

The Charles Cuddy Walker Academy

Derby Street, Walsall, WS2 7BH

Inspection dates 18–19 March 2015

| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Not previously inspected | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| | This inspection: | Requires improvement | 3 |
| 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:

- Pupils' progress is not consistently good across different year groups within the school.
- The more fluent readers do not have a range of strategies to read unfamiliar words and this sometimes stops them from being able to read challenging texts.
- Pupils do not always practise their mathematical and basic writing skills across different subjects and this slows their progress.
- Teaching is not yet typically good. Teachers are not always clear about what they want their pupils to learn. Activities are sometimes too difficult or too easy for pupils. This causes them to become disengaged in their learning and particularly slows learning for the most able pupils.
- Sometimes pupils' work is not well presented.
- The updated systems for checking the quality of teaching are not yet fully embedded.
- Marking does not always help pupils to improve their learning. This is because teachers do not give clear next steps for improvement in line with the school's policy.
- New subject leaders are beginning to understand their roles and responsibilities. However, it is too soon to see the impact of their work on pupils' progress.
- Academy leaders are still addressing a small number of incidents that occur in the playground, such as rough play.
- Although leaders are working closely with parents and carers, attendance is still below average.

The school has the following strengths:

- Children in the early years provision make good progress. They are very happy and settled. The staff make their learning fun.
- Prompt actions by the new headteacher in liaison with the academy's Trust contribute to the recent improvements made in teaching, the early years and leadership, including governance. As a result, pupils are now making better progress.
- Parents and carers are very supportive of the academy's work. Those who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, would recommend the academy to another parent or carer.
- Pupils say they feel safe. They are polite, friendly and welcoming to each other and visitors.
- Teaching assistants support pupils' learning well.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 16 parts of lessons. Two lessons were jointly observed with the headteacher.
- Discussions took place with the headteacher, various members of staff, two representatives of the governing body, a group of pupils and three representatives from the academy’s sponsor.
- Inspectors met with two groups of parents and carers at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents including: a range of pupils’ work; the school’s assessment information relating to pupils’ progress; the school’s own evaluation of its strength and weaknesses; and records relating to attendance, safeguarding and behaviour.
- Inspectors looked at the 13 responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View. They took into account the school’s own parental survey and written responses from parents and carers. Questionnaire responses from 23 members of staff were also considered.

Inspection team

| | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| Sharona Semlali, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Gary Rawlings | Additional Inspector |

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized school.
- The Charles Cuddy Walker Academy converted to become an academy school on 1 January 2013. When its predecessor school, North Walsall Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be satisfactory overall. The Charles Cuddy Walker Academy is sponsored by the Erudition Schools Trust.
- The substantive headteacher left at the end of the autumn term 2014. An executive headteacher was in place during the autumn term 2014. A deputy headteacher has been seconded to the school for four days a week since October 2014. The new acting headteacher was appointed in February 2015. There have been significant changes to the teaching staff.
- The school gets support from Hales Valley Teaching School.
- The early years provision is made up of a part-time morning and afternoon Nursery and a full-time Reception class.
- The majority of pupils are from Pakistani heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and the proportion who speak English as an additional language are above the national averages.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- Around two in every three pupils are supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care. This is well above the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is below average.
- The school manages its own breakfast and after-school clubs.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good or better by ensuring that:
 - teachers get opportunities to observe good and outstanding practice within and beyond the school
 - the most able pupils are challenged and those who need additional help are given the support they need, which will ensure that all pupils are engaged in their learning
 - teachers' marking gives clear guidance to pupils on how to improve, in line with the school's marking guidelines.
- Raise standards in mathematics and English, particularly for the most able, by ensuring that:
 - those who are more confident at reading have a wider range of strategies to work out how to read words that are unfamiliar to them
 - pupils practise using and solving problems in mathematics in different subjects
 - pupils write at length in other subjects and continue to improve their basic skills in spelling, punctuation and grammar
 - pupils present their written work to a high standard.
- Improve behaviour and safety by continuing to:
 - build on the work already started with parents and carers to raise attendance.
 - reduce the number of playground incidents, by ensuring that all staff consistently use the recently introduced behaviour system.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - developing the roles and responsibilities of the middle leadership team so that they can confidently drive improvements in their subjects.
 - ensuring that the newly introduced monitoring systems for checking the quality of teaching and learning are embedded across the academy.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because the quality of teaching is inconsistent across the academy and as a result, pupils' achievement is lower than it should be. Members of the academy's trust are working closely with the acting headteacher to address these issues.
- Recent changes to the staffing structure and new appointments have helped to strengthen the leadership team. New subject leaders are at the early stages of learning about their roles and responsibilities. They are motivated and ambitious with lots of plans in place, though it is too soon to see the impact of their actions. They do not yet have a clear understanding about how pupils are performing in their subjects.
- The new headteacher has improved the appraisal of staff. Targets are now linked to pupils' performance. Senior leaders have recently revised and updated the system for checking the quality of teaching though this is still in the early stages of its development.
- Members of the trust are very proactive in the support they give to the school. This was particularly noted during its time of unstable leadership. They do not shy away from making difficult decisions for the benefit of pupils. For example, they are supporting the new headteacher to address some of the inadequacies in teaching. The trust uses its links with the teaching school well and this has helped to improve the quality of teaching. It has invested heavily in improving the learning environment, including the outdoor provision in the early years, and providing high-quality resources for its pupils.
- The pupil premium funding is used well to support disadvantaged pupils by giving them extra adult help to improve their reading, writing and mathematics skills. It partly funds a learning mentor who helps to improve their emotional, social and behavioural development. These initiatives are working well to close the gaps in learning between disadvantaged pupils and others in the school.
- The curriculum is being reviewed. Currently it uses overarching themes which are school-wide and linked to a book. Pupils help to choose the themes and this encourages good relations. Leaders are keen to promote equality of opportunity and the curriculum helps pupils prepare for life in modern Britain. For example, programmes in the school encourage pupils to understand aspects of fairness and the difference between right and wrong.
- The curriculum is increasingly promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through its religious education lessons, displays and assemblies. Pupils are respectful and tolerant of each other. The school does not tolerate any form of discrimination.
- The sports premium funding is used effectively to employ qualified sports coaches who run high-quality physical education lessons within school time and a range of after-school active clubs. An increased proportion of pupils take part in these clubs as part of the academy's promotion of healthier lifestyles. Participation is tracked closely by the academy's leaders.
- Parents and carers are very happy and supportive of the school's work. The trust works hard to foster good relations within the community. It has strong links with a local college so that parents and carers can attend 'English as a second language' courses. This is helping them to be more confident in understanding English so they can better support their children's learning in school.

■ The governance of the school:

- The trust is in the process of reviewing the work of the governing body. It is aware of the areas that need addressing. For example, even though the governing body is increasingly asking more questions, it is the trust that diligently holds leaders to account. The governing body has an understanding of the school's data and its performance against other schools. This is because some of the governors have had training on this. They are aware of the quality of teaching in the different year groups.
- The performance management of the headteacher is firmly in place. The governing body is aware of how the school tackles any weaknesses in teaching and knows how increases in salary are linked to teachers' performance.
- The governing body ensures that safeguarding procedures meet requirements so that pupils are kept safe in the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. There are still a few incidents of poor behaviour that take place in the playground. The headteacher has introduced a new behaviour system to address this and as a

result, these incidents are becoming fewer.

- Pupils attitudes to learning vary from lesson to lesson. Some pupils become disengaged when doing activities that are too easy or too challenging for them.
- However, in corridors and between lessons, pupils follow the school rules such as using 'walking hands'. They are very polite and friendly to visitors. They show good manners and are quick to help their friends if they need help. Pupils say, 'We respect each other and will help our friends if they get stuck.'
- The school's learning environment is bright, attractive and celebrates pupils' achievements. It is well looked after and admired by pupils.
- Pupils relish taking on responsibilities, such as being a prefect and tidying up the library, and the older pupils help to take care of the younger ones.
- Pupils enjoy attending the breakfast club. It gives them a healthy and settled start to the day.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement. This is because attendance is below average. The school has introduced firmer systems to address this. This includes working closely with the educational welfare officer and taking parents and carers to court. As a result, attendance is starting to improve.
- Pupils know what bullying is and say that it does happen on rare occasions. They feel that adults help to keep them safe. Pupils say that adults help deal with any of their disputes. Pupils have a firm understanding of how to keep themselves safe when using the internet and say that they feel safe.
- Risk assessments are in place and up to date for visits, trips and for day-to-day activities. The school's procedures for checking staff and visitors are firmly in place. All of this helps to keep pupils safe.
- The majority of staff and parents and carers who responded to the questionnaires believe that the school keeps their children safe.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it is not yet typically good throughout the academy.
- Some of the planned activities do not challenge the most-able pupils or they are too difficult for those that need extra support. This often results in pupils becoming disengaged and as a result, their learning slows.
- The teaching of mathematics varies throughout the school. Where it is taught well, good use is made of the range of good quality resources available. This is helping pupils to develop deeper understanding of mathematical concepts. However, the new school leaders recognise that pupils do not have enough experience of using and applying their mathematical knowledge across all subjects. As a result, standards are not rising fast enough.
- The school is working closely with a teaching school to help improve teaching. Teachers are starting to observe good and outstanding practice in other settings. However, this is still in the early stages and consequently the quality of teaching is not yet consistently good across the school.
- The most able pupils, who are fluent with their reading, do not always have a range of methods to help them to work out how to read unfamiliar words when reading challenging texts. This slows their progress.
- Work in pupils' books shows that teachers' marking is detailed and up to date. However, it does not always inform pupils of the next steps needed to improve their work in line with the school's marking guidance. Sometimes teachers' low expectations mean that they accept pupils' work that is not presented at a high enough standard.
- Pupils do not always develop their stamina when writing at length in other subjects. Also, their basic skills in spelling, punctuation and grammar are often below average because these skills are not taught well enough.
- Where teaching is good, teachers are very clear about what they want pupils to learn and pupils know what is expected of them. Planned activities take into account pupils' prior learning and so help to move forward their learning.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have had recent training on teaching phonics (the sounds that letters make) to pupils who are at the early stages of reading. This has helped these pupils become more confident in trying to read difficult words. Teaching assistants throughout the school support pupils' learning well, both in classrooms and during small-group activities.

The achievement of pupils**requires improvement**

- Achievement requires improvement because pupils' progress is uneven throughout the academy. This is because of the recent instability among teaching staff and some teaching that is not good.
- In 2014, the attainment overall at the end of Years 2 and 6 was well below average. This was partly due to a significant number of pupils who had a range of complex needs.
- The school's information on pupils' progress and work in pupils' books show that prompt actions by the new headteacher and the trust have recently accelerated pupils' progress. For example, the high-quality staff training on how to teach pupils at the early stages of reading meant that in 2014 pupils achieved average results in the Year 1 phonics screening check. This was an improvement on the previous year.
- The achievement gaps between disadvantaged pupils and others in the different year groups are very narrow or have closed. In some cases, disadvantaged pupils do better than others in the school. In the national tests in 2014, the rate of progress for disadvantaged pupils was higher than for others in the school in reading, writing and mathematics. Rates of progress were higher than for other pupils nationally in reading and similar in writing and mathematics.
- In 2014, disadvantaged pupils attained better results than others in the school. They were just under a year ahead in mathematics and writing and just under two terms ahead in reading.
- However, despite the recent improvement in their rates of progress, in the 2014 national tests, disadvantaged pupils were five terms behind other pupils nationally in mathematics and around four terms behind in reading and writing.
- Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds make similar progress to their peers in the school. Those who speak English as an additional language make good progress from their starting points in their acquisition of English. This is because their needs are identified and catered for as soon as they start in the early years and additional support is provided for their parents and carers by the trust.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make at least expected progress from their starting points. Since the start of this academic year, the rate of their progress has improved greatly. This is due to greater support, focusing on pupils' individual needs.
- The proportion of pupils that reach the higher levels at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 is below average. This is because some teachers' expectations of the most-able pupils are not always high enough. At times they do the same task as others and are not always appropriately challenged. This limits their progress.

The early years provision**is good**

- Learning journals and the school's information on progress show that children make good progress, particularly in communication and language. This is because all adults in the provision work well together and identify children's different needs. Staff in the nursery make home visits and quickly establish close partnerships with parents and carers. Some staff speak the same home language as the parents or carers. This helps parents, carers and their children to overcome any initial learning barriers. As a consequence, staff know the children well from the start.
- Teaching in the early years is consistently good. Teachers use assessment well to plan for the diverse needs and interests of their children. All adults use questioning effectively to keep children's learning focused.
- Children are kept safe by all adults. They play well together, display positive attitudes to their learning and behave well.
- There have been major improvements to the outdoor area, which has encouraged a thirst for learning. Children are happy and excited in the learning environment. For example, during the inspection, children enjoyed looking at live caterpillars as part of their topic. They used magnifying glasses to examine them closely. Others explored different materials, including using a see-saw to see which were lighter or heavier. A few challenged themselves by reading their weight using the new weighing scales.
- Leadership and management of the early years provision is good. Leaders know the strengths and areas for development in the provision well. Regular checks are made on the quality of teaching and children's progress is closely monitored.
- Early years provision is not yet outstanding, because although an increasing number of children leave Reception ready for Year 1, a high proportion do not reach a good level of development.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| Grade | Judgement | Description |
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment. |
| Grade 2 | Good | A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment. |
| Grade 3 | Requires improvement | A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection. |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate | <p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> |

School details

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| Unique reference number | 139123 |
| Local authority | Walsall |
| Inspection number | 447826 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Academy converter |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 246 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mandy Morris |
| Headteacher | Lisa Chambers-Wardman |
| Date of previous school inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Telephone number | 01922 720822 |
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