

The Nethersole CofE Academy

High Street, Polesworth, Tamworth, B78 1DZ

Inspection dates 17–18 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	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.

- Children get a good start in the early years classes. Teachers use well-chosen activities to develop children's skills rapidly.
- Pupils have made particularly good progress in reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stages 1 and 2 this year.
- Standards are rising across the academy and any gaps between different groups of pupils' achievement are narrowing.
- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can do in English and mathematics. Most able pupils respond particularly well and make very good progress.
- Pupils find lessons interesting and exciting. Teachers use tasks that enable pupils of all abilities to achieve well.
- Pupils behave well in and out of lessons. Staff apply policies consistently and fairly to encourage good behaviour.
- The headteacher has made significant changes which have rapidly improved many aspects of the academy.
- The headteacher and deputy headteachers rigorously check that the quality of teaching is enabling all pupils to make rapid progress.
- Governors are committed to making sure that the academy continues to improve. They ask senior leaders searching questions to check how well it is doing and visit often to see for themselves.
- The governing body has taken effective steps to make sure that the quality of teaching in the academy is good.
- Pupils feel very safe in the academy. There is always someone they can go to if they have a problem.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some teachers do not always check frequently that pupils are making the best possible progress in lessons.
- Some teachers do not have high expectations of pupils' writing and how well pupils apply their literacy and mathematical skills in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Some newly appointed subject leaders who are new to their role do not have the skills they need to bring about improvements in their areas of responsibility.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed pupils' learning in 26 lessons, three of which were seen together with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and other staff, two groups of pupils, three members of the governing body, the Diocesan Director of Education for Birmingham and the academy's Challenge Advisor.
- Informal discussions were held with parents and pupils.
- The inspectors took account of the 74 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. They also considered the academy's own parental questionnaires, the 20 responses to a staff questionnaire and individual communications from parents.
- 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
Maggie Parker	Additional Inspector
Christopher Crouch	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Nethersole Academy became an academy school on 1 April 2013 and is sponsored by the Diocese of Birmingham Educational Trust.
- The academy is an average-size.
- Children in the early years start in the full-time Reception classes at the beginning of the year in which they are five years old.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well below average. The percentage of pupils who speak English as an additional language is also well below 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 below 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.
- From April 2013 to August 2014 the academy was led by an interim headteacher.
- There have been significant changes to leadership and staffing in recent months. The headteacher joined the academy in September 2014. At the same time, the two deputy headteachers took up post, as did the leaders of literacy, numeracy and early years.
- One deputy headteacher is the special educational needs co-ordinator and the other leads literacy throughout the academy.
- Six other teachers joined the academy in September 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching by ensuring that all teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in all subjects and check more frequently that all pupils are making the best possible progress in lessons.
- Train new leaders in order that they develop the skills they need to drive improvement in their areas of responsibility.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The dynamic and inspirational headteacher has made huge improvements to most areas of the academy in the short time he has been in post. The quality of teaching has improved and pupils say that lessons are more interesting and that this has helped to improve their behaviour. Parents told inspectors that communications between home and the academy are now much better. As a result, a positive and vibrant learning environment has been developed which encourages pupils to enjoy academy life and thrive.
- The deputy headteachers have been instrumental in improving the quality of teaching and middle leadership. They work alongside teachers to help them improve their skills and techniques. All senior leaders, including leaders of literacy, numeracy and the early years, use progress data well to make sure that any pupils in danger of falling behind are quickly helped to keep up. However, some newly appointed leaders have not been in their role for enough time to contribute fully to improvements.
- The appraisal system, which rewards teachers only when the pupils in their class achieve well, has contributed to the improved quality of teaching. Teachers are clear about leaders' high expectations, but also know that support and training are available to help them meet their challenging targets for pupils' achievement.
- Since September, the pupil premium has been used especially effectively to help disadvantaged pupils. Pupils are supported individually or in small groups, as needed, to help them keep up with their classmates. On occasions, teachers work with disadvantaged pupils on their own while additional adults oversee the work of the rest of the class. This results in eligible pupils making very rapid progress.
- Physical education and sport are taught extremely well. This is because the primary sports funding has been spent on employing a skilled, specialist teacher. He takes many of the lessons as well as running clubs and working alongside teachers to help them develop their own sports teaching skills. Pupils say they really enjoy the sports activities and many take part in the wide range of competitions against other schools. Nethersole Academy has been particularly successful in both boys' and girls' football and cross-county running competitions this year.
- The academy has formed strong partnerships with other local schools. As a result, they have the opportunity to share expertise and check that assessments of pupils' work are accurate. Partnerships with schools further afield are being developed to enable pupils to work and play with those from different backgrounds and cultures.
- The academy promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Strong links with the church give pupils a secure spiritual education. Pupils are given opportunities to discuss and write about moral dilemmas and issues of local concern in lessons. For example, Year 6 pupils drew up a balanced argument for and against the building of the high speed rail link.
- Pupils learn about different cultures and religions in lessons and through visiting their places of worship. This helps pupils understand and respect the beliefs of others. The academy strives to promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination in all it does. Concern and respect for others is consistently modelled by adults in the way they talk to, and treat pupils. Pupils follow their good example in their dealing with each other. The academy council is democratically elected and pupils are aware that this is a fair system. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Safeguarding arrangements in the academy are rigorous and effective. Leaders ensure that the academy's arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements and that all staff are well trained on safeguarding issues.
- The Birmingham Diocesan sponsor has supported the academy well. It guided governors through challenging employment issues, helped senior leaders develop their roles and provides training for governors and staff.

- The newly introduced range of subjects is exciting and interesting. Different topics such as 'Round the World in 30 days' and 'Adventurers and Explorers' inspire pupils to want to learn. Pupils are particularly enthusiastic about being able to choose their own topic theme for the last half term of the year.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are strongly committed to improving the academy. They are rightly proud of how much has been achieved in such a short time, but are also keen that the rapid pace of improvement continues in order to give pupils the best education possible.
 - Governors have reviewed how they work, and refined the way they check on the academy's progress. They now have extremely thorough and robust systems in place. They use pupils' progress data effectively, visit often and have regular meetings. Governors ask senior leaders challenging questions to make sure all understand how well the academy is doing and how the quality of teaching is improving. Governors ensure that the appraisal system sets challenging targets for teachers, and that they are only rewarded by movement up the pay scale if pupils in their class achieve well.
 - Finances are now managed well. Governors rigorously check that the pupil premium is being used effectively to help disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as their classmates.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are considerate to each other, polite and helpful to adults and are proud of their academy. Pupils move around in a calm purposeful manner and are always ready to talk about their learning and what they have been doing in lessons.
- Pupils have highly positive attitudes to learning. They told inspectors that lessons are now much more interesting than they used to be. Pupils like being able to choose work with different levels of challenge, but know that teachers will guide them if they choose inappropriately. Pupils feel that being able to choose their own level of work means that they strive harder than if the choice was made for them.
- Pupils all agree that behaviour has improved and is now good. They attribute this to the system of rewards introduced in September 2014. The system is fair and consistently applied across the academy. Pupils value the different types of rewards such as tickets and stickers. In the Reception classes, children eagerly choose their own 'good work' stickers from the pack and stick them onto their charts. They are proud to check and talk about how many they have achieved, and are equally congratulatory of others when they fill their charts. Shiny 'Headteacher Award' stickers are highly valued by pupils of all ages.
- Although pupils try hard in lessons, the standard of their work in other subjects is not as consistently high as in literacy and numeracy.
- Pupils' enthusiasm for the academy is reflected in their improved attendance and punctuality. Attendance is currently above average and rising.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel very safe because the teachers and other adults are always there to look after them. Almost all the parents who completed Parent View agreed that their children feel safe in the academy.
- Pupils are very aware of what bullying is and the different forms it can take, such as physical and cyber-bullying. They told inspectors that there is very little bullying in the academy. Any rare incidents are quickly dealt with by staff.
- Pupils play well together on the playground. This is a very lively and active place but at the same time pupils are aware of each other and make sure that their games do not impinge on, or endanger others.
- Pupils explained to inspectors why they have to take precautions when using the internet. They are acutely aware of the need to keep themselves safe and be wary about what information they impart when

playing or talking 'on-line'. Pupils also understand about road safety and how to keep safe when walking to and from the academy.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers make sure that lessons are interesting and encourage pupils' enthusiasm for learning. For example, pupils in Year 6 worked exceptionally well together to develop 'Macbeth raps' as part of Shakespeare week. The teacher's excellent subject knowledge meant that she could guide pupils both in the language they were using and the rhythms necessary to be successful.
- Writing is taught well. From the early years and throughout the academy, teachers use precise vocabulary to describe words and grammatical constructions. For example, Reception pupils understand what a digraph is, Year 3 pupils use the term 'inverted commas' and older pupils confidently use embedded clauses in their writing. During the inspection, the teacher encouraged pupils in Years 1 and 2 to explore using different adjectives to describe monsters and they wrote creative poems containing interesting and innovative vocabulary. However, not all teachers develop these skills well in all subjects.
- Reading is taught well. Phonics (the sounds letters make) are taught in the Reception classes and throughout Key Stage 1. This is then developed further in Key Stage 2 to help extend pupils' understanding of spelling patterns and grammar.
- The skills of mathematics are taught well. Pupils learn skills in mathematics lesson and then have opportunities to practise using these in practical, problem-solving situations. Different levels of challenge in lessons help pupils build successfully on what they have already learnt. Probing questioning by teachers makes sure that recently introduced ideas are fully understood before pupils move on. The most effective teachers also develop pupils' mathematical skills well in different subjects.
- Additional adults in the classroom are used well to support disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Adults are briefed in detail by the class teachers so that they are clear of the learning that is to take place. They sensitively support pupils by either working alongside them, or by checking regularly that they are not struggling to keep up. On other occasions, additional adults oversee the rest of the class while teachers work with identified pupils who would benefit from the additional support. However, this is not consistent practice in all lessons.
- The academy's method of teaching offers pupils tasks at various levels of challenge and pupils choose which level to work at. Most teachers usually have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and pupils respond well by choosing the highest level of challenge they can manage.
- The most able pupils benefit from this way of teaching as they push themselves to attain the highest level. Teachers make sure that activities not only extend pupils' knowledge, but deepen their understanding; pupils are expected to be able to talk about, and explain, their learning. An increasing number of pupils in the academy are currently working at levels higher than those expected for their age.
- When using the academy's agreed method of teaching, regular checking by teachers during lessons means that they know when to provide a new challenge, or suggest easier work, as appropriate. Occasionally, however, some teachers do not check often enough to make sure that the level at which pupils are working is helping them make the rapid progress of which they are capable.
- Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills when working in lessons other than English and mathematics lessons. This means that, although pupils are interested and excited by the topic and themed work, teachers do not always develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills as effectively as they could in these subjects.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children generally start in the early years with skills typical for their age. Records show that, before 2014, progress was slower than at present so that pupils started Key Stage 1 with lower skill levels and reached standards at the end of Key Stage 1 that were broadly average.
- Similarly, reflecting slower rates of progress in the past, standards at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2014 were average in writing and mathematics and below average in reading. In particular, pupils had not made the progress in reading of which they were capable since Key Stage 1. Academy data, however, shows that they made good progress in Year 6, making up for some previously lost ground and lower standards earlier in their time in school.
- Pupils currently in the academy are making consistently good progress. The way reading is taught has improved and pupils are encouraged to read more often, both in the academy and at home. As a result, pupils' enthusiasm for reading has increased and standards are rising, with many pupils reading above the level expected for their age. The results of the most recent screening of how well Year 1 pupils understand phonics were above average.
- The gaps between attainment of boys and girls in writing are narrowing, and have been eradicated in some year groups and many pupils are working at above average standards. This is because leaders have identified the need to change the way writing is taught. They make sure that all pupils, and especially boys, are making rapid progress and are given plenty of opportunities to practise using their literacy and numeracy skills.
- As pupils' progress in mathematics is accelerating, so standards across the academy are improving. Pupils currently in Year 6 are working at a level above average for their age.
- Groups of pupils who had previously fallen behind are being helped to catch up and are now making exceptionally good progress. This means that, as for other groups, the achievement of disadvantaged pupils in 2014 is not typical of pupils currently in the academy who are achieving much better. In 2014 disadvantaged pupils were over four terms behind other pupils in the academy in writing, six terms behind in reading and nearly eight terms behind in mathematics. In relation to other pupils nationally, they were seven terms behind in mathematics, almost six and a half behind in reading and three terms behind in writing.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are making good progress. Their needs are now accurately identified and additional support is well matched to meet their learning needs. Regular checks on how well they are doing ensure that the support is effective, even as their needs change.
- The most able pupils are also now making good progress and many more are on track to reach the higher levels than was the case in 2014.

The early years provision

is good

- The early years classes are safe, vibrant places for children to learn. Teachers and other adults are sensitive and caring while enabling children to develop confidence and independence. This means that children quickly settle into academy life. They behave well and soon learn to concentrate on activities and share equipment and ideas.
- Teaching is good. Teachers plan activities which interest and engage children, developing their enthusiasm for learning. Teachers usually make sure that tasks build on what children already know, or skills they have recently acquired. For example, during the inspection children wrote instructions for making fruit kebabs, having made these on the previous day. Another child wrote instructions for making a musical instrument before trying them out to see if they worked.
- The early years leader has developed a cohesive team which works together effectively, reflecting her strength of leadership. The team is clearly briefed about the learning planned for each activity. This means that staff accurately check how well children are developing their skills and use this information to plan future activities. The early years leader rigorously tracks children's progress and makes sure that any

children who need specific experiences or help receive them.

- The proportion of children who reached a good level of development in 2014 was above average. This good progress, and the positive attitudes to learning developed in the early years classes, prepares children well for their move to Key Stage 1.

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	139127
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	449834

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	271
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sue Eaton
Headteacher	Christopher Mansell
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01827 892357
Fax number	None
Email address	admin3209@welearn365.com

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2015

