achieve, although targets are not always rigorous or challenging enough to hold staff to account.
 - Middle leaders have a secure vision for improvement. They receive regular training and support and are continuing to develop their roles, so that they can hold staff more accountable for pupils' progress.
 - The school's self-evaluation is accurate. The improvement plan is focused on appropriate priorities. All staff understand their role in school improvement.
 - Funding to accelerate the progress of disadvantaged pupils is used appropriately and has a positive impact on their achievement and personal development.
 - School leaders promote pupils' personal and social development, and a positive ethos, effectively. This ensures that pupils are kept safe and behave well. Safeguarding requirements are met.
 - Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. British values are strongly evident in school displays. A Black History display makes explicit links with freedom of speech, rights and responsibilities. Remembrance Day displays link to issues of freedom and the democratic process.
 - Leaders have reviewed, alongside other trust schools, the structure of the subjects taught in order to accommodate recent changes to the National Curriculum. The breadth of the curriculum is reflected well in extensive high-quality display. Extra-curricular provision is well supported. New arrangements for evaluating and recording pupils' progress and attainment have been implemented.
 - Activities funded through the primary school sport funding have increased pupils' participation in after-school sports clubs and competitions. Additional staff training ensures that the changes are sustainable.
 - Parents are supportive of the school. Relationships are positive. This is a very cohesive community.
- **The governance of the school:**
- Council members know the school well. They have undertaken relevant training. Council members understand how the school's performance compares with that of schools nationally. However, while knowledgeable about pupils' attainment, they are less informed as to the progress pupils make. They challenge school leaders with confidence and are involved in school improvement at school and Board level. They successfully promote good relationships. They understand the strengths and weaknesses of teaching well. While governors ensure, broadly, that pay increases and promotion reflect individual teachers' effectiveness, not all targets are as sharp or challenging as they might be. Governors are fully committed to ensuring the school promotes tolerance, provides equality of opportunity and tackles potential discrimination. They understand the impact of additional funding on gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and others. They ensure, along with senior leaders, that statutory duties are met, including those for the safeguarding of pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Their positive attitudes and ability to sustain concentration for extended periods has a good impact on the progress they make. They are always eager to learn and endeavour to produce good-quality written work. They conduct themselves well in the busy lunch hall.
- Pupils contribute well to the smooth running of the school through taking on tasks in the classroom or playground. Some pupils act as classroom monitors or as playground buddies.

- Pupils' conduct is good. There are very few incidents of any significance. Detailed records of any incidents are maintained. Exclusions are rare and pupils' behaviour around the school is well managed.
- Attendance is above average. There are robust systems in place to promote good attendance.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Full checks are carried out on all staff prior to appointment. Safeguarding arrangements meet national requirements. The school site is secure. Risk assessments are thorough.
- Pupils feel very safe in school. They believe that adults will help them deal with any difficulties.
- Pupils learn about fire safety and road safety. They understand the risks posed by cyber-bullying. The school helps pupils to protect themselves from internet abuse.
- Pupils are aware that bullying may arise in different circumstances, but do not feel that it is a significant issue in school. They are certain that the school will respond robustly should any issues arise.
- The breakfast club provides well for the needs of pupils who arrive at school early.

The quality of teaching is good

- The teaching of literacy and mathematics is mostly good. Teachers are skilled in the teaching of writing, so that pupils make rapid progress. Most teachers provide good levels of challenge. This was evident, for example, in a successful Year 6 literacy lesson where pupils were extending their writing skills. They used a range of language structures and styles to produce a complex list of instructions. Pupils were engaged and committed throughout, keen to produce their best work.
- Teachers have a good understanding of the needs of pupils who are at an early stage of learning English. Tasks are well structured to meet their needs, and support staff are well deployed to help accelerate their learning.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well. Their progress is carefully tracked and they receive effective support from well-trained learning support staff. With more effective monitoring, progress is improving in the current year.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make) is effective, with additional support provided for pupils who have not made sufficiently rapid progress. The teaching of reading is efficient and pupils have sound technical skills. However, opportunities for pupils to extend their understanding of language further have not, in the past, been so well developed.
- In a few lessons, teachers' subject knowledge is less secure, or the tasks provided offer insufficient challenge.
- The school has mostly effective systems for checking and improving pupils' progress. Teachers' marking of writing is thorough and indicates clearly what pupils have to do next. These strengths are not consistently evident in the marking of other subjects, for example in science, where there is less evidence of high-quality presentation in pupils' written work. Targets are used to guide pupils' progress, although they are not consistently implemented across year groups.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Despite most children starting school with little or no knowledge of English, their standards of attainment at the end of Reception are broadly in line with those typical for their age. Thereafter, as they acquire more confidence in the use of English, pupils make good progress and achieve well in most subjects across the curriculum, including art and design.
- More pupils than average attained the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2014.
- By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment is broadly average. However, this achievement is more rapid than a superficial reading of the performance information suggests. Starting from a limited understanding of English, pupils take time to build confidence in the more subtle aspects of the language. Thereafter, their learning accelerates.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 in 2014 was broadly average, other than in reading, which was slightly below. The school has worked hard to boost achievement from historically low levels. Current information about pupils' progress indicates that the upward trend in attainment at Year 6 will be sustained in 2015. Currently, for example, there are many examples of high-quality writing both in Year 6 and across the school. The majority of pupils write coherently, legibly and at length.
- The most-able pupils are well supported. A well-above-average proportion attain at the higher Level 5 or above in mathematics and in grammar, punctuation and spelling. Ten pupils attained the challenging Level

6 in mathematics in 2014.

- In 2014, Year 6 pupils made good progress in mathematics, grammar, punctuation and spelling, and in writing. Progress in reading was a little slower because teachers have focused more on pupils' knowledge of phonics than on developing fluency and understanding of the texts they read. Pupils do not always fully grasp the nuances of language when working in their second language. Steady improvements in achievement across Key Stage 2 are contributing to steadily rising standards by the end of Year 6.
- The gap between the attainment in English and mathematics of disadvantaged pupils and that of others in the school, as well as of all pupils nationally, is narrowing. The average gap is now a little over one term. In some year groups, disadvantaged pupils are learning more rapidly than the others.
- Pakistani pupils, the most numerous ethnic group, attain at higher levels than similar pupils nationally and make more rapid progress.
- Pupils who are at an early stage of learning English, the majority, achieve well, because they receive good specialist support.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are mostly supported well and, despite some inconsistencies, make progress that generally compares favourably with that in other schools. There is evidence of more rapid progress in the current year.

The early years provision

is good

- Early years provision has many strengths. Children enter Nursery with levels of knowledge and skill which are below, and sometimes well below, those typical for their age. The majority of children speak only their home language on entry, most speak English as an additional language.
- The initial priorities are to enable children to communicate in English and to build their social skills. As a result of good teaching, children make good progress in Nursery, particularly in learning English. As their understanding of English develops, they are better placed to access the wider curriculum. Even so, their skills on entry to Reception are still below those typically found.
- With consistently good teaching, children achieve well. Their attainment on leaving Reception in 2014 was close to what is expected nationally. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development was in line with the national average. Children are generally well prepared for entry to Year 1.
- Effective teaching of phonics and rigorous assessment ensure that children make good progress. Staff know individual children well. Detailed checks and observations ensure that the school has accurate information about children's developmental needs. Expectations of children's personal and academic development are high.
- The school regularly reviews the areas of learning to ensure that children are effectively challenged to achieve well, including those who have special educational needs. There is breadth and depth of learning across all the key areas. There is a good balance between teacher-directed and free-choice activities. Children have frequent access to the well-resourced outdoor learning area.
- Children show independence when selecting resources and settling down. They have positive attitudes to learning. However, their concentration diminishes when they are not directly supported.
- Staff ensure that children behave well. They are safe and well looked after. The school promotes good links with parents.

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	139333
Local authority	Slough
Inspection number	449849

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	724
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jon Reekie
Principal	Liz Herod
Date of previous school inspection	No previous inspection
Telephone number	01753 810686
Fax number	01753 790816
Email address	lherod@theparkfederation.org

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