

The Orchards Primary Academy

Rhayader Road, Northfield, Birmingham, B31 1TX

Inspection dates 18–19 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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.

- The headteacher, well supported by other leaders and by the academy trust, has made significant improvements to the academy in recent years.
- Good teaching helps all groups of pupils to make good progress. Rates of progress have been much faster in the last two years than previously.
- Many children start the academy with low levels of skills and understanding. They catch up well and leave the academy with attainment in reading, writing and mathematics which is at national average levels.
- Children are well taught and make good progress in the early years classes.
- Pupils who have difficulties with speech and language are given effective help, so their speaking skills develop well.
- Pupils enjoy interesting and exciting lessons and topics. Many clubs, activities, trips, visitors and special events develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are warm and respectful. Teachers know their pupils well. The quality of teaching continues to improve.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the academy site. They are cared for and feel safe in the academy.
- Leaders and teachers keep a close check on pupils' progress, and provide extra help when it is needed.
- Members of the Local Advisory Board, who are responsible for the governance of the academy, are regular visitors and work alongside teachers and managers. They know the academy well and hold leaders to account effectively. As a result, the academy is improving strongly.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always set work which is difficult enough for the most-able pupils. Sometimes pupils could be moved through activities more quickly.
- While teachers' marking is good, and gives pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work, teachers do not always check that pupils have acted on this advice.
- Pupils' achievement in mathematics is not as high as in reading and writing, particularly for the most-able pupils. Basic mathematical skills are taught well, but there are too few opportunities for pupils to think for themselves how to solve mathematical problems.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 22 lessons. Ten of these were jointly observed with academy leaders.
- Meetings were held with staff, including senior leaders and teachers in charge of subjects, and with two groups of pupils. The lead inspector met with members of the Local Advisory Board (LAB) who have responsibility for the governance of the academy, and with representatives from the multi-academy trust.
- Inspectors evaluated the work in pupils’ books and listened to pupils read. They also spoke informally to pupils and observed them around the academy at break and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors spoke to a small number of parents at the start of the academy day. They took account of the ten responses they received to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View, and looked at the results of the academy’s own larger survey of parents’ views. They also considered six staff questionnaires.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents including information about pupils’ achievement, records of their attendance and behaviour, documents relating to safeguarding, and the academy’s plans for improvement.

Inspection team

Michael Phipps, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Glen Goddard

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Orchards Primary Academy converted to become an academy on 1 July 2013. When its predecessor school, Ley Hill Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to require improvement.
- The academy is sponsored by Education Central Multi Academy Trust (ECMAT), a wholly-owned subsidiary of The University of Wolverhampton.
- The Orchards Primary Academy is similar in size to the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is much higher than average. The pupil premium is additional government funding for pupils in the care of the local authority and those who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average. These pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is lower than average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is higher than average.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- A breakfast club, managed by the academy, provides care for pupils at the start of each day.
- The academy provides full-time early years provision in Nursery and Reception classes.
- The Orchards Pre-Academy and Pre-School operates on the same site. It is separately inspected, so was not included in this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, so more is outstanding, by making sure that:
 - teachers always set work at the right level of difficulty for all pupils, especially for the most-able
 - pupils are moved quickly on to their next activity as soon as they are ready
 - teachers always check that pupils have followed the guidance given them in the marking of their work
 - teachers have more chances to observe, and learn from, the practice of their most effective colleagues.
- Raise pupils' achievement in mathematics, especially for the most-able pupils, by making sure that:
 - tasks are always difficult enough to make pupils think hard for themselves
 - pupils have regular opportunities to use and apply their mathematical knowledge, and to work out for themselves how to solve mathematical problems.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, well supported by senior and middle leaders and by members of the academy trust, has made significant improvements to the quality of teaching, and to pupils' achievement and behaviour, since the last inspection. Together these leaders have created a positive learning environment in which good teaching and good behaviour can flourish.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the academy's strengths and areas for improvement. They make good use of consultants, including those from ECMAT, to validate their judgements about the quality of the academy's work. Their plans to improve the academy are well organised and focus on the right areas.
- Leaders make regular checks on the quality of teaching, planning and marking. Teachers' targets are based on the progress pupils make. Any teacher's underperformance is tackled rigorously. However, teachers do not have many opportunities to learn from the outstanding practice of their colleagues, and so improve their own teaching.
- Good attention is paid to making sure that all pupils from all backgrounds and starting points have an equal opportunity to succeed and that there is no discrimination. Leaders check pupils' progress frequently and accurately. Teachers are held to account for pupils' progress. If any pupils fall behind, extra help is quickly provided until they catch up.
- Middle leaders are effective in improving the quality of teaching in their areas, checking pupils' progress, and arranging extra help where it is needed. They are contributing well to pupils' good progress.
- Staff are well trained in child protection issues and provide a high level of care for pupils. The academy meets all current safeguarding requirements.
- Pupils are taught a well-planned and broad range of lessons and topics which have been revised in the light of changes to the primary national curriculum. Pupils enjoy a large number of clubs, activities, trips, visitors and special events which develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding well. During the two days of the inspection, for example, pupils visited a local zoo, enjoyed specialist teaching in dance and judo, participated in an assembly run by a member of the local clergy and took part in a teambuilding session led by a former member of the Royal Marines.
- Pupils are well prepared to live in modern Britain. Pupils learn about different cultures and beliefs by, for example, visiting places of worship from different faiths. They are respectful of others' beliefs and values. Pupils are encouraged to understand the rule of law by, for instance, discussing why school rules are important; police officers come to school to speak to groups of pupils about their work. Pupils take part in activities that promote democracy, such as elections to the school council. They raise money for charities, and take part in local community events.
- Extra funds from the pupil premium are spent effectively on teaching assistants who help disadvantaged pupils in lessons, and improve their literacy and numeracy skills in additional groups. Funds are also spent on a teacher who provides one-to-one support, on an attendance officer and on a behaviour counselling service. As a result, disadvantaged pupils make good progress.
- The national primary sports funding is used well on a specialist sports teacher who helps staff to teach high quality physical education lessons, on a judo instructor and a dance teacher. Funds are also used to support a number of sports clubs. As a result, the teaching of physical education has improved in quality, and more pupils take part in a wider range of sports.
- The ECMAT academy trust provides effective support and challenge for academy leaders. The trust holds academy leaders to account regularly for the progress that pupils make. Their support has decreased over time since the trust correctly judges that leaders have good capacity to improve the academy further.

The governance of the school:

- Members of the LAB have a clear view of the academy's strengths and areas for improvement. They are regular visitors to the academy, and many see the quality of teaching for themselves. They are linked to specific areas of the academy's work and meet regularly with relevant leaders. They make sure that teachers' salary progression is based on pupils' progress, and they know how any underperformance in teaching is dealt with. As a result, governance is effective.
- Board members know what data on pupils' performance tells them about how well the academy is doing. As a result, they effectively challenge academy leaders when necessary.
- Members of the LAB make sure that academy finances are managed well. They have arranged further training for themselves in this area. They know how extra funds are spent, for example, from the pupil premium, and the impact on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are friendly, confident and articulate. They told inspectors how proud they are of their academy. They behave well around the site, between lessons and at break and lunchtimes. They treat visitors and each other with respect. They follow the academy's rules on uniform well and do not drop litter.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. They enjoy taking part in lessons, and are keen to answer questions and to share their ideas with the class. They work hard, cooperate well together and want to succeed. Disruption to learning caused by poor behaviour is rare.
- Parents have no concerns about the behaviour or safety of pupils.
- Pupils enjoy and take seriously the many responsibilities the academy gives them. These include: members of the curriculum council, who advise teachers on what topics the class should study; digital leaders, who help other pupils to use computers; and a variety of other roles including being members of the academy council and looking after the academy's animals.
- Pupils' behaviour is not outstanding because on the rare occasions when the quality of teaching does not fully engage their attention, some pupils lose focus and make slower progress.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils told inspectors they feel safe in the academy. The site is secure. There are good procedures to check visitors when they arrive, and all necessary checks are carried out on staff before they are appointed.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. They know about, for example, the potential dangers of using the internet because they are taught about this effectively.
- Pupils understand what bullying is, but say it is not an issue. Academy records confirm this view. All groups of pupils get on well together, and racism is virtually unknown. Exclusion rates are very low.
- Pupils' attendance rates have increased, and are now above national average levels. Academy leaders have helped pupils to understand the importance of attending regularly. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has fallen, and is now lower than average.
- The academy's breakfast club keeps pupils safe at the start of the day. Pupils enjoy the range of activities on offer, and parents appreciate the facility.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching over time is effective in making sure that pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' effort, presentation of work and behaviour. They foster warm and respectful relationships between adults and pupils, and between the pupils themselves. Teachers know their pupils well as individuals, and check their progress carefully.
- Classrooms are bright and stimulating places to learn. They contain excellent displays of pupils' work, and effective reminders for pupils on how to produce work of high quality.
- Teachers give pupils many chances to develop their speaking and listening skills by, for example, discussing their learning with a partner. Pupils who join the academy with speech and language difficulties receive expert help from the school's speech and language therapist, so they develop their speaking skills well. Pupils who find learning more difficult are given effective extra support in lessons from teaching assistants. They help by breaking down tasks into smaller steps so pupils can more easily make rapid progress.
- Teachers' marking is frequent and detailed, and contains helpful advice for pupils on how they can improve their work by identifying, for example, a 'gap task' for pupils to complete. Sometimes teachers do not check that all pupils have noted this advice, and acted on it.
- Sometimes, a few pupils do not have work which is sufficiently challenging, especially the most able. Occasionally some pupils are not encouraged to move on to the next activity when they are ready, but have to wait for other pupils to catch up. This means they make slower progress than they could.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Many children join the academy with levels of skills and understanding below those that might be expected for their age. By the time they leave the academy at the end of Year 6 they have caught up well. Their levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics are broadly average, so they are well prepared for secondary school. This represents good progress.
- Pupils learn to read well. Phonics (the sounds that letters make) is taught effectively. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 is at national average levels. The proportion of pupils who made more than expected progress in reading by Year 6 in 2014 was well above national average levels. Pupils enjoy reading, and speak with enthusiasm about their favourite books and authors.
- School data indicate, and inspectors' checks of pupils' work confirm, that all groups of pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 make good progress. Pupils' rates of progress in the last two years have been much faster in reading, writing and mathematics than previously.
- Pupils develop their writing skills well because they have many opportunities to write at length for different purposes across different subjects. The proportions of pupils making and exceeding the progress expected of them in writing are above average. Teachers plan interesting activities for them to write about which engage pupils' interest.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make the same good progress as their classmates. Their progress is checked regularly, and effective help is given quickly when it is needed.
- Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language make similar good progress to other pupils.
- Disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium make the same good progress as other pupils. In 2014 they were two terms behind other pupils in the academy in reading, one term behind in writing and

half a term behind in mathematics. Compared to other pupils nationally they were one term behind in reading, half a term behind in writing and a term and a half behind in mathematics. These gaps are closing rapidly.

- Pupils' basic mathematical skills are developed well, including their knowledge of times tables and their calculation skills. However, they have too few opportunities to use and apply their mathematical knowledge to practical tasks, or to work out for themselves what approaches to use in solving mathematical problems.
- The academy's most-able pupils make the same good progress as other pupils, but the proportions reaching the higher levels of attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 are below national average levels, particularly in mathematics. These pupils make faster progress in Key Stage 2: in 2014 the proportions of pupils gaining the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6 were above national levels.

The early years provision is good

- Many children join the Nursery Year with weak skills, knowledge and understanding particularly in speaking, understanding numbers and managing their feelings and behaviour. Children make good progress in the early years classes. In 2014 the proportion of children who reached the level expected for their age by the end of the Reception Year was at the national average level, well up from the previous year. Any gaps in the achievement of different groups of children are closing rapidly. As a result, children are well prepared to join Year 1.
- The quality of teaching and of children's learning is consistently at least good. Adults organise many activities for children to learn new skills which capture their imagination and move their learning on well, both in classrooms and in the outdoor areas. The learning areas, both indoors and outdoors, are colourful, well-planned and stimulating. Adults talk to children and ask them questions as they play. Children's early reading skills develop well, as phonics is taught consistently and effectively. Teachers and teaching assistants keep detailed and accurate records of children's knowledge and abilities, which build into an online profile of what children can do.
- Children are well cared for. All welfare and safeguarding requirements are met. Children are kept safe, and learn how to keep themselves safe. Relationships with adults are warm, caring and supportive. As a result, children's physical and emotional health, safety and well-being are well developed and their behaviour is good. Adults praise children for their effort and achievements. This means that children enjoy learning and want to do well.
- The leadership and management of the early years provision are strong. Leaders make regular checks on the quality of teaching. Children's progress is tracked carefully, and extra help is given when it is needed. Relationships with parents are strong. Staff carry out home visits before all children start in the Nursery Year so that children can get off to a good start. Leaders have an accurate idea of the strengths and areas for development in early years, and suitable plans to improve it further.

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	139860
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	453765

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	224
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sarah Hannon
Headteacher	Charles Chambers
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	0121 4644302
Fax number	0121 464 2811
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