

# Purfleet Primary Academy

Tank Hill Road, Purfleet, RM19 1TA

**Inspection dates** 22–23 January 2015

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Pupils do not make consistently good enough progress to eliminate past underachievement, particularly in mathematics and writing. Although attainment is rising pupils are not reaching the levels of which they are capable.
- Teaching is improving but is not yet leading to consistently good learning and good progress over time. Variations between year groups and between classes within the same year groups have not been fully eliminated.
- Teachers in some classes do not have high enough expectations of the pupils.
- The work teachers set does not always challenge the pupils' thinking enough. This includes those with additional needs as well as the more able.
- In spite of recent changes, teachers across the academy do not provide consistently good guidance in their marking.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has quickly made a difference to the academy and is building the capacity to sustain recent improvements. She has successfully improved teaching, the pupils' progress and their behaviour and attendance in a short time.
- Arrangements for governance are very strong and effective. The trust has played a major role in supporting the academy's recent improvements.
- The academy is moving rapidly towards the headteacher's ambition of having sufficient high quality teaching to act as a model for others so it relies less on outside support.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are greatly improved over the last two terms, following the recent tightening and clarification of rules, responsibilities and consequences. Pupils say that they feel safe in the academy.
- Provision and achievement in the early years is good and has been more consistently so than in the rest of the school. The children's learning benefits from teaching that focuses sharply on their particular needs in a warm, supportive but challenging environment.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection was undertaken without the academy being given the usual notice.
- Inspectors observed 21 lessons, three of which were visited together with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors looked at work in pupils’ books from this year.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, academy staff, the Chair of the Interim Transition Board, and a representative from the academy trust.
- Inspectors took account of the 29 responses to Ofsted’s online parent questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors also held informal discussions with parents at the start of the school day and took account of the 156 responses to a recent parent questionnaire undertaken by the academy.
- Inspectors observed the academy’s work and looked at a number of documents, including the academy’s own information on pupils’ current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors also took account of the 27 responses to the staff questionnaire.

## Inspection team

|                              |                      |
|------------------------------|----------------------|
| Martin Beale, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Jacqueline Frost             | Additional Inspector |
| David Belsey                 | Additional Inspector |

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The academy is larger than most primary schools.
- Half of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. This proportion is much higher than in most primary schools. The largest group is made up by pupils of Black African heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils known to be eligible for funding through the pupil premium, about two in every five, is well above average. This is additional government funding which, in this school, supports pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or are looked-after children.
- At about one pupil in seven, the proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is broadly average.
- The Nursery caters for 46 children on a part-time basis. Children attend the three Reception classes full-time.
- The school became an academy under the REAch2 Academy Trust from the start of the summer term 2013.
- The headteacher took up post on a permanent basis in July 2014. The deputy headteacher left in October 2014 and a replacement was appointed immediately from within the academy.
- An Interim Transition Board has been responsible for governing the academy since January 2014. The academy is in the process of transferring to a Local Governing Board.
- The academy provides a daily breakfast club and an after-school club for pupils.
- The academy failed to meet the government's current floor standards in 2014, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Bring greater consistency to the impact of teaching on the pupils' learning and progress by ensuring that:
  - teachers have higher expectations of what the pupils can achieve
  - teachers provide work that enables all pupils, whatever their ability, to make good progress
  - pupils receive consistently better feedback from teachers and act on the guidance in order to improve to their work.
- Increase the pupils' progress in mathematics and writing in order to raise their attainment so that it is closer in line with reading.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher quickly identified on her arrival that behaviour had deteriorated and was badly affecting learning and the pupils' safety. She quickly clarified her expectations and achieved consistency from staff. She has established a climate in which learning can now take place unhindered by disruption.
- The headteacher also identified as priorities, raising attainment in Year 6 so pupils are better prepared for secondary school, and improving teaching across the academy. To this end, she has implemented robust systems for checking and improving the performance of teachers. She sets teachers challenging targets reflecting her ambitions for the pupils and provides individual training so teachers can meet these goals.
- In building the academy's capacity for further improvement, the headteacher is ensuring other leaders become more effective. Training and her expert coaching are making other leaders accountable for performance in their areas. They have played a significant part in recent, rapid, improvements by responding swiftly to half-termly assessment information and evaluating the impact of subsequent action taken.
- The academy is able to access a wide range of support and training from the Trust, including through the expertise of other academies within the Trust. Regular monitoring enables both the academy and the trust to identify progress and future action. This has enabled the school to improve the impact of teaching and outcomes for children in their Reception year.
- The academy now promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination more effectively than previously. It has used part of the pupil premium grant successfully to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils. This has included regular meetings with parents and providing places at breakfast club. Changes this year in the use of the pupil premium grant have led to the progress of disadvantaged pupils rising, and gaps closing significantly between their attainment and other pupils in the school, and nationally.
- Records of checks on staff are maintained accurately and audited regularly. Procedures for identifying pupils at risk have been tightened recently and any follow-up action needed is pursued thoroughly. New expertise in child protection is giving arrangements considerable rigour.
- Academy staff are working hard to establish a curriculum that inspires pupils while ensuring a strong focus on literacy and numeracy. This includes teachers promoting extended writing regularly through topics such as that on Ann Boleyn in Years 2, 4 and 6 through links with The Royal Opera House. This is leading to pupils exhibiting a greater love for learning.
- The academy gives promoting British values and the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development a high priority. Pupils learn about democracy and the rule of law by having a voice in developments, particularly around behaviour. They have the opportunity to express views and listen to the views of others through 'philosophy for children' sessions. Pupils learn acceptance and tolerance of others through assemblies, visitors to the school from different faiths and discussions about prejudice.
- The academy aims to use sport to raise the pupils' aspirations and as a lever to improve behaviour and attitudes. Additional funding is meeting these aims well. Pupils' engagement with sport in clubs and through competitions against other schools and within the academy has risen considerably.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The small team is highly expert in understanding assessment information, is sharply focused, challenging and shares the headteacher's ambitions for the pupils. Governors know teaching needs to improve further. They are very clear about the action being taken to improve teaching, behaviour, the pupils' achievement and leadership skills. They have made sure that close links are made between teachers' pay, the quality of their teaching and the progress of pupils in their classes. They are planning

carefully, with Trust support, for the change from the Transition Board to a Local Governing Board with wider representation. Governors have strengthened links with parents and pupils to ensure they fully understand their views. Careful financial management means the academy is in a position to undertake an ambitious building programme. They are vigilant in ensuring safeguarding arrangements are rigorously implemented.

## **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils say behaviour has improved because 'people know where they stand' and procedures are now followed through. Parents agree and report how much the school has changed in this respect since the arrival of the headteacher. Pupils value these changes highly. They no longer want to invoke the system of sanctions because they know the consequences they will face. Pupils treat each other with great consideration and, as peer mentors, help others with their problems.
- Pupils work hard and can often be seen supporting each other by sharing ideas or working together on activities. This accounts in part for their improving progress. Most respond quickly to their teachers, although a small number need reminders at times to concentrate when work does not challenge or engage them.

### **Safety**

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Safe practices are promoted at every opportunity. Pupils say they feel safe in school. Some pupils remember a time when poor behaviour meant they felt unsafe, but say that this has changed significantly for the better over the last year.
- Most parents are happier than previously about the academy's response to bullying. Pupils say that there used to be incidents but these have now been eliminated. A rise in fixed-term exclusions last year, when the headteacher raised expectations, has subsided along with incidents of unacceptable behaviour. This is the result of greater clarity and consistency among staff in implementing the procedures and involving pupils more in discussing what they want behaviour to be like in the academy.

## **The quality of teaching** requires improvement

- Teaching does not always provide sufficient challenge for all pupils to make them think deeply or move their learning forward. The work provided can be repetitive and does not extend the more able sufficiently and consistently. While pupils are expected to try things for themselves, a small number of less able are reluctant to do so and seek reassurance from teachers and support staff before starting their work.
- Marking procedures have changed this year and are being embraced more rapidly by teachers at Key Stage 1 and in Year 6 than is consistently the case elsewhere. Not all teachers are giving clear guidance to pupils on where they have made mistakes and how they can be eliminated. They also do not check that pupils act on any guidance they give and so improve their work.
- Not all teachers manage behaviour effectively so learning occasionally slows because of the need to issue reminders to pupils who have lost focus.
- Many teachers and support staff have a strong presence in the classroom, are vigilant and make sure pupils concentrate when they are working on tasks. They make learning interesting by the methods they adopt, the questions they ask and the resources they use. They provide activities to meet different needs and adapt their teaching when they see someone struggling or other pupils needing additional challenge.
- Staff are increasingly, but not universally, adopting strategies that work for special needs pupils, by taking into account recent training undertaken such as in how to support autistic children. Relationships are positive and strong, giving the pupils confidence to try things themselves. Support staff know the specific needs of the pupils and are sensitive to their needs when working with them.

**The achievement of pupils****requires improvement**

- Year 6 test results rose considerably in 2014, but were still below average in all subjects. This is because the school has a legacy of poor teaching. A significant number of pupils were not prepared sufficiently for secondary school and few reached the higher levels in any subject. Pupils of Black African backgrounds gained higher results than others in reading and writing, although this pattern is not repeated consistently across the academy.
- Variability in the quality of teaching now and in the past accounts for the slower progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs in some year groups. Where teaching is stronger they are now making good progress.
- The progress of the most able pupils is not significantly different from that of others in each year group. They are challenged more effectively in Key Stage 1 and Year 6. The number on track to reach Level 6 in mathematics is higher this year than in 2014.
- Disadvantaged pupils made slower progress than others in Year 6 in 2014. Gaps between their attainment and that of other pupils in the school and nationally were large. They were over five terms behind in mathematics and reading and about four terms in writing. They were more than six terms behind other pupils nationally in mathematics and over five terms in each of reading and writing. While gaps remain, they are closing quickly as teaching improves, reflecting better use of the pupil premium grant this year. The attainment of disadvantaged pupils is higher than others in some year groups.
- The legacy of slow progress in the past is being eliminated rapidly, although improvements seen in the short term have yet to be sustained over time. Pupils are making much improved progress at Key Stage 1 and in Year 6 but less consistently so in other year groups. Attainment is rising with more pupils on track to reach levels expected for their age by the end of Year 6.
- Children make good progress in the early years. Their attainment has been rising and was broadly average in 2014. More children than seen nationally reached levels expected by the end of Reception but relatively few pupils exceeded this.
- Pupils are making consistently good progress in reading and their attainment is now higher than in writing or mathematics. Phonics (sounds that letters make) skills are now developing more securely than previously. Results of the screening check for Year 1 pupils rose considerably in 2014, but were still below average. Evidence indicates that current Year 1 pupils are on track to exceed these results.

**The early years provision****is good**

- Children are prepared well for Year 1. Any entering the early years with skills in literacy and numeracy below those typical for their age catch up quickly through the sharp focus on both areas. Staff cater for the varying needs of the children well by using their regular assessments to plan sessions to promote the next stages of their learning.
- The children's progress is good and has continued to increase in all areas of learning because teaching is stronger than in the rest of the school. All staff are now targeting the more able more closely than previously with a small number already dipping into aspects of the Year 1 curriculum. This is because leaders identified that this did not happen enough last year when too few children reached higher levels.
- Leaders are quite aware where strengths lie in the early years and what action is needed to bring all teaching up to the quality of the best. The priority of establishing consistency across all classes is needed because not all teaching or gathering of assessment evidence is of the same high quality.
- Children behave well and are very keen to learn. They are happy, safe and secure because of the focus on helping them to settle in, and the vigilance of staff to any changes in their demeanour. Staff set high expectations and consistently remind children what is expected of them in a calm and supportive manner. Children listen carefully to staff when they lead sessions such as in phonics or when working on activities by themselves. They enjoy learning outside where they work well together sharing ideas and resources happily.

## 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

|                                |          |
|--------------------------------|----------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | 139380   |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Thurrock |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 449811   |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

|  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary                               |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Academy sponsor-led                   |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 3–11                                  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                                 |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 483                                   |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body                    |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Stuart Norman                         |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Lesley Mabey                          |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | N/A                                   |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01708 865038                          |
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