

Chandlers Ridge Academy

Chandlers Ridge, Middlesbrough, TS7 0JL

Inspection dates

10–11 March 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

- Expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough, particularly for children who transfer from the early years provision to Key Stage 1.
- The quality of teaching and assessment in the early years provision requires improvement.
- Teaching is not consistently good enough in Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2.
- Pupils' progress slows in Key Stage 1 and is variable in Key Stage 2 because the work is not challenging enough.
- Not all teachers use pupils' assessment information well enough to plan lessons that match their abilities.
- Teachers do not build well enough on pupils' knowledge and skills in English and mathematics in their other subjects. This slows progress, particularly in developing pupils' writing skills.
- Checks on the academy's performance are infrequent and senior leaders do not use the information sufficiently well to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- Subject leaders do not have a clear overview of the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' learning and achievement across the academy. Some subject leaders are unclear about what is expected of them.
- Performance management processes lack rigour, and teachers and those in leadership positions are not fully held to account.
- Development plans do not include sufficient detail to help leaders measure whether actions have been successful.
- Although governors are supportive, they have not challenged academy leaders well enough because they have not received sufficient information about the academy's performance.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils achieve well in Years 5 and 6 in response to good teaching. Standards are above average by the end of Key Stage 2 and many pupils achieve highly in reading and mathematics.
- The behaviour of pupils in many lessons and around the academy is good. They show a willingness to take on responsibility and work and play happily together.
- Academy leaders make sure that pupils are safe and secure. Pupils know how to keep themselves and others safe.
- The curriculum gives pupils a breadth of interesting experiences which enhance their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 22 lessons. Classes in all year groups were observed.
- One lesson was observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors observed pupils in lessons, around the academy and during play. They looked at a selection of pupils’ work from all year groups and listened to some pupils read.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, the headteacher, deputy headteacher, senior leaders and teachers. Discussions were held with the Chair of the Governing Body.
- The inspection took account of the 54 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) that were submitted during the course of the inspection. The inspectors also spoke to parents at the beginning of the day and held a telephone conversation with one parent.
- Inspectors took account of feedback from 40 staff questionnaires.
- The inspection team observed the academy’s work and examined a range of documentation including the academy’s own records of pupils’ learning and progress, the checks made on the quality of teaching and performance of staff, and those relating to behaviour, attendance, child protection and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Gina White, Lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Julie Deville	Additional Inspector
Geoffry Seagrove	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Chandlers Ridge became an academy in September 2012. It is not part of an academy chain or supported by the local authority.
- The academy is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and a small number of pupils are from a range of other ethnic backgrounds. The proportion for whom English is not their first language is 7.5%.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding is well below the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children that are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below the national average.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The early years provision is part time in the Nursery classes and full time in Reception.
- The academy is in a local teaching alliance partnership with Nunthorpe Academy.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in the early years provision, Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2 in order to accelerate pupils' progress by:
 - making sure that teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are consistently high for all pupils
 - ensuring that all pupils are provided with work that is pitched at the right level, with sufficient challenge, to enable them to develop and apply their skills in reading, writing and mathematics in all subjects
 - regularly checking learning in lessons and reshaping activities so that pupils are continuously challenged and can move onto the next step of learning more quickly
 - ensuring that all pupils, on all occasions, produce high-quality written work.
- Increase the impact of leadership and management and accelerate the rate at which the school improves by:
 - making sure that leaders and teachers know what is expected of them
 - ensuring that leaders' checks on the quality of the academy's work take place more frequently, are finely focused to identify the difference that actions are making to pupils' learning, and are used to inform the next steps for improvement
 - sharpening academy planning to ensure that plans drive improvement, are implemented swiftly, and the success criteria and milestone targets show the intended impact on pupils' learning and progress
 - ensuring that the quality of information arising from monitoring and evaluation of the academy's work is analysed and evaluated thoroughly and provided promptly to governors, to inform their decision making and enable them to hold senior leaders to account
 - ensuring that the way teachers are rewarded is closely linked to their performance and the progress made by pupils whom they teach.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because senior leaders and governors have not secured consistently good teaching across the academy. Checks on the quality of teaching are carried out annually with a lack of focus on the key priorities to help to drive improvement.
- Leaders do not review the academy's work rigorously enough and good self-evaluation practices are not embedded. Leaders rarely draw information and data together well or systematically to support regular review of their improvement plans. Consequently, the development of teaching and actions to improve provision in early years happen at a much slower pace than is needed.
- Leaders have created a positive ethos in which good behaviour can flourish, and high expectations of respect for all and courtesy pervade the academy. Pupils in Year 6 are well prepared and supported to take their next steps through well-established arrangements with local secondary schools.
- The headteacher inspires a committed and dedicated staff and governors. Teachers are given a high level of autonomy; there are some strengths emerging, for example, in mathematics and in the work taking place to support disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Middle leaders who are responsible for other areas of the academy, including those who are subject leaders, are not always clear about how to undertake their roles. There is a lack of accountability and clarity in relation to their roles. Job descriptions change and are renegotiated annually, creating uncertainty.
- Key leaders, including governors, lack focus on communicating high expectations. Systems for the management of teachers' performance are not sharply focused in holding teachers to account for their work to improve pupils' achievement.
- Assessment data and information are starting to be shared more fully with teachers and across year groups. However, systems for tracking pupils' progress and the rigour with which leaders monitor the behaviour, attendance and punctuality of pupils do not always lead to informative, sharp or timely analysis.
- The majority of parents who responded to Parent View would recommend the school to other parents. However, some parents feel that communication is not as good as it should be. Over one third of parents would like to receive better information about their children's progress.
- The curriculum has strengths in the range of activities provided to enhance pupils' learning. Sporting, musical and cultural opportunities, such as taking part in visits to the ballet, promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. The academic curriculum is not as strong. There are few opportunities to develop pupils' reading, writing and mathematics skills in other subjects. Pupils' achievements and work in other subjects are not always checked carefully to ensure good progress.
- The academy's work to promote values of democracy, tolerance and respect for other faiths prepares pupils positively to take the next steps in their lives.
- Adequate use is made of the primary school sport funding. As a result, pupils are enjoying and participating enthusiastically in a wide range of sports.
- Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements. There is no evidence of discrimination in any form. Good use of additional government funding has successfully helped to close gaps in the achievements of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and other learners.
- The governance of the school:
 - Governors are working towards getting a better grasp of their responsibilities. Recent changes to governance have yet to establish a better balance between support and challenge.
 - Governors' involvement in planning and self-evaluation is minimal. Targets and success criteria in improvement plans make little reference to the difference they are intended to have on pupils' learning and progress. This does not help governors to check whether plans are implemented effectively.
 - The governing body receives information and data but they are not always presented in a helpful and accessible way. Consequently, governors do not have the insights that would help them to hold the headteacher and senior leaders fully to account for the impact of actions to improve pupils' achievement. Steps to commission reviews by external consultants have helped governors to understand how well the academy compares on a range of performance indicators, including those relating to the achievement of disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium funding.
 - Governors have insufficient knowledge about what is being done to manage the performance of teachers but have ensured that policies are in place and that the headteacher is dealing with this.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Typically, pupils are keen to learn; they work hard and are capable of working on their own. Pupils sustain concentration very well, despite interruptions to lessons due to the layout of rooms. On occasions, pupils are not given work that is challenging enough; they sometimes lose attention and their workrate slows.
- The academy is a calm and orderly place. Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and adults, are positive and respectful. Pupils are polite, helpful and considerate. They know and follow school rules and play sensibly together in the playground.
- Occasionally, when behaviour falls short of the academy's high expectations, a small word or stern look from an adult is all that is needed for pupils to settle. Instances of poor behaviour are rare and quickly resolved. Parents who responded to the online questionnaire reported that they are generally happy with behaviour.
- Responsibility and independence are encouraged. Pupils are proud to serve on the School Council and to act as house captains, librarians and play leaders. Pupils say they are pleased to be able to play their part in making Chandlers Ridge a caring, friendly and happy community.
- Attendance is above average but just below the academy's own target. The headteacher has led a very recent drive to improve punctuality and to tackle entrenched and persistent absence. The impact of this work has yet to be evaluated.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. In their responses to the online questionnaire, almost all parents felt that their children were happy and kept safe.
- Supervision at playtimes and oversight of pupils are good. On rare occasions, pupils can be unkind and fall out. These disagreements are quickly and skilfully dealt with by staff and soon forgotten.
- A very few parents raised concerns about the way bullying is dealt with. Many do not know about this aspect of the academy's work. Discussions with pupils and checks of the academy's behaviour records reveal that instances of bullying are rare and quickly resolved.
- Pupils say they feel safe at school. They have a good understanding of the different kinds of bullying and know how to keep themselves safe when using the internet and mobile phones.

The quality of teaching**requires improvement**

- Not all pupils have had the benefit of good teaching over time. Expectations of what pupils can do have not always been high enough: assessment information has not been used effectively to build on earlier knowledge and skills to plan lessons that match pupils' abilities. This has slowed pupils' progress, particularly when they transfer into new classes and especially from the early years provision into Key Stage 1.
- Stronger teaching in Years 5 and 6 classes, together with the support of additional staff and focused strategies, helps pupils to catch up, particularly in mathematics. However, the quality of teaching and its impact on learning remain variable in other year groups.
- Typically in lessons, pupils are clear about what they have to do because teachers explain tasks well, but sometimes pupils are allowed to spend too long on tasks that repeat rather than extend their learning. In some classes, careful and skilful questioning by teachers and teaching assistants leads to swift intervention and re-adjustment of work to ensure it is always challenging to get the best from pupils.
- Teachers are changing and developing their teaching of writing. More opportunities for sustained writing are emerging across all classes. This provides useful opportunities for pupils to learn how to write in different contexts and to develop and apply the rules of grammar and spelling. However, the teaching of handwriting is inconsistent and high standards of presentation are not always insisted upon in pupils' work in all subjects.
- Regular 'reading challenges' are encouraging pupils to read more widely, especially in Key Stage 1. Taking turns to read aloud in small groups, interspersed with discussions about their books, is helping pupils to gain a deeper understanding of plots and to describe characters in more interesting ways in their own stories.
- An emphasis on testing and a daily individual mathematics challenge are much enjoyed by Key Stage 2 pupils. The most able pupils in particular relish these opportunities to put their knowledge and skills to the

test and to tackle more advanced work at higher levels. Pupils said, 'There is always a challenge and work to go on to'.

- Pupils' skills in reading, writing and mathematics are not reinforced well enough across the curriculum, especially in other subjects. This slows pupils' learning and progress.
- Recent changes to marking place more emphasis on feedback and discussion with pupils about their work in writing and mathematics. Some good practice is emerging, with pupils acting on the responses. However, this is not applied well enough in all subjects or shared across all teams of teachers to ensure consistent approaches across the school.
- Homework is enjoyed by pupils and some put much time and effort into it. Some parents, who responded to Parent View and those who spoke to inspectors, would like to see more useful homework set.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils make inconsistent progress as they move through the academy due to variations in the quality of teaching. Too few pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stage 1 and in Years 3 and 4. Leaders and managers have been slow to investigate and tackle the reasons for this.
- The skills and abilities that children have when they start their education vary from year to year. They usually are at levels typical for their age but sometimes higher.
- In the phonics (sounds that letters make) screening check, carried out at the end of Year 1, increasing numbers of pupils reached the national expectations for six-year-olds in 2013 and 2014 and this is reflected in pupils' reading.
- In Key Stage 1, pupils' learning and progress slows. Work is not always structured well enough to help pupils, particularly the most able, to build on their earlier achievements and to extend their knowledge and skills in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils who achieve the highest levels at the end of Key Stage 1 has declined steadily since the academy opened.
- Pupils make steady, rather than good, progress across Key Stages 1 and 2 in reading and writing. Although the standards reached by pupils at the end of Year 6 have increased gradually since the academy opened, this is due to consistently good teaching and additional support, especially in mathematics, in the final years of schooling.
- The most able pupils achieve highly in mathematics by the end of Year 6. Teachers plan tasks for this group that stretch their capabilities and challenge them to reach their full potential. As a result, the proportion reaching the higher levels is increasing.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are beginning to make similar progress to that of their classmates. Pupils' attainment and progress are carefully tracked and most are making good progress to overcome barriers to learning and achieve their individual targets. Individual support provided by teaching assistants is successfully helping pupils to make swifter progress.
- The attainment and progress of disadvantaged groups are not significantly different to their classmates' in each year group. By the end of Year 6, gaps in attainment and progress close. In 2014, disadvantaged pupils were typically ahead in reading, writing and mathematics compared to pupils nationally and three terms ahead of their classmates.
- There are no significant differences between the achievement of boys and girls. Although pupils study a broad range of subjects, assessments of their work take place infrequently. Data and information are not fully collated and analysed by the academy.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- Achievement is not consistent across the early years. Children's progress and development in Nursery classes have not always been built upon consistently when they enter Reception classes. Consequently, the effectiveness of the early years provision requires improvement.
- Most children start in the Nursery with strengths in speech, language and number. Children make rapid progress, settling into routines and developing self-control. For example, children are starting to recognise their names and, with their parents' support, they 'sign in' on arrival. They quickly choose activities from a broad range that is well planned to cover all areas of learning. Children are developing in confidence, are familiar with staff and are keen to attend.
- Despite the start made in Nursery, children's progress dips and is much slower in Reception classes. This is because records of children's progress have not always been passed on to teachers. Consequently, tasks and activities have not been adapted well enough to ensure that they continue to be challenging.

Children's understanding of how to blend letters and sounds to form words is a weaker aspect of teaching.

- The new early years leader has started to make a concerted approach to develop provision. The assessment of learning and progress is beginning to be more accurate in response to a consistent focus on checking the reliability of the judgements made by all members of the early years teaching team. This work is at an early stage.
- Communication with parents is improving, although some parents are not always kept informed about their children's progress or involved as much as they would like to be.
- Children are engaged in activities and have opportunities to choose and make decisions. They are well cared for by adults, and learn and play happily and safely together in the secure environment.

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	138656
Local authority	Middlesbrough
Inspection number	449702

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	378
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Thwaites
Headteacher	William Smith
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01642 312741
Fax number	01642 327779
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