

Redby Academy

Fulwell Road, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear, SR6 9QP

Inspection dates 23–24 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
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

- There is still too much variation in the quality of teaching within and between years. This is having a negative impact on the progress of too many pupils, including those who are disadvantaged.
- The gap between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and others in the school and nationally is not closing quickly enough.
- Leaders do not monitor the quality of teaching with sufficient rigour. As a result, staff are unclear about what they need to do to improve.
- The curriculum beyond English and mathematics is not developed enough.
- Governors do not have a strategic vision for the academy and do not focus relentlessly enough on improvement.
- Not enough time is provided for pupils to respond to teachers' suggestions for improving their work so that they learn from their mistakes and make good progress.
- Middle leaders are not yet skilled enough to undertake their roles in developing their subjects and checking the work of their teams.

The school has the following strengths

- The highly committed headteacher has a clear vision for the academy. She has laid the foundations for sustained success. She has successfully tackled all of the inadequate teaching in the academy and established an ethos of high expectations.
- Pupils behave well and are proud of their school. They are eager to learn and take on responsibility.
- Provision in the early years is well led and is now good. Expectations are high and children respond well. They are happy and make rapid progress.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are strong. The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The academy is a safe place to learn.
- Standards in reading are good and improving. Pupils enjoy reading and read widely because of the academy's structured approach.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed an assembly and range of lessons. The headteacher and other members of the leadership team joined inspectors for the observation of five of these lessons.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around the academy and reviewed the academy's promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Inspectors observed pupils in the playground and during lunchtime.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work in their books and in the learning journals of children in the early years.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and middle leaders, including those responsible for leading curriculum subjects, literacy, numeracy and early years leaders. The lead inspector met with eight members of the governing body, including the Chair of the Governing Body, and a representative of the Wearmouth Learning Trust.
- Two groups of pupils discussed their opinions about the academy and their learning with inspectors. The inspectors listened to several pupils read.
- There were insufficient responses to Ofsted's online parent survey (Parent View) to be considered. However, inspectors did take account of the academy's own recent survey of parents. Inspectors held discussions with parents at the start and end of the school day.
- Inspectors observed the academy's work and looked at a number of documents, including minutes from meetings of the governing body, pupils' achievement data, the academy's evaluation of its own performance and its development plan. Behaviour and attendance records and information relating to safeguarding were also scrutinised.

Inspection team

Mark Evans, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Michael Reeves

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- There is a part-time Nursery where children attend for two and a half days each week. There are two full-time Reception classes.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those supported through the pupil premium, is slightly below the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding which supports pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- Since the previous inspection, the acting headteacher and deputy headteacher have been made permanent.
- The academy is part of the Wearmouth Learning Trust. A local secondary school, Monkwearmouth Academy, is the other academy in the Trust. The two academies work closely together.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good and achievement, especially for disadvantaged pupils, improves more consistently across all year groups, by ensuring that:
 - teachers build upon pupils' learning more promptly, making greater use of the more accurate pupil assessments now available
 - teachers pay particular attention to the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils so that the gap between them and other pupils narrows much more quickly
 - pupils have the time to respond to teachers' feedback about their work so that they can learn from their mistakes and are fully clear about what they need to do to improve
 - teachers develop their subject knowledge and techniques, such as questioning, so that teaching and learning in all classrooms and subjects is interesting and engaging
- Improve the impact of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that all senior and middle leaders rigorously check the quality of teaching and follow up promptly any shortcomings in order to raise standards
 - supporting all teachers and teaching assistants so that they use key information about pupils to help them to plan their teaching and act quickly if pupils fall behind
 - ensuring that governors are provided with key information in a timely fashion so that they can use it to hold the academy to account for its work.
- Improve the impact of governance by:
 - ensuring that governors develop a clear strategic vision for the academy rooted in success for all pupils in their care
 - ensuring governors closely monitor the impact of actions taken to improve the consistency of teaching and achievement across the academy.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

Require improvement

- The headteacher has a clear vision for driving improvement in pupils' achievement and encouraging positive attitudes. Working with her team, she has established a culture of high expectations and good behaviour where pupils feel valued and are clear and enthusiastic about their responsibilities as members of the academy and wider community.
- With support from the governing body and the Wearmouth Learning Trust, the headteacher has succeeded in tackling the historically weakest teaching through a combination of support and robust challenge. The leadership has ensured that the academy is now well placed to eradicate the remaining inconsistencies and underachievement.
- Systems are now in place to check the work of the academy. However, leaders' monitoring of teaching and its impact is not focused enough. Leaders identify areas of concern in teachers' work but follow-up actions are not prompt. Leaders' records of discussions about improving teaching are not always rounded off with agreed next steps. As a result, vital action can be too slow.
- Middle leaders are beginning to strengthen the academy's ability to improve. Leadership in literacy and mathematics is developing effectively and has helped eradicate the weakest teaching. Progress in mathematics, especially, is improving across the academy. However, a few middle leaders still lack the skills to check on the quality of teaching so that they can play a full part in improving the work of the academy.
- There are now firmer systems in place to review information about how well individual pupils are learning and to identify any areas of weakness. These are beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' progress. Leaders and teachers use this information to help ensure that the work pupils are given is more targeted on their needs. However, not all teachers are using this information to good effect to plan their teaching so that action is swiftly taken if pupils fall behind. As a result, pupils' progress is variable.
- Leadership of the early years is increasingly effective and focussed. Regular monitoring and effective ways of holding staff to account are ensuring that staff are challenged and well supported. This results in children making good and better progress.
- Leaders manage the performance of staff so that now all teachers and, increasingly, teaching assistants, understand the link between performance and pay progression. There are regular informal and formal opportunities for leaders and staff to evaluate whether teaching is having a positive impact on pupils' achievement and to determine future training priorities. However, these opportunities are not always focused sharply enough.
- Parents are more involved in academy life and are encouraged to be active partners in learning so that they can better support their children's progress. Parents' responses to a recent school survey and other inspection evidence reveal overwhelmingly strong support for the academy and satisfaction with its service.
- Leaders are ensuring that the pupil premium funding is now being used increasingly to good effect to help disadvantaged pupils make the progress that they should. However, recent academy data suggest that gaps are still too wide.
- Additional physical education (PE) and sports funding has been successfully used to enhance provision, improve teaching skills and increase pupils' participation. For example, the academy has accessed specialist sports coaches to work alongside teachers in school and increased the opportunities for inter-school competitive sports. Pupils talk enthusiastically about how these events improve both their sporting skills and confidence.
- Leaders are developing a broader curriculum at the academy. There is an increasing emphasis on subjects other than English, mathematics and science. Leaders in subjects such as geography, history, religious education and modern foreign languages are beginning to work with colleagues to develop appropriate programmes and assessments. However, these subject leaders still need additional support to develop these key areas.
- Leaders ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Beautifully presented displays around the academy, which pupils discuss with enthusiasm, clearly demonstrate the impact of the school's work. The academy prepares pupils effectively for life in modern Britain. For example, there are practical hands-on displays about the Royal Family in the Nursery class and there are opportunities to develop an understanding of democracy through the school council.
- The academy receives effective support from the Wearmouth Learning Trust, Sunderland local authority

and Durham School Services. The Durham School Services support has been particularly effective in helping teachers make more accurate judgements about the quality of pupils' work.

- The academy promotes equality of opportunity effectively. Leaders work hard to ensure that all pupils have access to an increasingly interesting curriculum. There are opportunities for pupils to experience a wide range of sporting and artistic activities both in and after school. The academy promotes good relations and tackles different forms of discrimination. Pupils of different ethnic origins, boys and girls and those of different faiths get on well together and say they are happy in school.
- Staff at the academy have not received any training in relation to extremism and radicalisation. Senior leaders recognise that this is an area to be addressed.
- The academy's procedures for safeguarding pupils are effective and meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have worked hard to support the academy. However, they do not have clear enough insights into its work and are not holding leaders to account with sufficient rigour. They are not provided with sufficient detail about the progress of the academy in a timely enough fashion. As a result, they are not able to monitor the impact of actions.
 - Governors have focused on the more immediate issues of the academy at the expense of the broader, strategic priorities which will ensure the academy's improvement is sustained.
 - Governors visit the academy regularly. However, this vital aspect of their monitoring role lacks rigour. Governors are not clear about what they are looking for.
 - The records of governors' actions, including the minutes of meetings, lack detail and are insufficiently focused on what governors have done to hold leaders to account for the inconsistencies at the academy.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They work hard, are keen to learn and show pride in their achievements. On occasions, where teacher expectations or the challenge of the work is too low, they sometimes lose concentration and their work rate dips.
- Pupils display a very positive attitude to school. They respond well to the aims of the Lighthouse principles and the house system which creates a sense of belonging.
- Pupils move around the academy sensibly and display very good manners. Staff reinforce these positive aspects through praise. The vast majority of parents strongly agree that there is a good standard of behaviour at Redby Academy.
- Attendance is above average and punctuality is good. The leadership and office staff have rigorously addressed any areas where attendance needed to improve. Creative approaches to support pupils where attendance has been an issue have greatly improved attendance levels in these cases.
- Bullying, name calling and racist language are very rare at the academy. This is because all staff take this aspect very seriously and good opportunities for pupils to learn about tolerance and caring for others is well developed through assemblies and the curriculum.
- Pupils actively contribute to the positive character of the academy. The academy council, class assemblies and sports competitions with other schools provide good opportunities to contribute to the life of the academy.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Parents and pupils strongly agree that pupils feel safe at Redby Academy.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe using the internet and mobile phones. There are opportunities, such as internet safety week, that ensure all pupils have this guidance reinforced.
- Lunchtimes and playtimes are a happy and enjoyable experience for pupils. Good supervision, well thought through timetabling and high expectations of staff result in a sociable and safe time for pupils.
- Safeguarding procedures are good with all policies and training in place and practices secure.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- The quality of teaching at the academy, although improving, is still not consistently good enough and

requires improvement. There is too much variation between the quality of teaching in classes in the same year and across phases. This results in too much variation in the progress that pupils make.

- Pupils and children report that they enjoy school and the opportunities they are given. They are increasingly developing as independent, enquiring learners who are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The curriculum, although developing, is insufficiently varied and interesting. Although this is now being addressed, there is still some way to go. The work set in subjects such as science and religious education, for example, is mundane and does not give pupils sufficient opportunities to develop their skills as scientists and theologians.
- The teaching of mathematics is improving. The academy has very recently introduced a mastery approach in mathematics. This approach encourages pupils to think deeply about their mathematics and apply their skills to more real-life problems. It is too early to assess the impact of this initiative. However, early signs suggest that it is supplementing the existing, and increasingly effective, progress in this area of the curriculum.
- The academy's approach to marking and feedback helps pupils understand what they need to do next to improve. Pupils welcome this and the opportunities it gives them to respond to their teacher's comments. However, time is not always set aside in lessons for pupils to make these responses nor do staff always check that pupils have responded accurately.
- The whole-school approach to the teaching of spelling is leading to improvement in the accuracy of written work. There are also improvements in the presentation of pupils' work in their books. However, there is still too much variability in the accuracy of pupils' work, especially in their topic books.
- Teachers regularly ask questions to check for understanding. However, this questioning is too often limited to literal answers. It focuses on the 'what' rather than the 'how' and 'why'. Opportunities are missed to challenge pupils' initial ideas and to explore alternatives. Too often, pupils do not deepen their understanding as fully as they might.
- Teaching in subjects other than reading and mathematics does not provide a consistently good level of challenge for the most-able pupils. Work is not always set at the right level and there are insufficient opportunities for these pupils to stretch and develop their skills and knowledge through open-ended activities. This is hindering the progress and limiting the creativity for the most-able pupils.
- The teaching of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is improving rapidly. Because of effective leadership, staff are increasingly able to identify the needs of individual pupils accurately and provide appropriate support. Pupils receiving additional support are catching up successfully through carefully targeted action which is now monitored regularly. Outside specialist help is used to identify specific learning needs of pupils and parents are fully involved.
- Teaching assistants are increasingly effective in their support of particular individuals and groups of pupils. This is because they are now more involved in the assessment of pupils' progress and then the planning of next steps with teachers. The academy is effective in developing the skills of this group of staff through carefully targeted training and other opportunities for professional development.
- Teachers and teaching assistants run regular after-school booster classes for small groups of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, who need additional help. These are enjoyable, well attended and supported by parents. As a result of these classes and the high quality of the teaching that takes place in them, pupils who take part make generally good progress.
- The quality in the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) is good. Teachers' questioning is very specific and this is helping pupils make rapid progress.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because pupils make inconsistent progress as they move through the academy and sometimes within year groups. Too few pupils achieve the expected levels in reading and mathematics in Key Stage 1. Governors and leaders know that these areas need to improve and they are beginning to put in place actions to address this.
- The skills and abilities children have when they start school are usually typical for their age. They make good progress through the Nursery and Reception Years. The proportion of children leaving Reception with a good level of development was higher than national averages in 2014 and the academy's results are even better this year. The majority of children are well prepared to start Year 1.
- In the phonics (sounds that letters make) screening check, completed in Year 1, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level was above the national average in 2014 and has further improved in 2015. This is because teachers have a well-planned and consistently delivered approach to phonics teaching

through the Nursery and Reception Years and Key Stage 1.

- Where the teaching is stronger, for example in Year 2 and Year 6, pupils' achievement is accelerated. Progress is less secure in other years where the academy's own externally checked data show that there are inconsistencies in the progress that pupils make in parallel classes in the same year. This is a result of inconsistencies in the quality of teaching.
- Increasing numbers of the most-able pupils are now achieving the higher results at the end of Year 2 and the end of Year 6. This is particularly the case in reading and mathematics. Improved assessment processes and increased challenge for these pupils is having a positive impact on their learning.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. This is because the academy is becoming more adept at identifying gaps in learning and promptly putting in place teaching to address pupils' learning needs. The improved deployment of teaching assistants and same-day additional teaching in afternoons enables identified gaps in learning in literacy and numeracy to be addressed promptly.
- In 2014, the Year 6 attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and others nationally was two terms in mathematics and reading and one year in writing. Compared with their classmates, pupils were two terms behind in reading, four terms behind in writing and three terms behind in mathematics.
- The academy's own data indicates that these attainment gaps are likely to widen in 2015 before reducing for subsequent year groups. The progress of disadvantaged pupils is not significantly different to their classmates in each year group. By the end of Year 6, their progress is typically at least similar to other pupils nationally and in many cases above national levels for reading, writing and mathematics.

The early years provision

is good

- The headteacher has ensured that early years provision has improved since the previous inspection. A new early years leader was appointed in 2014. The quality of leadership and management, teaching and the assessment of children's learning have all strengthened. As a result, children now achieve well through the Nursery and Reception Years.
- Most children enter early years with levels of development that are typical for their age. Those children with speech and language needs are identified promptly and extra support is provided. They make good progress through their time in early years and most achieve good levels of development that are above national averages by the time they leave.
- Children in early years are well prepared for school and work in Year 1. For example, from springtime in Reception, children write in A4 books similar to those used in the rest of the academy. This raises their expectations, encourages them to write more extensively and helps prepare them for Year 1.
- Children's good progress reflects good teaching. The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) is effective. Staff support children well so that they can read a range of sounds and letters and use them to write words and sentences. Children enjoy playing literacy games, which help to reinforce new learning.
- There is an effective balance between activities children can choose for themselves and those led by adults. All staff observe and record children's progress carefully. They use these records to plan next steps and intervene promptly if support in a particular area is needed. The staff have visited other schools to look for best practice and used this knowledge to improve the children's learning opportunities both within the school building and in the outdoors areas. This is enhancing the development of children's creativity.
- Behaviour is good in both the Nursery and Reception classes. Children look after each other and collaborate well in pairs and groups. Staff encourage children to listen to each other and to express their opinions. Staff model fair play and respect so that children work in a caring, harmonious environment.
- Early years leadership is good. The early years leader sets high expectations that children will make good progress and monitors the work of her staff carefully. Improvements in the assessments of children's skills and knowledge have resulted in more accurate identification of children's starting points and any gaps in their learning. All staff are involved in recording children's progress, taking pride in recording information in each child's learning journal.
- The early years is a safe place to learn. Children are well looked after and safeguarding is a priority.

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	137463
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	455516

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	402
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Gowans
Headteacher	Melanie Wight
Date of previous school inspection	28 November 2013
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