

The Giffard Catholic Primary Academy and Nursery

Hordern Close, Hordern Road, Wolverhampton, WV6 0HR

Inspection dates 26–27 February 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Disadvantaged pupils and those from White British backgrounds do not make enough progress.
- Some pupils at all ability levels have weak basic skills. This means that they make unnecessary mistakes in their calculations and writing.
- The gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and others are not closing quickly enough because extra funding has not been used effectively enough.
- Teachers do not always expect enough of pupils, especially the most able.
- Teachers do not adjust their teaching to help pupils who are struggling or to provide more challenge for those who find the work easy.
- Pupils are not given enough opportunities to develop an understanding of their learning through checking their own work and that of other pupils.
- Children's learning in the early years through investigation and exploration is not good because too few adults ask questions or make suggestions about what else children could explore.
- Leaders have not made improvements to the school quickly enough. They have been hampered by frequent changes of staffing, which have also limited leaders' success in improving the quality of teaching.

The school has the following strengths

- This is an improving school. Senior leaders are ambitious for the academy. They have identified accurately the areas that need improving and have detailed plans to achieve the required improvements.
- Pupils behave well at all times during the day. They enjoy coming to school and their attendance is improving.
- Pupils are safe at the academy.
- The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and relate well to each other.
- Governors (members of the board of directors and the academy committee) have an accurate view of the academy's effectiveness. They are involved in setting priorities for improvement and provide a good level of challenge for senior leaders.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 13 lessons. Five observations were carried out jointly with the Principal or the Acting Vice-Principal.
- Inspectors looked at pupils’ workbooks to assess pupils’ progress in the current school year. They listened to pupils reading. An inspector observed the quality of one-to-one and small-group support.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation, including the school’s own evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses, development plans and the data the academy collects on pupils’ progress. Documents detailing arrangements for safeguarding were reviewed and discussed.
- Inspectors held meetings with members of the board of directors and the academy committee. They spoke to staff with different levels of responsibility and a group of teaching assistants. They spoke to pupils formally and others informally at times throughout the school day. A discussion was held with the academy’s improvement advisor.
- Questionnaire responses from 15 members of staff were analysed.
- There were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, for them to be published. Inspectors looked at the results of the academy’s recent questionnaires giving parents’ views.

Inspection team

David Speakman, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jaimie Holbrook

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The academy is an average-sized primary school.
- Children in the Reception year attend full time. In the Nursery they attend part time.
- A well-above-average proportion of pupils come from a wide range of minority ethnic groups. The largest groups are White British (just over a quarter), those from other White backgrounds (almost a third), and Pakistani (an eighth). About a half of the pupils speak English as an additional language.
- An above-average number of pupils join or leave the academy at times other than usual.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or in the care of the local authority) is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is about average.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The governors run a 'drop-off' club each morning, and this was included in this inspection.
- There have been many staff changes recently. Over 70% of the staff are new to the school since the academy opened and there has been a great deal of change in the allocation of responsibility.
- The Giffard Academy converted to become an academy on 1 July 2013. When its predecessor school, The Giffard Catholic Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to require improvement. It is a member of the Bishop Cleary Catholic Multi-Academy Company. This consists of a secondary and four primary academies. Governance is provided by a multi-academy board of directors and each academy has its own academy committee, which is directly accountable to the board of directors.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is at least good in all classes by:
 - ensuring teachers use their observations of how well pupils are learning to reshape tasks, especially for the most able and those who find work difficult
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of doing
 - increasing planned opportunities for pupils to contribute to their own learning by taking a greater role in checking their own work and that of others
 - providing more adult guidance to improve learning through exploration and investigation in the early years.
- Accelerate pupils' progress and raise standards by:
 - increasing the levels of challenge in lessons so that greater proportions of pupils make more than nationally expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics
 - making sure that weaknesses in pupils' basic skills in numeracy and literacy are strengthened to provide a secure base for further learning
 - providing greater levels of targeted support for disadvantaged pupils to close the gaps in attainment between them and other pupils nationally more quickly.
- Increase the impact of leadership and management on school improvement by:
 - making sure that teachers act more effectively on advice from checks on the quality of teaching to eliminate the remaining weaknesses in teaching
 - developing clear strategies for checking how well pupils are learning in the humanities and creative subjects.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- As a result of the high number of staff changes, leaders have had difficulty in establishing continuity of leadership. Responsibilities for key areas such as mathematics and the early years have been allocated recently, so staff are still settling into new roles. English and the provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are competently led by the Principal and Vice-Principal, but the responsibilities are temporary. Leadership of some other subjects is currently being taken on by members of the senior leadership team.
- Teaching is regularly checked by senior leaders, but teachers have not yet acted fully on the feedback they receive. Although leaders have eliminated past ineffective teaching, teaching lacks a consistent quality across the academy. Consequently, pupils' progress is uneven across year groups.
- The academy has effective procedures to set targets for teachers to improve their work. Targets for all teaching staff, including the senior leaders, are challenging and focus on improving pupils' achievement. There are clear links between teachers' effectiveness and the award of pay rises. However, the use of target setting to improve teaching has been hampered by frequent changes in staffing.
- Senior leaders are developing the curriculum, and the academy is moving towards a themed approach to learning. They are developing the academy's approach to new assessment procedures in collaboration with local authority schools, but this is work in progress. Systems for checking on standards and pupils' progress do not give leaders a strong view on the quality of provision in the humanities and creative subjects.
- The pupil premium funding has not been used effectively enough to help disadvantaged pupils catch up in reading, writing or mathematics. Although attainment gaps are narrowing, they are still too wide. The funding was used to pay for additional adults to provide pupils with more learning support and to enable disadvantaged pupils to take part in all school activities. However, published information does not give details of all spending and it is not clear that the funds were used specifically to support disadvantaged pupils through targeted support to help them catch up more quickly.
- A new physical education subject leader joined in May 2014 and made arrangements to spend the primary sport funding to raise the profile of physical education. Improved equipment and resources are now helping to raise teachers' confidence and skills in teaching physical education. Although the school has identified intended outcomes, the impact of the funding has not been evaluated.
- Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are good and, at the time of the inspection, requirements were fully met. Staff are exceptionally vigilant over child protection matters and the safety of pupils.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Good social and moral development is shown in the way pupils from different backgrounds get on and by their good behaviour. The academy has a wide range of activities to help pupils understand what it means to be British. They learn about democratic processes through responsibility posts such as prefects and membership of the school council, which represents the pupils' voice. Pupils take these responsibilities seriously. Pupils are prepared well for life in multicultural Britain through developing their understanding of and respect for different lifestyles, customs and cultures.
- The academy's work is based on set of values that promotes equality of opportunity for all, regardless of ethnicity, ability, disability or background. Pupils from a widening range of backgrounds and experiences are welcomed. Adults strive to include all pupils, including any with a disability, are fully included in school life so no one feels left out. Adults set a good example of respect for all, so pupils in turn show respect for and courtesy towards one another. Pupils confirm that any form of discrimination would not be tolerated.
- Drawing on a wide range of evidence, senior leaders have identified accurately the priority areas for improvement. They have prepared detailed plans, with challenging targets and timescales to help them improve the academy. Their evaluations of pupils' achievement, teaching, the quality of leadership and

management and the academy's overall effectiveness are accurate.

- Members of the board of directors provide good levels of support and challenge for the academy. They provide direction for the ongoing improvement of the academy. They hold the Principal and senior leaders to account for the quality of education through a representative allocated to work specifically with this academy. The designated director for the academy maintains good links with the Principal, including through the academy committee.

■ The governance of the school:

- Members of the committee systematically challenge senior leaders over the effectiveness of the academy. They have a good understanding of their own responsibilities and ask searching questions, using robust measures to hold senior leaders to account. They provide a strong link with the board of directors.
- Some governor training has taken place and has had a positive impact on improvement, such as curriculum development.
- Members of the committee and the allocated member of the board of directors visit the academy to see for themselves how it is doing. They have a good knowledge of how well teachers are doing their jobs through first-hand experience and through discussions each half term with senior staff.
- They are aware of how the achievement of pupils compares with other schools. They challenge senior leaders on the academy's improvement by setting challenging targets for the performance of the Principal.
- The academy committee ensures that statutory requirements for safeguarding are met, but it has not ensured that published information for pupil premium funding and primary sports funding contain sufficient detail.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Their good attitudes, including a pride in the school, have a positive impact on learning. Pupils speak well about behaviour around the academy and in lessons. All staff and most parents who responded to the academy's own questionnaire said that behaviour is good.
- Behaviour at break times and on other occasions is good. Pupils play alongside each other calmly and respectfully. Pupils from different backgrounds mix well. They have a strong sense of what is right and what is wrong and say, 'We all try to follow the school rules.'
- Pupils from different backgrounds also work well with each other when they are learning. Pupils with good English often help those who struggle because of their limited understanding of English. This helps pupils who speak English as an additional language pick up English more quickly.
- Attendance is improving and is now average. The number of pupils who are regularly away from school is falling quickly.
- Pupils occasionally get restless when lessons fail to interest or challenge them.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Staff training in child protection is up to date and adults are very vigilant. Staff take appropriate action if they are worried about the safety of any child.
- Pupils are aware of the different forms bullying can take and know what to do if they ever need help. They say bullying is very rare and they are not aware of any threatening behaviour in school. They are confident that if bullying were to happen it would be dealt with effectively. They know about different types of bullying, including on social networks and the internet.
- Pupils are looked after well in the 'drop-off' club before school. There is a good range of activities that are

well supervised and parents spoken with feel secure in leaving their children there.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teachers do not always use the information they have on pupils' previous learning well enough to plan work that helps pupils at different levels of attainment make good progress. As a result, some pupils struggle with their work, and pupils who find the work easy are not provided with harder tasks to challenge their learning. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are sometimes too low, particularly for the most able.
- During lessons, teachers often make on-going assessments of how well pupils' are learning, but they do not always use this information to move pupils on to the next steps or provide greater challenge when pupils show they are ready. Sometimes when pupils struggle, teachers do not intervene to provide guidance or explain the task more clearly.
- Pupils are not given enough opportunities to contribute to their own learning or to develop understanding of what makes a piece of work good. In Year 6, pupils are given many opportunities to assess and comment on their own and others' work and to make improvements on what they have already done. However, this does not happen consistently throughout the school so the quality of learning is not uniformly good and pupils are not well enough prepared for what they will do in Year 6.
- Marking of pupils' work is regular, up to date and provides pupils with ideas on how they can improve. However, teachers too often do not pick up on basic mistakes, such as spelling, poor punctuation or untidy presentation, particularly for younger pupils. This means that pupils do not build a secure enough foundation on which to base future learning.
- With a more settled staff, teaching is now having greater impact on pupils' progress. Not all teachers have a clear understanding of how to help pupils learn, while others demonstrate the skill of enabling all pupils in their classes to make good progress.
- Teaching assistants know pupils individually and are aware of different needs. They are deployed well to provide focused support to disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and pupils at the early stages of learning English.
- Where learning is best, teachers promote an enthusiasm for learning by providing challenging tasks and giving pupils some control over their own learning. They set a good example by modelling accurate spelling, punctuation and neat handwriting, and provide interesting classroom displays to encourage pupils' curiosity.

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Children start in the Nursery with weaknesses in their knowledge and skills in language, communication and mathematics. Their personal, social and emotional development is better. From the very beginning, children typically settle well, separate from their parents easily, mix well with others and behave well. Children do not make sufficiently good progress, however, and the proportion of children achieving the expected level at the end of the Reception year, particularly in literacy and mathematics, is below average.
- Attainment in the national assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2014 was below average because too few pupils made the expected progress from their starting points. The results of the screening check for phonics (letters and the sounds they make) at the end of Year 1 were also below average.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 in 2014 was below average. The school's performance in this year group was affected by the high proportion of pupils (almost one in five), who joined the academy towards the end of the Key Stage with very limited English. The progress of pupils who attended throughout Key Stage 2 was better and, overall, their achievement in Year 6 in 2014 was typical for their age.

- Some pupils, at all levels of attainment, display weak basic skills in number and in writing. This means that they make unnecessary mistakes in calculation, spelling and punctuation.
- The most-able pupils do not do as well as they should. In lessons, they are not consistently challenged and they are not given hard enough work to enable them to reach the levels of which they are capable. At the ends of both key stages, too few pupils achieve higher levels.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not achieve as well as other pupils. In 2014, pupils in Year 6 made better progress than others in writing, but slower progress in reading and mathematics. Although the gap between their attainment and that of other pupils closed slightly in 2014, pupils supported by the pupil premium funding did not catch up with others in the academy or nationally. In mathematics, they were a year behind other pupils in the academy and five terms behind other pupils nationally. In reading, they were just over a term behind their peers, but over four terms behind pupils nationally. In writing, they were about a term in front of others in the academy but just over two terms behind other pupils nationally.
- In 2014, the proportions of pupils making the nationally expected progress compared favourably with national percentages in reading, writing and mathematics. In mathematics, the proportion making more than expected progress was close to average. However, the proportions of pupils making more than expected progress in reading and writing were below average.
- There are some differences in the achievements of different groups of pupils. In the national assessment tests at the end of Year 6 in 2014, disadvantaged pupils and those from White British backgrounds did not achieve as well as others. Those with previous low attainment, pupils who speak English as an additional language, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and those from a White, non-British backgrounds all achieved well.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language soon learn enough English to access the full curriculum. From this point they make good progress.
- Now that staffing is more stable and there are challenging targets for improvement, current progress is improving, although it is not yet good. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are working at levels expected for their ages and are making the expected progress. Through focused attention, White British pupils are now achieving well. However, disadvantaged pupils are still making slower progress than others in reading and writing, but better in mathematics. Pupils in Year 2 have benefited from the school's action to tackle weaknesses in reading and are making the progress that is expected nationally.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- When children choose their own activities, most stay occupied, but their learning through investigating and exploring different situations is not good. This is because adults are sometimes being used to teach phonics to help raise standards in reading and there is insufficient adult guidance to support children's learning through play. There is not enough adult intervention in the form of asking questions and making suggestions to ensure this learning is effective.
- The early years' leader has recently taken on this responsibility and, since taking over, she has identified where improvements are needed. There is an emphasis on developing interaction between adults and children and on making the indoor and outside learning environments more stimulating.
- During adult-led activities, adults match tasks well to children's learning needs and abilities. They talk to children to try to develop their English, but this interaction is lacking for most during times that children choose their own activities. Children's progress is limited because there are insufficient informal activities to extend their language. As a result, they are not fully prepared for their learning in Year 1.
- Children enjoy learning. They behave well and work calmly alongside other children, helping and supporting each other. They respond readily to adults' requests, and activities flow smoothly.

- Adults check carefully and regularly that children are safe. They are vigilant and, during the activities observed during the inspection, children were safe.

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	139894
Local authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	453419

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	240
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nick Benton
Principal	Ann Lombardi
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy
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