

# The Ferrars Academy

Macaulay Road, Luton, LU4 0LL

**Inspection dates** 25–26 June 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
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		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Although the principal, governors and senior leaders have made sure teaching is improving this year, not enough pupils make good progress and so attainment is average in reading and mathematics and below average in writing.
- More of the most-able pupils are capable of reaching the higher levels of skill, particularly in writing.
- The gap in attainment between early years children who are supported by the pupil premium and others in the school is larger this year, especially in writing. Provision in early years requires improvement.
- Teachers sometimes give pupils work which is too easy. This is because staff have not received effective training in this aspect of their work.
- Targets for pupils across the school are not always used successfully and so pupils do not understand how to reach the next stage of development.
- Marking and teachers' comments are not always specific and so pupils do not know in detail how to improve their work.
- Sometimes pupils' errors and misunderstandings are not sorted out successfully before the next session and so they are not totally ready to develop new skills.
- The action plans that early years and subject leaders have created are not always effective in showing how they will support pupils' progress. This means they do not keep a close enough eye on pupils' achievement in every year group.
- Leaders do not ensure that all teachers have a chance to see the good practice of other teachers.
- Governors do not receive clearly presented information about how well different groups of pupils are doing. This means that some of them are not totally aware of which groups of pupils are making slower progress.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils develop their problem-solving skills successfully because practical activities are used well.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and they concentrate effectively in school. This is because staff guide pupils calmly and firmly.
- Pupils feel safe in school and parents agree. This is because staff care for them successfully.
- Senior leaders and staff form a strong partnership with parents.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team visited 19 lessons, some jointly with the principal. As well as observing lessons, inspectors also studied pupils' records of progress and the work in pupils' books in many year groups. They heard some pupils read and attended one assembly.
- Inspectors held meetings with pupils, the principal and members of the senior leadership team, subject leaders, phase leaders and other staff responsible for areas of the school's work. The lead inspector met with three members of the governing body.
- Inspectors could not analyse responses to the Ofsted Parent View online survey because there were insufficient responses, but they did analyse a recent survey which the school completed with 108 parents.
- Inspectors took account of 12 completed staff questionnaires.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including records of pupils' behaviour and the subject leaders' plans. They looked at leaders' records describing the school's success in improving teaching, minutes of governors' meetings and documents relating to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Jacqueline Cousins, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lesley Fisher

Additional Inspector

Matthew Klimcke

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Ferrars Academy converted to become an academy school in May 2013. When its predecessor school, Ferrars Infant School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are from minority ethnic groups and a small minority are White British. Six in every ten of the pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is average. This additional funding is for looked-after children and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- Children attend the early years full time in the Reception year and part time in the Nursery.
- There have been several changes in staffing in the last two years. This year some classes changed their teacher part way through the academic year. The school has a temporary early years and literacy leader.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and pupils' achievement, especially in writing from Nursery to Year 2 by ensuring that:
  - the proportion of pupils who reach higher levels of skill increases and more pupils make good progress
  - the gap between disadvantaged children in the early years and the rest is reduced considerably
  - teachers receive effective training in how to challenge the most-able pupils
  - teachers' marking and comments explain to pupils in detail what they have done well and what they could do to improve their work
  - pupils' individual targets are used successfully to help them reach the next stage of development
  - pupils' errors and misunderstandings are sorted out methodically.
- Improve leadership by making sure that:
  - early years and subject leaders create action plans which support pupils' progress and keep a closer eye on pupils' attainment and achievement in every year group
  - governors have a deeper understanding of which groups of pupils are making slower progress because data is presented more clearly
  - teachers observe good practice from other teachers so that they learn how to have a greater impact on pupils' achievement.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management requires improvement

- Although leaders have appropriately improved the quality of teaching this year, they have not yet done enough to ensure that teaching is good from Nursery to Year 2 and that all groups of pupils are making good progress.
- In recent years, the school found it difficult to recruit a literacy leader and currently this role is being covered by a temporary leader. The leader of mathematics is permanent and so improvement is more marked in mathematics than literacy. However, improvement plans for these subjects are not particularly effective and so subject leaders are not monitoring all year groups' progress as successfully as they could.
- Senior leaders observe teaching and they agree individual targets with teachers to improve their teaching skills. Leaders do not ensure that teachers observe good practice and so a few do not develop their skills as quickly as they could and the impact they have on pupils' achievement is less effective.
- The principal and vice principal form a productive team. This year senior leaders rightly focused on the removal of inadequate teaching, which they achieved. Progress in reading by Year 1 is improving and a higher proportion of pupils passed the Year 1 phonics check (letters and the sounds that they represent) than was the case last year.
- The principal and staff create a friendly atmosphere in the school where teaching is improving, pupils behave well, concentrate in lessons, respect others from all sorts of backgrounds and attend regularly. Staff support pupils' well-being thoughtfully. The school treats everyone equally fairly and does not permit any discrimination. A positive partnership with parents means that children settle quickly into school life and parents support their child throughout their time at the school.
- The school is using the pupil premium funding in Years 1 and 2 adequately. As a result, the gap between those who receive this funding and the rest in the school was similar to other schools last year. Pupils receive extra support in small groups or through one-to-one tuition and many more disadvantaged pupils take part in activities outside of school, such as football and street-dancing clubs and trips to the pantomime.
- The school prepares pupils successfully for life in modern Britain. Every year the pupils help to write class rules and understand the importance of keeping to them. They know what is not lawful because visitors to the school, such as the police, carefully explain some the laws of Britain. They vote for their school councillors and know that they discuss ways to improve the school. Assemblies and class sessions make sure that pupils learn about other people's cultures and beliefs. For example, pupils know about life in other countries as well as the beliefs of Muslims and what happens during the festival of Eid.
- The pupils say they enjoy learning in all subjects, particularly in reading, writing and solving problems in number work. They really appreciate the after-school activities such as tennis, gymnastics and trampolining. Many projects are planned to develop skills in more than one subject at a time. The pupils said they liked design and technology topics where they used their reading skills to follow instructions when they made cakes and colourful masks.
- The school spends its primary sports funding carefully. Many pupils learn to swim successfully because the funding is used to provide tuition to all Year 2 pupils. Pupils win competitions in street dancing and gymnastics because specialist coaches effectively support pupils' learning in these sporting activities.
- Leaders and governors ensure that safeguarding procedures and policies meet national requirements. Many staff have first aid qualifications for both early years and adults. All staff completed child protection training in September 2014 and new staff complete this training as part of their induction arrangements. The school works productively with the local authority, the family worker, other agencies and parents to keep pupils safe. Some governors are trained in how to recruit staff safely.
- The school does not receive support from the local authority. It receives adequate external support from a

private company. This has assisted the principal to get rid of inadequate teaching.

### ■ The governance of the school:

- Governance is effective. The governors understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They say that pupils' behaviour is good and that attendance is improving. This is because staff keep a close eye on both these aspects.
- Governors are keen to improve the school's results. They know about teaching and its impact on pupils' achievement. They know that the most-able pupils could do better. This is because they study the school's data which tracks pupils' progress. However, data is not presented to them clearly and so it is tricky for some of them to have a detailed knowledge of which groups of pupils are making slower progress.
- The governors thoughtfully manage the performance of the principal. They understand that leaders provide extra support for staff who are not performing as well as expected, in order to improve their teaching skills. Staff who perform productively are rewarded with extra responsibilities and pay rises.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are well behaved around school. They handle apparatus carefully whether they are in the classroom or outside. Pupils, staff, governors and parents all agree that behaviour is good.
- Pupils are proud of their work and share it willingly with others. They quickly settle down to work and concentrate effectively. This is because staff guide them carefully and reward pupils for good work.
- Pupils' self-confidence is high and they persevere when problems seem hard to solve. This is because staff form supportive relationships with them and encourage them to try new ways of approaching challenges. All pupils in Year 1 and 2 recited poems to the whole school in an assembly about the Muslim Ramadan and Eid which successfully raised their self-esteem.
- Pupils from all backgrounds respect and get on well with each other. They thoughtfully consider others' ideas and are tolerant of others' beliefs. They regularly raise money for others less fortunate than them.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The pupils say they are safe in school and the parents agree. This is because staff keep a close eye on pupils during break and lunch times as well as in lessons. Bullying does not often occur and pupils say it is dealt with efficiently on the rare occasions it does happen. Pupils also know they can discuss their concerns with friends and try to sort things out before they go to an adult.
- Pupils' attendance is improving, but it is average and could be higher. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has decreased this year. This is because leaders and staff rigorously follow up any absences and reward high levels of attendance.
- The pupils know how to keep themselves safe on the internet. Regular sessions take place in school which help pupils to understand how to handle a range of situations they may find themselves in when they are on line.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. Leaders hold regular fire drills and pupils are clear about what to do when the alarm is raised. They know how to cross the road safely and who to talk to before they take any medicines.

## The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Despite some strengths, teaching is not yet consistently good enough in the early years and in Years 1

and 2 to ensure that pupils make good progress.

- Teachers do not regularly challenge the most-able pupils effectively. This is because staff have not received enough training in how to extend pupils' skills and so the teachers are not totally clear about all the ways that this can be achieved.
- Marking and comments made by teachers and support staff give pupils self-confidence but sometimes they are not particularly specific. Consequently, pupils are not totally clear about what they have done well and could do to improve their work.
- Teachers do not always use individual targets for pupils successfully. This means that some pupils do not understand fully how to reach the next stage of development in their work.
- Teachers and support staff do not make sure that pupils' misunderstandings and errors are corrected. This means that some pupils start the next session without the skills they need to make good progress.
- Teachers help pupils to achieve adequately in learning to write. They support pupils in writing long pieces of work. However, some teachers do not always expect enough from pupils.
- Teachers develop pupils' basic mathematical and problem solving skills effectively. As a result, pupils are beginning to study problems and work out a variety of ways to solve them. This is because staff use questioning thoughtfully and so pupils learn to explain their ideas in detail.
- Teachers and staff are beginning to encourage pupils to read more successfully. Consequently, pupils are reading more widely and for longer periods of time. Staff ensure that pupils develop their comprehension skills and use phonics carefully.
- Staff care for pupils considerably. As a result, classrooms are pleasant places to work. Pupils listen to staff carefully and respond efficiently to staff and other pupils. Pupils often discuss their ideas in pairs and groups before they speak out to the class. This develops their speaking and listening skills well.
- Teachers carry out regular checks on what pupils do and do not know. The school tracks their progress and is beginning to help those making slower progress to catch up. The teaching of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is starting to help some of them catch up with others in the class.

### **The achievement of pupils**

### **requires improvement**

- Achievement requires improvement because, again this year, a smaller proportion of Year 2 pupils than found nationally are working at the higher levels of skill in writing. Not enough pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2. This is because teachers are not setting pupils work which will challenge them fully in all lessons.
- Boys and girls, including those from minority ethnic groups, have made sufficient progress since they entered Year 1, but too few pupils have exceeded expected progress. Consequently, in 2014, results were average in reading and mathematics and below average in writing. Inspection evidence shows that although attainment in writing is better in Year 1, it is still below average in the current Year 2.
- Last year the progress made by disadvantaged pupils in Year 2 required improvement. They were on average about one term behind others nationally in mathematics, two terms behind in reading and three terms behind in writing. They were two terms behind others in the school in mathematics and reading, and three terms behind in writing. This year the Year 2 pupils are making similar progress and there is no evidence that gaps are reducing.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language and those with a disability or who have special educational needs make good progress. The school watches over their achievement thoughtfully and

meets their needs rigorously.

### **The early years provision**

### **requires improvement**

- Children start school with a typical level of skill in most areas of learning but some have gaps in their knowledge of language, literacy and mathematics. The children in the Nursery and Reception make expected progress and so attainment is average again this year. However, the gap between disadvantaged children and the others in the school is bigger this year.
- Teaching requires improvement because gaps in children's knowledge of writing are not filled successfully, especially in the Nursery. This is because individual targets are not used productively and so staff are not totally clear how children can improve their skills and reach the next stage of development.
- Children get on well together and their behaviour is good. They are keen to join in all activities and they concentrate effectively. They take turns and share equipment fairly. The children are safe and secure in Nursery and Reception classes. As a result, they become more confident and persevere with the tasks they are given. This is because staff guide them thoughtfully.
- The leader and staff ensure that children's interests are picked up on carefully and included in the planning. Staff use the outside area astutely to broaden children's experiences and involve them in practical activities that make learning easy to remember.
- Leadership requires improvement. A temporary early years leader is in place. Leadership does not ensure that the progress of different groups of children, especially those who are disadvantaged, are watched closely enough. This is because plans to improve the early years are not detailed enough. Consequently, children are not fully ready for Year 1.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	139612
<b>Local authority</b>	Luton
<b>Inspection number</b>	449963

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	331
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Carole Tompkins
<b>Principal</b>	Leigh Oliver
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01582 573641
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