

The Round House Primary Academy

School Drive, St Neots, PE19 6AW

Inspection dates 23–24 June 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.

- Good leadership and teaching have enabled pupils to make faster progress this year. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is broadly average.
- Across the academy, pupils achieve well, whatever their starting points. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because they are well taught and given the support they need.
- Leaders keep a very close check on the quality of teaching and learning. Along with governors and the trust, they have been instrumental in successfully identifying and tackling weaknesses.
- Teachers provide lively and exciting lessons in a wide range of subjects, which adds to pupils' enjoyment and helps them to learn faster.
- Teachers make sure that the work they plan builds on pupils' previous learning. They keep a close check on pupils' understanding in lessons and deal with any misunderstanding sensitively and effectively.
- Pupils behave well in and out of lessons. They have positive attitudes to learning and feel safe.
- Leadership and teaching are good in the early years and children achieve well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although good, pupils' progress in writing is not as fast as in reading and mathematics. Sometimes, more could be expected of the most-able writers.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to write at length in subjects other than English.
- Teachers do not always pay enough attention to pupils' writing skills when they mark work in other subjects.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 19 lessons, four of which were observed jointly with either the headteacher or the deputy headteacher. Inspectors heard pupils read and looked at the work in their books.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils and staff with leadership roles.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, who is also the chief education officer of the trust, and the chair of the academy’s local governing body, who is also a director of the trust. Inspectors also met with another director of the trust, a member of the local governing body and an external consultant who works with the academy.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents, including a summary of the academy’s self-evaluation and improvement plan, policies aimed at keeping pupils safe, and information about governance and the management of teachers’ performance.
- The views of 54 parents and carers were analysed through their responses on the Parent View website. Inspectors also spoke with a number of parents during the inspection.
- Inspectors took account of the 36 questionnaires returned by staff.

Inspection team

Keith Williams, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Elizabeth Ellis-Martin	Additional Inspector
Helena Mills	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The academy is a larger than average primary school.
- The Round House Primary Academy became an academy in September 2013. When its predecessor school, called The Round House Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to require improvement.
- The academy is part of the Diamond Learning Partnership Trust. It has its own governing body, known as the local governing body.
- Most of the pupils are of White British heritage. A number of other ethnic backgrounds are represented, with the largest group, about one in ten pupils, being those of other White backgrounds. The proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is above the national average. In this academy, this relates to those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- In 2014, the academy met the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Children in the Reception class attend full time.
- The academy hosts a privately-run pre-school playgroup. This is inspected separately and is not included in this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning, particularly in writing, by:
 - extending the level of challenge for the most-able writers
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length in subjects across the curriculum
 - keeping a closer check on pupils' writing skills when teachers mark their work in other subjects.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Strong leadership from the headteacher and deputy headteacher, ably supported by governors and the trust, has made a significant contribution to the school's improvement. Weaknesses in the performance of pupils last year, and shortcomings in teaching, have been tackled robustly. As a result, teaching and learning have improved rapidly and are good.
- Leaders have successfully created an atmosphere in which teachers and pupils can focus, uninterrupted, on learning. Pupils' behaviour has improved considerably and an improved curriculum has captured their imagination and increased their enjoyment.
- Subject leaders, some of whom are new to leadership roles, contribute well to the vision and direction set by senior leaders. They have responded well to training and support and are well placed to extend their influence on standards and quality in their subjects. All staff share the drive to secure the academy's improvement and there is a strong sense of teamwork and high aspirations for pupils.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning is widespread and thorough. As a result, leaders know the school well and are clearly focused on the most important areas for improvement. These careful checks have resulted in consistently good teaching across the academy, although there are still inconsistencies in the way teachers mark and improve pupils' writing in subjects other than English.
- Systems to assess and track pupils' progress are good. Leaders thoroughly analyse the results, as well as the outcomes of the other checks they make on teaching and learning. They use this information well to hold teachers to account and identify where pupils' learning needs a boost.
- The academy works well with other schools in the trust, sharing its own expertise and learning from others. The trust has also had a positive impact on the academy's improvement through the engagement of an external consultant, who provides good support and challenge to school leaders. The executive headteacher plays a full part in checking on teaching and learning and has helped to improve leaders' monitoring skills by observing lessons alongside them.
- Leaders take effective steps to make sure that all pupils have equal opportunity. Pupils of different backgrounds, abilities and needs are welcomed and included fully in academy life, and discrimination is not tolerated. The funding for pupils supported by the pupil premium is used well to provide additional support for pupils' learning and ensure that they are able to take part fully in school activities. As a result, the gap between their performance and that of other pupils is closing rapidly.
- Pupils experience a wide range of exciting and lively experiences through the school's very well-planned curriculum, much of which takes place in the 'ice zone' (areas set up specifically for pupils to explore topics and themes, covering all subjects and using a wide range of resources and media). This adds enormously to their enjoyment, but also ensures that the skills they learn in each subject build successfully upon their previous learning. Although pupils use their writing skills in subjects other than English, there are too few examples of them improving their skills by writing at length.
- Pupils learn key values such as tolerance, respect and democracy. This promotes very positive relationships, prepares them well for life in modern Britain and ensures that they make good progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The primary sports and physical education funding has been used well. The introduction of specialist coaches to lead lessons and improve teachers' own knowledge and confidence has also helped to improve pupils' skills and has increased their participation and success in competitive sport.
- Leaders make sure that pupils are safe and the school's safeguarding arrangements meet all national requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The local governing body has contributed well to the academy's improvement. Governors have well-

developed ways of finding out about the academy's work, including visiting classrooms and meeting with staff who have key roles. They are well trained in analysing the information produced about pupils' performance in the national assessments. As a result, governors have a clear and accurate picture of the academy's performance and they are able to hold leaders to account.

- Governors are well informed about the quality of teaching. They understand where improvements have been secured, and they know where there is still more to do. Governors make sure that teachers' appraisals are carried out fairly and robustly, and that only effective teaching is rewarded with a pay rise.
- Governors and the trust have a good overview of spending and ensure that good value for money is achieved when making purchases. They have a good overview of the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and sport.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is sometimes outstanding. This coupled with their positive attitudes to learning and to academy life in general, has had a considerable impact on their improved learning. Pupils of all ages concentrate well and work hard.
- Relationships are very positive among pupils and with adults. Staff are good role models for the pupils, who are ready to learn and rise to the challenge of teachers' high expectations of how they should behave. Around the school, pupils are polite and respectful. They move sensibly between lessons, for example, when changing classrooms for literacy.
- Pupils enjoy break times very much and say that behaviour is usually good. Lunchtimes are civilised and enjoyable social occasions. Boys and girls of different backgrounds mix well, and they are equally respectful to teaching, support and supervisory staff.
- Pupils understand the academy's clear and effective system of rewards and sanctions, which pupils of all ages helped to devise. Attendance levels are broadly average. Leaders are taking appropriate steps to secure further improvement.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say, and their parents agree, that they feel safe in school because they trust staff to look after them. They say that bullying is rare and they are confident that staff deal with it swiftly when it does happen.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different forms of bullying. They know how to stay safe in different situations, including when using the internet.
- Pupils of all ages, including those in Reception, play with a good regard for each other's safety.

The quality of teaching is good

- Staff have worked well with leaders to improve the quality of teaching. A combination of better planning, accurate assessments and keeping a very close check on pupils' understanding is ensuring that pupils of all abilities achieve well.
- Teachers have a good understanding of how pupils learn. They question well to probe and extend their understanding and to check that they are ready to move on. Teachers are skilled at dealing with any misunderstandings quickly and sensitively. Where necessary, teachers successfully modify the work or alter their approach to enhance pupils' learning.
- Teachers plan lessons that are interesting and enjoyable, and, usually, the work is at the right level of difficulty for pupils of different abilities. Teachers' expectations are high although, occasionally, the most-able writers are not challenged enough to use more complex writing skills or sophisticated vocabulary.

Nevertheless, reading, writing and numeracy are taught well, and this enables pupils to make good progress.

- Teaching assistants contribute well to pupils' learning, whether in the classroom or in the 'ice zone'. They give good support to pupils of all abilities. They are particularly adept at ensuring that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are fully involved in lessons and able to learn.
- Teachers mark pupils work well. They make consistent use of the academy's system for giving pupils a clear picture of how well they have learned and what needs to improve. Occasionally, teachers do not pay enough attention to improving pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar when they write in subjects other than English.
- Pupils learning English as an additional language are taught well and are given the support they need to play a full part in lessons. They soon gain confidence in speaking English, and this helps them to make good progress in other subjects.
- The sports coach makes a good contribution to the teaching of physical education and sport. Teachers have improved their knowledge and confidence in teaching the subject. As a result, pupils have access to a good range of activities in and out of lessons and they have increased their skills.
- Teaching is good in the early years, where children are able to thrive in the supportive, lively and interesting environment.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' progress has accelerated considerably this year. As a result of consistently good teaching, pupils of different abilities achieve well, whatever their starting points. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is broadly average and rising.
- Children join Reception with broadly typical skills, although it is lower in their understanding of the world. By the end of Reception, the proportion reaching a good level of development is similar to that found nationally and, in some cases, for example, in communication, language and literacy, it is higher.
- Pupils are making faster progress than previously in Key Stage 1, and their achievement is good. They make good progress in learning to read because phonics skills (the sounds that letters make) are taught well. Pupils currently in Year 2 are on track to reach broadly average standards, with a much higher proportion reaching the expected levels than was the case last year.
- Pupils in Key Stage 2 make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. However, their progress in writing is not as fast as it is in reading and mathematics. They are given good opportunities to write for different purposes in a wide range of subjects. Across the school, pupils improve their skills by writing at length in English lessons, but this is not always the case in other subjects. Teachers do not always use their marking to improve pupils' writing in those subjects.
- Last year, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 was behind that of other pupils in the academy by over three terms in reading and mathematics. It was over four terms behind other pupils in mathematics. When compared with other pupils nationally, disadvantaged pupils were over two terms behind in mathematics, over three terms behind in reading and over four terms behind in writing. However, effective use has been made of the additional pupil premium funding, and the work in pupils' books and the information collected about their achievement show that these gaps are closing markedly this year. As a result, disadvantaged pupils make good progress from their different starting points.
- The most-able pupils achieve well because they are usually given the harder work of which they are capable. They are challenged to think deeply and, in class discussions, often use sophisticated vocabulary and explain some complicated and complex ideas knowledgeably and confidently, revealing a good level of understanding. This is not always evident in their writing, however, and their progress slows when the

level of challenge for their writing is not high enough.

- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well. They make good progress from their different starting points because there is a strong emphasis on including them fully in lessons and improving their confidence and self-esteem. Pupils' rate of progress increases as they move through the school and, by Year 6, some have made rapid progress.
- There is no significant difference in the progress made by pupils based on their ethnic origins. Those learning English as an additional language achieve well.

The early years provision

is good

- Children achieve well in the Reception classes because the teaching is good. Staff work well together to ensure that children are well prepared for Year 1. They plan an interesting range of activities that build well upon children's own interests and capture their imagination.
- Staff make good use of the classrooms and the well-resourced outdoor area to give children a wide range of activities that promote their all-round development. They question well, help children to deepen their understanding and encourage them to extend their vocabulary. Staff keep a close check on children's learning and build up a helpful and detailed collection of information from their assessments. Parents, too, contribute regularly to these 'learning journals'.
- Children enjoy learning very much. They concentrate for increasingly long periods and take delight in telling anyone who will listen what they are doing. Relationships with other children are very positive, so that they readily take turns, share equipment and listen carefully to each other's point of view.
- Children behave well, sometimes outstandingly well. They play with a great regard to the safety of other children. Staff place a high priority on ensuring that children are safe.
- Leadership of the early years is good. Positive relationships are built with parents from an early stage, and this enhances children's learning and well-being. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to review and improve the provision. They have high expectations and aspirations for the children.

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	139634
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	449871

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	324
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alan Ball
Headteacher	Tracy Bryden
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01480 479890
Fax number	01480 479891
Email address	office@roundhouse.cambs.sch.uk

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