

Racemeadow Primary Academy

Ratcliffe Road, Atherstone, CV9 1LT

Inspection dates 4–5 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy	
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management	Good		2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good		2
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' achievement in writing and mathematics is not yet good enough. Their progress in these two subjects is not consistently good across the school.
- Although it is improving quickly, the quality of teaching is not yet consistently good. Teachers' planning does not always build on what pupils, particularly the most-able, already know and so they are not given work that challenges them sufficiently. As a result, too few pupils reach the higher levels of which they are capable.
- Teachers do not always adapt work to allow pupils to move on in their learning as soon as they are able to do so. This slows their progress.
- Checks on pupils' learning in lessons by some middle leaders do not always focus on the progress of groups of pupils and so opportunities to identify common barriers can be missed.
- Pupils do not have enough chances to apply their numeracy skills to practical problem solving activities and so develop their reasoning.
- Pupils in the older years have gaps in their basic spelling, punctuation and grammar skills as a result of weaker teaching in the past.
- Pupils' speaking skills are not sufficiently well developed to enable them to talk about what and how they are learning in sufficient depth. This hinders their progress to the higher levels.

The school has the following strengths

- The senior leaders have been very effective in rapidly changing the culture and ethos of the school. Checks on teaching and learning are rigorous and leaders are well supported by governors and the academy trust board.
- Leaders are making effective use of the good and better teaching within the school and the trust to benefit all staff.
- Pupils enjoy their lessons and are now making better progress in all subjects. They take good care with the presentation of their work.
- Pupils know how well they are doing and what they are aiming to achieve as a result of regular and detailed marking. Their good responses help them to improve further.
- Pupils feel safe and behave well. They have good relationships with each other and with staff.
- Children in the early years are taught and cared for well. They make good progress and are increasingly well prepared for Year 1.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 14 lessons, several of which were jointly observed with academy leaders. Pupils' behaviour at playtimes and lunchtimes was also observed.
- The inspection team evaluated the work in a sample of pupils' books, and listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, head of school, senior leaders, other staff, pupils, members of the local governing board and representatives from the academy trust board.
- Inspectors held meetings with two groups of pupils. They also had a number of informal discussions with pupils.
- Inspectors took account of 31 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and spoke to parents at the start of the school day and after an assembly.
- The inspectors examined a wide range of documents, including: the academy's own information about pupils' learning and progress; plans for improvement and checks on teaching; records of governing body and academy trust board meetings; and documents relating to safeguarding, pupils' behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Joanne Sanchez-Thompson, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Justine Lomas	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Racemeadow Primary Academy converted to become an academy school in November 2013. When its predecessor school, Racemeadow Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to require special measures.
- The academy is part of the REAch2 Academy Trust group of schools. Riverside Academy, another of the trust's schools has provided support to senior and middle leaders.
- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- There is one Reception class of pupils in the early years provision. Children attend this class full-time.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those supported by additional funding through the pupil premium, is higher than the national average. The pupil premium is government funding which supports pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority.
- The executive headteacher joined the school in December 2014. The head of school began her interim role at this time and she was appointed permanently in April 2015.
- Several teachers have joined the school this academic year.
- The school uses its local authority's alternative provision (The Link at Stockingford Primary School) for a very small number of pupils.
- There is a breakfast club which is managed by the governing body and formed part of the inspection.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning so they are consistently good and better and pupils make more rapid progress by:
 - making sure all teachers plan lessons that are securely based on pupils' prior learning so they can provide work for the most-able pupils that challenges them at the right level of difficulty
 - ensuring teachers check the progress pupils are making during lessons and adapt activities to allow pupils to move on more rapidly in their learning
 - developing the school's system of checking on teaching so that it focuses on the progress of different groups within lessons
 - continuing to share the existing good practice that exists within the school and the trust.
- Raise achievement in writing and mathematics by:
 - ensuring pupils' basic spelling, punctuation and grammar skills are systematically taught, developed and practised
 - planning more opportunities for pupils to apply their practical problem solving skills in mathematics
 - developing pupils' speaking and reasoning skills in all lessons
 - providing further support for parents to understand how they can help their child at home

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders have implemented a systematic drive for improvement which has seen a positive change in the school's culture and ethos. The quality of teaching has improved strongly and staff now have much higher expectations of what pupils can achieve. As a result, standards are rising and pupils' behaviour is good.
- Leaders' self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate. They monitor the school's effectiveness, identify priorities for improvement and plan carefully. Constant checking on the quality of teaching, used alongside information about pupils' progress, is enabling weaker practice to be addressed. Leaders recognise that this checking could be even more effective by focussing on the progress of specific groups within lessons and have plans in place to do this. Staff value the support, challenge and training provided and all share a determination to move the school forward.
- The school's middle leaders have worked alongside leaders from Riverside Academy, another of the trust's schools, and this has been very effective in developing their confidence and capacity to check on provision for themselves and then to drive through improvements to teaching.
- The REAch2 Trust holds the school's leaders to account for the progress that pupils make. This support and challenge have been fundamental to the many improvements seen over the past year in the academy, with the Trust acting decisively to secure improvements to leadership and management.
- Pupils learn and play happily together because their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. They learn about the beliefs of different faiths and have a good understanding of right and wrong. Displays around the school, including one on the recent election, support the school's promotion of British values of tolerance, respect, equality, the rule of law and democracy. Discrimination in any form is tackled rigorously. As a result, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils find the curriculum (the topics and subjects taught) interesting. There is an appropriate focus on developing pupils' basic reading, writing and mathematical skills although their speaking and reasoning skills are less well developed.
- Support provided for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is now well organised and is enabling these pupils to make faster progress. This indicates the school's commitment to promoting equality of opportunity for pupils.
- The pupil premium is now being used effectively to provide additional teaching and in-class support for disadvantaged pupils to help them catch up in their work. There are good arrangements for pupils' pastoral support through the work of appropriately trained staff and other outside agencies. As a result, they are making faster progress and gaps to other pupils within the school and nationally are closing.
- The additional primary school sport funding is being used to provide specialist sports teaching and support for teachers which is highly valued by pupils and staff. As a result, pupils enjoy a wider range of sports and many more of them are participating in clubs within school and in competitions with other local schools.
- Most parents express positive views about the academy although some say that they do not receive valuable information about their child's progress. Parents receive three written reports a year, two are short and one longer, and they have three formal opportunities to meet with teachers. Reports are well written, however some of the language used may be difficult for parents to understand. The school intends to improve this next year.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and are effective. All training is up to date and there is a robust culture of safeguarding within the school. Leaders and governors monitor this carefully, ensuring that pupils are safe.

- The Link at Stockingford Primary School, when used, provides effective support for pupils' specific needs. Leaders monitor the progress, attendance and behaviour of these pupils closely.

■ The governance of the school:

- The local governing board works well with the Trust Board to provide effective challenge and support to academy leaders. They have a very clear understanding of the academy's performance in relation to other schools nationally, and within the trust, due to the range of information provided.
- Through regular visits to the academy, governors have a good awareness of the quality of teaching and its impact on learning. They know where teaching is strongest, what is being done to tackle weaknesses in staff performance, and how effective teaching is rewarded financially.
- Although ultimate responsibility for the school's finances rests with the academy trust, members of the governing board make sure that funds, including those for the pupil and sports premiums, are spent to improve pupils' achievement.
- Governors carry out their safeguarding duties effectively, ensuring that statutory requirements are met and pupils are kept safe.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite and respectful towards each other and adults. They behave sensibly around the large site and conduct themselves well. Pupils take good care of the school environment, picking up any litter they may find and keeping their cloakrooms tidy. They are proud of their work, which is well displayed around the school. School records confirm that the good behaviour seen during the inspection is now typical.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to school and to their learning. They work hard in lessons and cooperate well with each other. However, when activities do not engage them fully, some pupils do not give their full attention and their progress slows. Pupils recognise the improvements that have been made this year and are confident in talking about their learning and what they need to do to improve further. They appreciate the opportunities to improve their work in their daily Read and Respond sessions.
- Well-trained staff work effectively with pupils who have additional needs to help them learn to manage their own behaviour.
- The school gives a high profile to promoting good attendance and pupils respond very positively to this. As a result, attendance is at least in-line with the national average.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Procedures for checking on visitors and new staff are rigorous. Parents and pupils are positive about the school's work to keep them safe. Risk assessments are thorough and safeguarding procedures are understood fully by staff.
- Pupils understand what bullying is and although they say that it does happen sometimes, they feel confident to talk to an adult who will deal with it promptly and effectively.
- Work in and out of lessons helps pupils learn how to stay safe. They know the potential dangers of using the internet and social network sites. The Junior Road Safety Officers also help promote the need to keep safe in the local area.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching, although improving strongly, is not yet consistently good across the academy and this results in

pupils making inconsistent progress between year groups.

- The teaching of writing has not enabled pupils to make good progress. This is now improving in Key Stage 2, although there are still gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills. Younger pupils are benefitting from more systematic teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) which is supporting faster progress in reading. However, planned writing activities are not always challenging enough to ensure these younger pupils make faster progress.
- The teaching of mathematics focuses on ensuring that pupils have the appropriate skills and knowledge in the use of number and new concepts. As a result, there is insufficient focus on helping them to deepen their understanding of solving problems and their reasoning about mathematics, both within their mathematics lessons and in other subjects.
- The academy's most-able pupils are not always given work that is difficult enough for them or which makes them explain their thinking. As a result, too few of these pupils reach the higher levels of attainment.
- During lessons, pupils' understanding is not checked effectively or often enough. Teachers plan tasks for different groups of pupils but some teachers do not recognise when pupils are ready to move on to a harder task. This slows pupils' progress as they continue to complete work which is too easy for them.
- Teaching is improving as a result of the concerted actions taken by school leaders. Where it is strong, there are high expectations of what pupils can achieve and teachers plan well-structured tasks which enable all to make rapid progress. This successful teaching, along with observations of teachers in other trust schools, is being shared with all staff as part of their training programme.
- The quality of teachers' marking and feedback has improved considerably and now, in most classes, provides clear and specific guidance to pupils. As a result, pupils know how well they are doing in reading, writing and mathematics and are able to say their level and what specific steps they should take to improve further. At the beginning of each morning, pupils make their corrections or respond to their challenges, learning from their mistakes. However, these responses are not always returned to by teachers to check if they are correct.
- Pupils' presentation of their work has improved markedly over the past year as a result of teachers' higher expectations and the consistent teaching of handwriting.
- Teaching assistants work closely with teachers to match work to the needs of disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and disadvantaged pupils. They have received appropriate training and are particularly effective when working with small groups in class or in additional interventions.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement because the progress they make as they move through the school varies too widely. This is particularly the case for writing, where attainment is below average across Key Stages 1 and 2.
- In 2014, standards in Key Stage 2 were in line with the national average in reading but below in writing and mathematics. In Key Stage 1, they were broadly average in reading and mathematics and below in writing.
- The proportion of pupils making the expected rates of progress between Years 1 and 6 is below average in writing and inconsistent in mathematics. The proportion that make better progress than expected is much lower than average, especially in writing. As a result, fewer pupils reach the higher levels.
- The most-able pupils make the expected progress but do not make more rapid progress because teachers do not consistently set work for them that is sufficiently challenging.

- Disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium in Year 6 in 2014 were just over four terms behind others in the school in reading, five terms behind in writing and two years behind in mathematics. There was a similar picture when compared with other pupils nationally.
- Work in pupils' books, the school's current progress data and lesson observations show rapid improvements in most year groups for all groups of pupils, including the disadvantaged. In some cases, disadvantaged pupils are making faster progress than other pupils in the school and nationally and so the gaps are closing. Higher standards were seen to be being reached by the end of Year 6 for all groups of pupils.
- Achievement in reading is a strength of the school. Pupils enjoy reading and each classroom has a welcoming reading area to encourage pupils further. The teaching of phonics is now more systematic and the proportion of pupils achieving the required standard in the Year 1 phonics check last year was close to the national average. This looks set to improve further this year.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are making progress similar to that of other pupils. Appropriate support meets their needs and is enabling them to effectively engage with their learning.

The early years provision is good

- Most children enter the school with skills and knowledge that are below those typical for their age, particularly in personal and social development. Good teaching ensures that children get off to a good start.
- Staff assess children's skills accurately when they arrive at the academy and then provide them with a rich range of opportunities which promote their personal development and early literacy and numeracy skills. As a result, children make good progress so that by the end of the year they are attaining broadly average levels and are ready for the challenges of Year 1.
- Phonics has a high priority in the Reception class and is effectively taught. Pupils' developing knowledge is then skilfully incorporated into stimulating literacy activities such as reading and responding to a 'message in a bottle' from a pirate. Pupils' interest is captured and they willingly practise and refine their skills.
- All areas of learning are developed effectively both in the classroom and in the outdoor area, although there is scope for greater challenge in mathematical learning. Staff plan a range of opportunities to enable children to find things out for themselves and know when to intervene and when to stand back. Just occasionally, adults do not demand enough of children's responses to probing questions.
- The leadership and management of the early years are good. The leader has an accurate view of the strengths and areas for development of the provision, and good plans to improve it further. She is well supported by senior leaders. There are very positive relationships and communication with parents and staff work with them closely.
- Children's behaviour and safety are good. They enjoy playing and working together and show increasing confidence when talking about their learning, such as when discussing whether a pirate ship will float or sink. Adults show great care and concern for pupils' well-being and children respond exceptionally well to this, ensuring that there is a warm and nurturing environment in which children feel safe and happy.

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	140198
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	450207

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	222
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anita Willars
Executive headteacher	Susan Dutton
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01827 713284
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