

Holley Park Academy

Ayton Road, Washington, Tyne and Wear, NE38 0LR

Inspection dates

10–11 March 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 | | Outstanding | 1 |
| 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.

- The headteacher and senior leaders provide excellent leadership to the academy and have skilfully guided it through its first years.
- Pupils' behaviour both in and out of class is of a very high order. They are extremely polite and courteous and proud of their academy.
- Teaching is good because teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and plan interesting lessons that help them to learn well.
- Children in the early years quickly settle in. They make good progress because all the staff know them well.
- All pupils make good progress no matter what their starting points. The standards they reach by the end of Year 6 are above average and rising year-on-year.
- Governors are very well informed about all aspects of academy life and share the same determination as the staff to make it the best it can be.
- The curriculum is well planned not only to allow pupils to achieve well in English and mathematics but also to become well-rounded and confident citizens with an accurate understanding of life in modern Britain.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Middle leaders do not have enough opportunities to check the quality of teaching in their subjects.
- Pupils are not always expected to make the improvements to their work suggested in teachers' marking and so they do not always learn from their mistakes.
- It is not always clear to pupils what they need to show in their work to reach their targets.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to investigate and solve mathematical problems.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors held meetings with staff, groups of pupils, and a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority. They also met the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body and held discussions with the early years leader, the special educational needs coordinator and the school's middle leaders. Inspectors also talked to parents at the start and end of the day.
- Inspectors looked at a range of evidence including the academy's improvement plan; the academy's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its own performance; data relating to pupil progress; the work in pupils' books and folders and documentation relating to safeguarding and child protection.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning and listened to pupils in Years 2 and 6 read. They conducted four lesson observations jointly with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors took account of 43 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and 21 questionnaires completed by the staff.
- Inspectors considered a report written by the local authority, documents relating to teachers' performance and minutes of governing body meetings.

Inspection team

| | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| Peter Evea, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| David Shearsmith | Additional Inspector |
| Deborah Wylie | Additional Inspector |

Full report

Information about this school

- Holley Park Academy converted to become an academy on 1 August 2012. When its predecessor school, Holley Park Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- This is an average-sized academy.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average. (The pupil premium is additional government funding to support those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or those looked after by the local authority.)
- Children attend the Reception class on a full-time basis and the Nursery class on a part-time basis. The Nursery class started in September 2014.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- The headteacher is a Local Leader in Education and supports leaders in other schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching further and so raise standards further, especially in Key Stage 1 and in mathematics by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to investigate and solve mathematical problems
 - ensuring that pupils know what they need to do to be successful in their work
 - insisting that pupils make the improvements suggested by teachers when they mark their work.
- Strengthen leadership further by giving middle leaders opportunities to check the quality of teaching in their subjects and areas of responsibility.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

are good

- The academy has been very skilfully guided through its first years as an academy by a very effective headteacher ably supported by an equally determined and tenacious senior leadership team. They have successfully created a vision for the academy's future which is shared by all staff.
- Senior leaders regularly check on the quality of teaching and the progress of pupils and as a result, have been able to implement changes that have resulted in improvements in both. Good systems to check on pupils' progress allow any underperformance of individuals to be identified, and regular meetings between senior leaders and teachers mean that extra help or greater challenge can be provided in a timely fashion. This demonstrates the academy's commitment to providing equality of opportunity.
- Middle leaders play an important part in helping the academy to improve further. They create action plans for their subjects and areas of responsibility and carry out some checks on progress. However, the senior leaders recognise that the middle leaders do not have the opportunity to carry out first-hand checks on the quality of teaching to ensure that improvements happen at a more rapid rate. Senior leaders have plans in place to address this.
- There are rigorous systems in place to check on the performance of teachers and staff pay awards and teachers' performance targets are closely linked to pupils' achievement.
- Child protection and safeguarding are very important to the academy. Leaders at all levels including governors make sure that all requirements are met and all staff know what to look for in relation to extremist views or behaviours and the dangers associated with radicalisation.
- The very creative curriculum helps pupils to develop a clear understanding of traditional British values as well as meeting their interests in sports, art and music. Pupils particularly appreciate and value all the opportunities to learn outdoors and these form a key part of the curriculum. While there is an appropriate focus on English and mathematics, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to investigate and solve mathematical problems linked to real-life scenarios.
- The school works very effectively to foster good relations and to tackle discrimination in any form. Pupils say that the school is like a big family where everyone is equally valued.
- The primary school sports funding is used very well to improve the quality of teaching of physical education (PE), to extend the range of after-school clubs and activities and to increase the range of sports and competitions available to pupils. The academy has developed good links with local clubs so that pupils can pursue their chosen sports outside of school. During the inspection the after-school dance club was well attended.
- The pupil premium funding is used well to provide additional support and resources to individuals and small groups both in and out of class. The small number of pupils who are eligible for this funding make progress that is as good and often better than their classmates and the funding ensures that they have access to all that the academy has to offer.
- The academy works closely with a partner academy to provide much appreciated mutual support.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know the academy well through detailed reports and regular visits. They share the same passion as senior leaders to make the academy as good as it can possibly be and they have an accurate view of its strengths. They use their varied skills to good effect, especially in checking on the achievement of pupils and the quality of teaching. They oversee the arrangements for the management of teachers' performance so that only good teaching is rewarded and weaknesses are tackled. They are determined in making sure that all their statutory duties are met, particularly in relation to safeguarding. Governors oversee the spending of pupil premium and additional sports funding and make sure that they have a good impact on pupils' progress and physical well-being.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils are exceptionally well behaved in and out of class. Their positive attitudes to learning shine through and they talk readily about their love of learning.
- Pupils are always extremely polite and courteous. They are very proud of their academy which they typically describe as like a big family and they wear their smart uniforms with pride.
- There are clear systems to encourage and reward the best behaviour which everyone follows and pupils share the same very high expectations of behaviour as the staff.

- Older pupils have posts of responsibility. There is a very active school council and pupils also act as buddies to younger pupils. The break time monitors help ensure that the academy runs smoothly while pupils are at play. Pupils take their responsibilities very seriously and carry out their duties conscientiously.
- Attendance is above average and pupils come to the academy on time. This is partly because of the hard work of staff to encourage regular attendance and partly because pupils want to come to the academy. Some parents report that their children cannot wait for weekends and holidays to end!

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Staff and governors are meticulous in following policies and there are very clear procedures in place to make pupils safe and to follow up any accidents. Pupils say that they feel extremely safe and parents agree that the academy provides a safe and secure environment.
- Pupils develop an excellent understanding of the different risks they might face, particularly when near roads and when using the internet. They are especially alert when learning outdoors and their very sensible behaviour when on visits helps to keep them safe.
- Pupils say that bullying is extremely rare. They know what bullying in its different forms looks like, including cyber-bullying, and are confident that if any should occur it would be swiftly tackled. In their words, 'Teachers would be right on it and it would go away, forever'.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Senior leaders have ensured through regular monitoring and effective professional development that the quality of teaching has improved and is good overall, with some that is outstanding.
- Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and expect pupils to work hard to reach ambitious targets. They plan lessons which capture pupils' interests and give them appropriate activities which give pupils opportunities to learn. In some lessons, however, teachers do not make sure that pupils know what they need to do to be successful and, as a result, pupils are not able to make sure their work is as good as it can be before it is marked. In addition, not all teachers insist that pupils make the improvements to their work which they suggest when marking books.
- Strong relationships are seen throughout the academy and pupils hold their teachers in high regard, readily acknowledging the willingness of teachers to go the extra mile to provide additional help and encouragement where it is needed.
- Teaching assistants are an asset to the school. The work they do in supporting pupils with special educational needs and in giving extra challenge to the most able pupils is impressive.
- Basic mathematical skills are taught well and pupils develop a sound foundation for future mathematical learning. When given the chance to investigate and solve mathematical problems they relish the challenge. The Year 6 class, for example, became completely absorbed in investigating consecutive numbers and were oblivious to the presence of an inspector and their headteacher. However, these opportunities are not frequent enough.
- Pupils get off to a very good start in learning to read at an early age and build on their skills as they move through the school. They willingly talk about favourite authors and are given frequent opportunities to read in school and are encouraged to read at home.
- Pupils are given much to write about in their literacy lessons and in other subjects. They write with increasing accuracy and length as their skills develop and the walls and noticeboards contain many examples of high quality writing. Pupils work hard to gain the privilege of writing in pen and develop good handwriting styles as they mature.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils' achievement has improved. Pupils in all year groups typically make good progress but progress is faster in Key Stage 2 and standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are improving over time.
- Children join the school in the Nursery Year with skills and knowledge that are typical for children of their age. They make good progress so that by the end of the Reception Year a high proportion are ready for learning in Year 1. Good progress continues, especially in Key Stage 2 so that standards, especially in reading and writing, but also in mathematics, are typically above national averages. Although there appeared to be a dip in achievement in 2014, almost a third of the year group had particularly low starting points and the evidence gathered during the inspection confirms that this was an exception.

- Standards in reading are very good. Pupils get off to a good start in developing their phonic knowledge (letters and the sounds they make). Reading has a high profile in the school and pupils benefit from the frequent opportunities to read in school and the encouragement to read regularly at home.
- Standards in writing are approaching those in reading. Pupils develop their skills in adapting their style to suit different audiences and purposes, and write convincingly in literacy lessons and in other subjects. By the time they reach Year 6, they understand that writing is a craft that authors use and that they can master this themselves.
- Standards in mathematics, while good, are not as high as in English. Although pupils learn their basic skills and knowledge of mathematics well, the progress and subsequent attainment of some pupils are hampered because they do not use their skills to investigate and solve mathematical problems often enough.
- The academy is using the pupil premium funding well to provide extra support for pupils.. In Year 6 in 2014 there were too few eligible pupils to make meaningful comparisons without identifying individual pupils. However, disadvantaged pupils typically make better progress than others in the academy and any gaps in attainment have closed by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities make good progress from their different starting points. Their needs are accurately identified by an experienced and effective special educational needs coordinator and they are very well supported by skilled and dedicated staff who take pains to make sure that any barriers to learning are removed.
- The most able pupils make good progress in all subjects because they are challenged and supported well in class. They really benefit from an effective partnership with the nearby secondary academy where Year 6 pupils receive specialist teaching. This is preparing them well for the very high Level 6 national tests in English and mathematics which they will sit later this year.

The early years provision

is good

- Children join the Nursery with the skills and knowledge that are typical for their age. They make good progress through the early years and the number of children who reach a good level of development and are subsequently ready for learning in Year 1 is above average and rising year-on-year.
- The learning environment, both inside and outside, is used well to provide interesting experiences in all areas of learning. Teachers and other adults plan activities that capture children's interest and makes them want to learn. Teaching is effective and is based on a secure understanding of children's needs and, as a result, children make good progress.
- Leadership is effective and a close-knit team has been created. They share the same drive to keep children safe and secure at all times. There are well understood routines and practices which keep children safe especially when learning outside and also at the beginning and end of the school day.
- Children's behaviour is of a high order. Younger children benefit from learning in the same environment as older children and quickly absorb the routines of happy life in early years. As a result of the caring environment created by skilled staff, the children become happy and inquisitive learners. Parents are encouraged to support their child's learning and they value the booklets, known as learning journeys, that keep them well-informed about all of their child's accomplishments.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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

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| Unique reference number | 138534 |
| Local authority | Sunderland |
| Inspection number | 449698 |

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

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| 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 | 262 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | David Haw |
| Headteacher | Sharon Richards |
| Date of previous school inspection | Not previously inspected as an academy |
| Telephone number | 01912193740 |
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