

# City Road Primary Academy

Cavendish Road, Rotton Park, Birmingham, B16 0HL

## Inspection dates

24–25 February 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
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

- In the 2014 national tests, Year 6 pupils did not make the progress they should have done in reading and mathematics since the end of Key Stage 1.
- By the end of Key Stage 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics were well below average.
- While the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make are improving, they are not yet good in all year groups.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise their literacy skills in different subjects.
- They do not have enough opportunities to use their mathematical knowledge in practical situations.
- Not all teachers give pupils clear guidance as to how they can improve their work.
- Pupils rely too heavily on adults to tell them what to do in lessons. When not closely supervised, pupils sometimes lose concentration and falter in their learning.
- Attendance is below average.
- Some leaders do not use the academy's data on pupils' progress to drive improvements in their areas of responsibility; they do not identify where pupils are not doing as well as they could.
- The local advisory board does not check some areas of spending or actions taken by the academy closely enough to make sure that they are as effective as possible.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils make rapid progress in some classes.
- The most able pupils make particularly good progress and achieve well.
- The principal and vice-principal rigorously check how well pupils are doing. They make sure that teaching and achievement are both improving.
- Pupils feel safe in school and know how to keep themselves safe in different situations.
- Pupils' conduct is good. They are pleasant and polite to adults and each other. Lessons are rarely disrupted by poor behaviour.
- Children get a good start to school life in the Nursery and Reception classes. Adults create a safe place to learn and activities help children develop their skills well.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed pupils’ learning in 21 lessons, three of which were seen together with the principal.
- Meetings were held with the principal and other staff, two groups of pupils, a parent, three members of the Birmingham City University Academy Trust board and three members of the local advisory board.
- Informal discussions were held with parents and pupils.
- There were insufficient responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View, to view results, but the inspectors took account of the academy’s own parental questionnaires, individual communications from parents and the 25 responses to a staff questionnaire.
- The inspectors observed the academy’s work and reviewed a range of documentation, including: the academy’s checks on its performance; its analysis and tracking of pupils’ progress; records of behaviour and safety; academy improvement plans; records relating to classroom observations and the management of staff performance; safeguarding arrangements; and records of meetings of the governing body.
- The inspectors also looked at pupils’ work, listened to pupils read and checked information on attendance.

Inspection team

Susan Hughes, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Timothy McGuire	Additional Inspector
Dennis Brittain	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- City Road Primary Academy became an academy sponsored by the Birmingham City University Academy (BCUA) Trust in July 2013.
- The academy is governed by a local advisory board (LAB), which includes parents, members of staff, local community representatives and representatives of the Birmingham City University Academy Trust.
- The academy is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Children in the early years start in a part-time Nursery when they are three years old. Almost all move on to the full-time Reception class at the beginning of the year in which they are five years old.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well above average. Most pupils are Pakistani. The percentage of pupils who speak English as an additional language is also well above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils (those supported by the pupil premium, which is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority) is well above 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.

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

- Improve teaching to raise standards, especially in writing and mathematics, by:
  - giving pupils more opportunities to practise their literacy skills in different subjects
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills and knowledge in practical, problem-solving situations
  - ensuring that all teachers' marking gives pupils clear guidance on how they can improve their work.
- Improve behaviour and pupils' learning by ensuring that:
  - pupils become less dependent on adults for each step of their learning
  - pupils concentrate on their learning without needing regular adult reminders
  - good attendance is recognised and rewarded so that pupils' attendance improves.
- Strengthen leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - all leaders analyse data effectively, using the information to check progress and identify how they can drive improvements in their areas of responsibility
  - local advisory board members monitor more closely how the academy's actions and spending are improving pupils' achievement.

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

### requires improvement

- Subject and other leaders are not confident when interpreting and using the data on pupils' progress and attainment. This means that they do not always have a full picture of where improvements are needed in their areas of responsibility.
- Leaders rely too heavily on the headteacher and deputy headteacher to guide them in how they can play their part in improving the academy. While they understand that improvements are required, they do not always see how to address them, or how to monitor accurately the impact of actions taken.
- Under the aspirational leadership of the principal, the quality of teaching is improving and standards are rising. She rigorously checks how well pupils are doing in all classes. The principal and vice-principal use academy data to make sure that any pupils in danger of falling behind are quickly identified and helped to keep up.
- The appraisal system, which rewards teachers whose pupils make good progress, has helped to improve the quality of teaching in the academy. Teachers understand what is expected of them and recognise that any pay increases depend on the pupils in their class achieving well. Subject leaders support colleagues to help them improve their teaching skills.
- The academy has formed good partnerships with other local schools. These provide opportunities for staff to share expertise and attend joint training sessions to improve their teaching skills. Other partnerships, such as with the local music service, have provided exciting opportunities for pupils. Many pupils learn to play musical instruments and singing is a strength of the academy. Pupils take part in and attend concerts at the Symphony Hall in Birmingham.
- A productive partnership with a company that provides learning mentors and sports coaches is funded by the primary physical education and sport premium. This means that pupils now receive high-quality coaching in lessons and, as a result, are positive about physical education and participate enthusiastically. The coach runs additional clubs for pupils and works alongside teachers to help them develop their own teaching techniques.
- The pupil premium funding is used well to widen pupils' experiences and support learning. Some is spent on individual help or support for small groups in lessons. Other spending funds visits to different places of worship, museums and art galleries. These link closely to topics studied by pupils and deepen their understanding of what they are learning.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is developed in lessons and through assembly themes. For example, during the inspection, pupils in Year 3 discussed what it means to 'let yourself down'. They shared thoughtful suggestions on how to make sure they could be proud of their behaviour and actions. Classes are named after famous characters from history or the present day, providing positive and aspirational role models for pupils.
- In other lessons, pupils learn about what it means to be prejudiced and how to make sure that everyone is treated equally. They are aware of the fairness of democracy and the academy council, which is democratically elected, visited the council chamber to see how the city council works. Developing such British values, and the academy's drive to ensure equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination, prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- The Birmingham City University Academy Trust has taken a little while to provide support which has had an impact on standards. However, it now has appropriate policies and procedures in place and is focusing more closely on improving pupils' achievement. More recently, good support for academy leaders has helped them to check the accuracy of teachers' assessments and supported more rapid improvements in teaching.
- Safeguarding arrangements in the academy are rigorous and effective. Leaders make sure that the

academy is safe and secure and that policies and procedures are used consistently. They ensure that the academy's arrangements for safeguarding meet national requirements and that all staff are well trained on safeguarding issues and vigilantly check on the welfare of pupils.

### ■ The governance of the school:

- Although finances are otherwise carefully managed within the guidelines agreed with the Birmingham City University Academy Trust, the local advisory board has not checked how the primary physical education and sport premium is being spent and the extent to which it is improving pupils' physical education skills and well-being.
- While governance is effective, some board members are more confident than others in using academy data. They are aware of the need for more training and have arranged for this to take place.
- Board members visit the academy regularly, but these visits are not always tightly focused on agreed academy improvement priorities.
- Members of the local advisory board are increasingly asking challenging questions of senior leaders to make sure that the academy is improving. Recent changes to the way they hold meetings has improved this: a brief informal meeting, held before the board meeting, enables less-experienced members to gain confidence in asking questions.
- Board members appreciate that the pupil premium is supporting disadvantaged pupils and are becoming increasingly diligent in checking the impact this is having.
- Board members understand well how the quality of teaching is improving. They know that the appraisal system is supporting this and they make sure that pay rises are only awarded when teachers' challenging targets are met. They are effectively tackling underperformance to improve the academy.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils

## requires improvement

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Around the academy, pupils are pleasant, polite and sociable. However, in lessons, they often rely too heavily on adults to guide every step of their learning. This means that, while they generally do as they are told, they are not developing the skills to make decisions about or extend their learning.
- When pupils are not being directly supervised by adults, they sometimes lose concentration and do not have the self-discipline to maintain their learning. However, they respond appropriately when adults encourage them to refocus and they rarely disrupt the learning of others. Children in the early years classes persevere with tasks and concentrate well while playing and working together.
- Pupils get on well together and show respect for adults and each other. The 'singing playground leaders' are pupils from Year 4 who organise games at playtimes. Other pupils respond well and join in with enthusiasm.
- The academy has worked closely with parents and carers to ensure that their children attend regularly. Nevertheless, attendance remains below average. While the academy has robust systems to tackle poor attendance, it does not do enough to encourage and reward those pupils who do attend regularly.

### Safety

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils feel safe in the academy because they know that the site is secure and they can rely on the caring teachers and other adults to look after them. Pupils said there is always someone they could go to if they had a problem.
- Playtimes are active and enjoyable. They are well supervised and there are plenty of activities and play equipment. Pupils are mindful of each other's safety and make sure that even the most energetic games do not impinge on quieter activities. Older pupils enjoy organising games for the younger ones and make sure that the activities are appropriate and safe.
- Pupils understand what bullying is and that it can take different forms. Pupils said there is very little bullying in the academy and any incidents are dealt with well by teachers and other staff.

- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe outside the academy. They are aware of road safety issues and talked to inspectors about 'stranger danger'. Pupils explained that a stranger represented a danger, not by appearance, but by their questions and behaviour.
- Pupils are developing a good awareness of how to stay safe when using the internet. During the inspection, parent and pupil workshops highlighted the need for vigilance when using social media. Pupils demonstrated that they knew not to give personal details away to strangers. They discussed the importance of only using the type of language they would use if talking to someone face to face.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- In some classes, teachers do not give pupils clear enough guidance on how they can improve their work. When guidance is helpful, it directs pupils to the next step in their learning. For example, teachers add 'now try this' examples in pupils' books to check their level of understanding and move them on in their learning.
- Although writing is otherwise taught well, pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise their literacy skills in subjects other than English. Work in books shows that teachers have higher expectations of what pupils can achieve in literacy lessons than in other subjects. Consequently, skills are not applied or developed as effectively when pupils are writing in their topic or science books as in literacy books.
- Mathematics is being taught more effectively since the academy reviewed its methods of teaching. As a result, pupils are filling previous gaps in their learning, building on prior knowledge and making much better progress. However, pupils are not given enough opportunities to use their mathematical skills in practical, problem-solving situations in order to deepen and consolidate learning.
- Reading is taught well and standards in reading are currently higher than in writing and mathematics. The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) from the early years and through Key Stage 1 gives pupils the skills they need to sound out unfamiliar words. Pupils spoken to during the inspection said they enjoyed reading and most read regularly at home.
- Effective phonics teaching is particularly helping pupils who speak English as an additional language as it supports accurate pronunciation. In lessons, teachers make sure that these pupils understand what is expected of them and check their progress regularly. For pupils who speak English confidently, but use incorrect grammar, teachers sensitively correct errors and encourage pupils to follow the model answer they have been given.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well supported. Their specific learning needs are accurately identified and they are helped by additional adults in the classroom, or in small groups. However, occasionally, the support is too intense and pupils become very dependent on an adult to help them.
- Disadvantaged pupils are equally well supported by additional adults when needed. Teachers make sure that the adults are clear about what pupils will be learning in the lesson so that they can provide appropriate help. Pupils' rates of learning, however, vary according to the quality of the teaching provided by the class teacher.
- The most-able pupils respond particularly well in lessons because teachers plan work that takes account of what they already know. Teachers expect pupils to explain their learning so that they can check their understanding and deepen their knowledge. For example, during the inspection, pupils in Year 5 were learning about improper fractions. They accurately described these fractions as ones where the numerator is always bigger than the denominator.

**The achievement of pupils** requires improvement

- Children start school with skills that are much weaker than those typical for their age, especially in language and communications. Standards were below average by the end of Key Stage 1 in 2014. The results of the most recent screening of how well pupils understand phonics were also below average, but attainment in phonics is steadily improving.
- Pupils left the academy at the end of Year 6 in 2014 having made inadequate progress over the course of Key Stage 2. However, they had made rapid progress during their final year which narrowed the very wide gap between their attainment and that expected for their age, especially in writing. Nevertheless, they were still nearly four terms behind other pupils nationally in mathematics and three terms behind in reading and writing.
- Disadvantaged pupils leaving the academy in 2014 were one-and-a-half terms behind other pupils in mathematics, half a term behind in reading and slightly ahead in writing. In relation to other pupils nationally, they were nearly six terms behind in mathematics, four terms behind in reading and three-and-a-half terms behind in writing. They had made inadequate progress since Key Stage 1. Improving progress for pupils currently in the academy means that gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and their classmates are narrowing.
- As progress is improving, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are rising. However, the rates of progress vary across the academy. Most pupils currently in Years 5 and 6 have expected attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. An increasing number of pupils throughout the school are now working at levels higher than those expected for their age.
- The achievement of the most-able pupils currently in the academy is good. Some pupils in Year 6 have already achieved levels above those to be expected by the end of the year. Others are on track to achieve similarly above-average standards.
- Disabled pupils make similar progress to other pupils. The support they receive enables them to achieve as well as their classmates. This means that, in some classes, they make good progress and achieve well, while in others their progress requires improvement.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language also make similar progress to other pupils. Once pupils are confident in using English, they achieve at least as well as their classmates.

**The early years provision** is good

- Children get a good start in the Nursery class, where a caring and nurturing environment helps them to quickly settle into school life. Children behave well and thrive in the safe, vibrant classrooms where they are encouraged to explore and talk about what they are doing. For example, a child in the Reception class confidently sang a counting song to one of the inspectors, inviting her to eat one of the delicious currant buns. He proudly informed her that 'delicious' was the word of the day.
- Children start school with skills well below those typical for their age, especially in language and communication. Good teaching throughout the early years develops these skills well through play activities and working with adults, inside the classroom and outdoors. Adults ask children questions and talk to them about their learning, correcting mispronunciation and introducing new vocabulary.
- The early years is led and managed well. The leader makes sure that children's progress is carefully tracked and thoroughly recorded, using photographs and notes. The information is then used to plan activities that deepen and extend children's knowledge and skills.
- Despite making good progress, some children leave the Reception classes with language skills that are still lower than those typical for their age. However, the proportion who achieved a good level of development in 2014 was broadly average. This, and their positive attitudes to learning, means that children are well

prepared for Year 1 work.

## 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>	139571
<b>Local authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	449864

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>	470
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Local advisory board
<b>Chair</b>	Lynn Fulford
<b>Principal</b>	Jackie Gazeley
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 4643348
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