

Purford Green Primary School

Purford Green, Harlow, CM18 6HP

Inspection dates 3–4 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	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.

- Senior leaders have ensured that teaching improves and that, as a consequence, pupils achieve well.
- Under the umbrella of the academy trust board, the governing body provides an effective balance of support and challenge to move the academy on.
- Teaching is good. Teachers manage their classes well and provide activities that interest and engage pupils. They question pupils skilfully to make them think hard.
- Effective extra help is provided for disadvantaged pupils and those who are disabled or who have special educational. As a result, these pupils make good progress in all subjects.
- Pupils conduct themselves well, and work and play together harmoniously. They respect others and learn about different faiths and cultures. Pupils are being well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The academy promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Together with pupils' good behaviour and attitudes, the academy has created a strong sense of community.
- Pupils are keen to learn. They work hard and follow instruction well. They make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils are kept safe. They feel well cared for and valued.
- Children get off to a good start in Reception. They quickly gain in confidence and learn how to do things for themselves. Good teaching and resources, together with well-planned activities, ensure that they make good progress in all areas of learning.
- Attendance is above average.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- When marking pupils' work, teachers do not always provide pupils with enough advice on how to improve.
- Activities set for pupils are not always at the right level of difficulty to ensure that pupils make rapid progress in their learning.
- Teachers do not always check how well pupils understand the tasks set for them in lessons.
- For a few pupils, their spelling and familiarity with mathematical vocabulary and number facts are not yet strong enough.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils in all classes engaged in a range of activities in different subjects. In some lessons, inspectors were joined by senior leaders. Inspectors looked at pupils’ written work and checked the records of children’s learning in the early years.
- The inspection team held meetings with the headteacher, other academy leaders, and the Chair and three other members of the Governing Body. Inspectors spoke to two representatives of the Academy Trust and the academy’s Improvement Partner.
- Inspectors spoke to two groups of pupils and, informally, with other pupils in lessons and around the school. An inspector listened to pupils reading and spoke to them about their reading habits.
- Inspectors examined several academy documents. These included the academy’s evaluation of its performance and its improvement plan, notes of governing body meetings, information about pupils’ progress and attainment, evidence about the quality of teaching, and records relating to behaviour, safeguarding and attendance.
- Inspectors took account of the 32 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and the views expressed informally by parents as they arrived at school. The team analysed the 20 questionnaires returned by staff.

Inspection team

James McVeigh, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Zahid Aziz

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The academy is smaller than the average-sized primary school. There is one class for each year group, and children in the Reception Year attend full time.
- The school became an academy in September 2013, joining the Passmores Cooperative Learning Community.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (extra government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or children who are looked after by the local authority) is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above the national average.
- The academy runs a breakfast club.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that:
 - the different groups of pupils, particularly the most-able, are always set suitably challenging activities
 - teachers always check that pupils understand what they have to do
 - when marking, teachers help pupils to improve their spelling and also give them advice on how to improve their work.
- Further improve pupils' achievement in mathematics by ensuring that all pupils are encouraged to use mathematical terminology in their explanations and have good opportunities to develop their skills in using and remembering number facts.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders and governors have a resolute drive to improve the academy's provision. Their high expectations of staff and pupils have brought about improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement since the academy was formed. They ensure that pupils work hard and behave well.
- Senior leaders gather a wide range of evidence to evaluate teachers' performance. The headteacher sets challenging targets, including raising pupils' rates of progress, for teachers to meet. Underperformance is tackled promptly. Teachers benefit from opportunities to work with the wider community of schools in the academy trust. They meet together to check the accuracy of their assessments of pupils' work and develop their teaching skills. Teachers are well supported to improve their practice through extra training and help from their colleagues. Pupils across the academy are making better progress in their learning as a consequence.
- Senior leaders have an accurate picture of how well the academy is doing and where its weaknesses lie. They are implementing effective plans to make sure that pupils' achievement continues to rise. Pupils' progress is checked regularly, and extra help is provided for any pupil in danger of falling behind.
- Staff have worked effectively together to plan a range of topics based on the new National Curriculum that pupils find interesting and engaging. For example, Reception children have been engrossed in their learning activities around the theme of 'Pirates'. There is a suitable focus on numeracy and literacy, and other areas, such as citizenship and personal and social education, are cleverly integrated into the topics. Further enrichment comes from a good range of trips and school events, such as visits to the Astrodome and theatrical productions, as well as presentations from the police and fire services on road and firework safety.
- The academy has strong, effective support from the academy trust in all areas of its work. Governors and staff have access to training, advice and management systems. Pupils' experiences are greatly enhanced by the links with Passmores Academy. For example, pupils have opportunities to practise their French and try cookery, and engage in reading club and a range of sporting activities.
- The academy promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. There are many opportunities for pupils to learn about different faiths and cultures, and pupils are respectful of others with different views. Pupils know right from wrong and have experienced democracy in action when choosing members of the school council or taking part in recent mock elections. They are being prepared well to take their place as responsible citizens in British society.
- The academy is committed to equal opportunities and does not tolerate any form of discrimination. For example, it makes sure that pupils eligible for the pupil premium take full advantage of trips and clubs and that they are effectively supported academically to catch up with their classmates. Leaders have ensured that the academy's motto, 'Working together to be the best we can', is brought to life in the academy's friendly and purposeful atmosphere. Pupils have good opportunities to reflect on school values, such as being caring, responsible and truthful. As a result, the academy is effective in promoting good behaviour and a keenness to learn.
- Subject leaders are well supported to develop their leadership skills further, through training from the academy trust's Improvement Partner and professional development courses. They are closely involved in training other teachers and checking pupils' progress, and are accountable for the development of their subjects. They are helping to ensure pupils make good progress in their learning.
- The academy makes effective use of the primary sports funding to encourage pupils to become more active. The academy shares a specialist physical education teacher with the rest of the academy trust schools to coach teachers and pupils, and increase the opportunities for pupils to enjoy sport. Pupils are engaged in regular physical activity. They have a wide range of sports clubs available, including ones at the secondary academy, and take part in many sporting competitions.
- Senior leaders ensure pupils are safe. The headteacher, as the designated safeguarding lead, is highly focused on making sure any concerns about pupils' safety are followed up promptly. She is very proactive

in handling potential safeguarding issues and dealing with the local social services. Staff are appropriately trained and are familiar with the safeguarding policies. Attendance is monitored closely and good use is made of an attendance officer, who works across all schools in the academy trust, to follow up pupils' absences immediately.

- The headteacher is closely involved with the leadership of the early years. She supports the work of the local authority in checking the accuracy of teachers' assessments in other local early years settings.
- Parents report that teachers are easy to talk to and helpful. They have good opportunities to see their children's work, including through class assemblies and classroom visits. There are regular newsletters about school events and parents receive good advice about helping their children at home. A breakfast club, well received by parents, provides pupils with a healthy breakfast and ensures they arrive on time for lessons and ready to learn.
- Transition to the next stage of their education is well planned for pupils. Virtually all pupils in Year 6 are expected to move on to the Passmores Academy. They have often visited the secondary school for lessons and clubs, and they have benefited from a formal programme to introduce them into the way the secondary school works.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors understand school performance information and are well informed, through reports and their own well-planned visits, about the progress pupils are making and the quality of teaching. They have a good range of relevant skills that are augmented by further training. Governors benefit from the expertise and resources available from the advisory board of the academy trust. They ask challenging questions about the academy's performance, ensuring that leaders maintain their focus on improvement.
 - Governors know about the quality of teaching in the academy and make sure that all pay awards are justified by improvements in pupils' progress. They ensure that any underperformance is challenged promptly and that the academy uses the pupil premium effectively to help disadvantaged pupils make better progress.
 - Working with the Academy's Improvement Partner, governors set challenging targets for the performance of the headteacher.
 - The governing body regularly checks all safeguarding arrangements and ensures that they are fully compliant with current legislation.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The focus on the academy's values has a strong influence on pupils' behaviour. They are polite and courteous when moving around the school and play together harmoniously at break times.
- Teachers apply consistently the academy's procedures for managing pupils' behaviour. Adults work effectively to support the few pupils who have difficulty in managing their own behaviour. Pupils know the rewards and sanctions and display good levels of self-discipline.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They readily take on responsibilities. For example, as school council representatives or play leaders.
- Pupils enjoy their work and are keen to learn. They usually stick to the tasks given to them and listen carefully to their teachers. Pupils work well together, readily discussing their ideas and sharing resources. Occasionally, when work is not demanding enough, a few pupils lose concentration.
- Incidents of misbehaviour are recorded clearly and misbehaviour levels are low.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Areas where pupils work and play are well supervised.

- Pupils say they feel safe and well looked after. They know there is an adult they can turn to if they are ever upset. Pupils know about the different forms of bullying. They report that there is little bullying and are confident that staff would sort out any incidents quickly.
- Leaders ensure the academy trust's health and safety procedures are followed closely and reviewed regularly. Staff are well aware of safeguarding policies and implement them effectively. For example, staff know how to report any concerns about child safety.
- Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe; for example, when using the internet. They remember advice about such things as road and fire safety from the visits from the police and fire service and seeing the 'Crucial Crew' safety demonstrations.
- Absences are followed up quickly and the academy promotes regular attendance successfully. As a result, attendance rates are above average.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching has improved. Teachers have benefited from the well-focused training opportunities to improve their practice. Clear evaluations of their teaching observed by senior leaders help teachers understand how to improve their practice. Consequently, teaching is good and pupils are enabled to make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers manage their pupils well. Classrooms are neat and well organised. Bright and helpful displays of pupils' work and recent activities contribute effectively to the good learning environment. Teaching assistants know their roles well and are suitably trained. They support those pupils identified as needing help effectively so that these pupils have full access to activities and progress well. Leaders regularly check that the extra support provided for disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is effective.
- Teachers usually plan interesting activities for pupils and explain clearly what they expect them to be able to do. In a mathematics lesson, pupils in Years 5 and 6 worked enthusiastically to plan a shopping list to support a family of four on a limited budget. They made good progress in researching food prices on the internet and calculating potential costs.
- Teachers often question pupils skilfully to make them reflect on their ideas and think harder. They give them time to consider their replies and pose follow-up questions to tease out more information.
- Phonics (letters and their sounds) is taught well. Teachers demonstrate how to sound letters accurately and how to blend them together in the finished word. Consequently, pupils learn to read quickly. From their relatively low starting points, pupils are helped to make good progress in writing. Teachers encourage pupils to write lengthy pieces in a variety of forms in most subjects, such as newspaper reports, diaries and stories.
- As a result of weaker teaching in the past, pupils' knowledge of number facts and mathematical vocabulary is not as strong as it could be. Teaching has improved and pupils are now making good progress in mathematics. However, pupils sometimes use mathematical terminology inaccurately and do not always spot mistakes quickly enough. Teachers do not always challenge pupils' incorrect use of the language of mathematics.
- Teachers mark pupils' written work regularly. However, they do not always follow the academy's marking policy closely enough so their efforts do not have as much impact on pupils' learning as they could. Teachers explain what pupils have done well and usually point out any mistakes, but they do not always give pupils clear guidance on what to do next to improve. Occasionally, important spelling mistakes – for example, a confusion between 'quiet' and 'quite' – are not picked up through marking.
- Teachers work together and with colleagues from other schools in the academy trust to check their assessments are accurate. Assessments are regular and used to ensure that all pupils are making good

progress and to plan the extra help needed for any who may be falling behind. However, teachers do not always set work that is appropriately challenging for all pupils, particularly the most able. They do not always check how well pupils understand or are able to complete the tasks they have been set. At such times, pupils' progress is limited as they either spend too long on something they have already mastered or make too little headway on a problem they do not fully understand.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics to reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 6.
- All groups of pupils in Key Stage 1 make good progress. The academy's records of pupils' achievement, confirmed by work seen in books, show that Year 2 pupils are on track to attain higher standards than last year in all three subjects and reach the national average in each case. Pupils' progress in other year groups is also improving, although progress in mathematics is not always as strong as in other subjects. Work for pupils in mathematics is not always set at the right level of difficulty, particularly for the most able.
- Pupils are making strong progress in their writing. They have plenty of opportunities to write at length for different purposes in a wide range of subjects. Although their attainment in grammar, punctuation and spelling is improving, it is not as strong as in other elements of writing. Spelling is the weakest aspect of pupils' writing.
- Results in the national phonics check of Year 1 pupils are improving and are broadly average. Pupils are learning to read well. Reading competitions, a new range of books that appeal to pupils' interests, and on-line reading opportunities are effective in encouraging pupils to read regularly. Pupils have regular opportunities to read to adults.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are making similar progress to their classmates and, in some cases, are progressing faster. They receive well-focused additional support from teachers and teaching assistants that ensures their needs are met. The impact of this support is checked closely by leaders to ensure it is effective.
- As well as well-targeted tuition in small groups, and opportunities for personal counselling, the academy ensures that pupils eligible for the pupil premium take full advantage of all opportunities available, such as going on trips and joining clubs. Eligible pupils are making good progress compared to others in the school and others nationally. The attainment gap between them and their classmates is closing. In 2014, in reading and writing, they were around half a term behind others in school, but ahead of them in mathematics. Compared to other pupils nationally, they were almost two terms behind in reading and mathematics, and about half a term behind in writing.
- The most able pupils often work together on harder activities, have opportunities to develop their thinking skills through sessions led by a secondary school teacher and attend a secondary school reading club. Although the most able pupils make good progress overall, their progress is not always as good as others, particularly in mathematics. This is because the work teachers set for the most able pupils is not always hard enough to push them to reach the highest standards of which they are capable.

The early years provision is good

- The early years department is well led and managed by the headteacher and Reception class leader. Effective transition arrangements help children to settle quickly. Parents visit Reception in the term before their children start and early years staff visit each child at home to get to know them better.
- Staff look after children carefully and make sure they are safe. Children quickly gain in self-confidence in the warm and caring environment and learn how to do things for themselves.
- Children begin Reception with skill levels that are below those typical for their age. From low starting

points, children make good progress in all areas of learning, but particularly in mathematics, literacy and personal, social and emotional development. The proportion reaching a good level of development is above the national average.

- Teaching is good and meets the particular learning needs of all children. Children are well prepared for the next stage in their education. Adults manage their groups well so that children listen closely to their instructions and behave well. Resources and activities are well planned to appeal to children's interests and engage them fully. For example, a group of children were immersed in 'sailing' their pirate ship to search for treasure. Children stuck to their roles as captain, lookout and helmsman, and spoke animatedly to each other, giving orders and explaining what was happening.
- Phonics is taught well. Adults pronounce letters accurately and help children to develop associated actions, such as hand movements, to help them remember the sounds. A high-ability group of children made good progress in a rapid-fire exercise to segment words and then blend the sounds. This helped them to spell the words accurately on their whiteboards.
- Adults monitor and record children's achievements well to plan children's next steps. Evidence of progress is recorded in each child's learning journal, including parents' observations, to give a comprehensive picture of children's achievement.
- Activities, both inside and outside, are planned carefully to support and build on children's learning. Children were seen to make good progress in their reading and writing skills. One child demonstrated the ability to use phonic knowledge to read short sentences, while another showed progression from writing single letters to full sentences. Children develop a good understanding of the concept of number through regular opportunities to count and carry out simple calculations.

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	139950
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	450246

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	213
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Brown
Principal	Lee Woods
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01279 425100
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