

Gray's Farm Primary Academy

Gray's Farm Road, St Paul's Cray, Orpington, BR5 3AD

Inspection dates 04–05 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Inadequate 4
Leadership and management	Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils	Inadequate	4
Early years provision	Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Leaders, managers and governors have not been successful in raising pupils' achievement, or the quality of teaching, since the school became an academy.
- Attainment is too low at the end of Year 6. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, the most able, and pupils who speak English as an additional language do not achieve well. Disadvantaged pupils underachieve, especially in mathematics.
- Behaviour is inadequate. A significant minority of pupils do not show a proper level of respect for each other or for adults. Some younger pupils feel unsafe because of the behaviour of others. Attendance is too low, and many pupils arrive late.
- Teaching is inadequate because it underestimates what pupils can achieve. Assessment and feedback are not used well to pitch work at a correct level. Teaching assistants are not always used effectively to support pupils.
- Weaknesses in leadership mean the academy lacks the capacity to improve rapidly from its low base. It is taking too long to establish a substantive local governing body to provide much-needed strategic direction, and to hold leaders to account.
- The academy faces changes at senior leadership levels. Middle leaders lack the skills and time to contribute to the required improvements in achievement in their areas of responsibility.
- The curriculum lacks breadth and balance and fails to engage pupils' interest and enthusiasm, especially boys. This results in low-level disruption in some classes. Not all staff manage pupils' behaviour effectively.
- Provision in the Nursery is inadequate. It does not enable children to achieve as well as they should.
- A substantial minority of parents lack confidence in the academy and would not recommend it to their friends.

The school has the following strengths

- Children in Reception achieve well in reading and writing.
- Since February 2015 the energetic involvement of the Chair of the Interim Executive Board has begun to accelerate improvements by setting challenging, achievable targets.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 30 parts of lessons, mostly in English and mathematics. They observed teaching in all of the classes, sometimes with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Pupils from a range of year groups spoke to inspectors about their views of the academy, and their work. The results from the academy's survey of pupils' views were considered. A few children in Years 1, 2 and 6 read to inspectors, and examples of their previous work were scrutinised. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour and attitudes in lessons, when they moved around the academy, during playtimes and at lunchtime.
- Meetings were held with members of staff who have leadership and management responsibilities, teachers who are in training or new to their career, representatives of the Interim Executive Board, and directors from the academy trust. Inspectors also met with teaching assistants and staff with responsibility for behaviour management and attendance.
- Inspectors spoke to some parents when they brought their children to school in the morning. They considered the responses of 47 parents who completed the online survey (Parent View), and a letter from a parent written to the inspection team. Inspectors also took into account the views of 198 parents who responded to the academy's survey in September 2014, and 89 who completed a later survey in March 2015. They took into account 34 responses to the staff questionnaires.
- A range of the academy's documentation was reviewed. This included its self-evaluation summary, the improvement plan, records of the meetings of the Interim Executive Board, arrangements for safeguarding pupils, and information about pupils' behaviour, progress and attainment.

Inspection team

Kath Beck, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Bruce Waelend

Additional Inspector

Gulcan Asdoyuran

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Information about this school

- The Gray's Farm Primary Academy is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of two Reception classes and one Nursery class. Children in Reception attend full time. Those in the Nursery attend part time, either in the morning or the afternoon.
- Most pupils come from White British backgrounds. An above-average proportion of pupils come from a wide range of minority ethnic groups. One tenth speaks English as an additional language. This is below the national average. Only a few are new to speaking English.
- Almost half of the pupils are supported by pupil premium funding. This is high compared to other schools nationally. Pupil premium is additional government funding that enables schools to give extra support to pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is above average.
- In 2014 the academy did not meet the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics and English.
- Gray's Farm Primary Academy converted to become an academy on 1 September 2013. The Kennal Academies Trust (TKAT) has responsibility for the academy. When its predecessor school, Gray's Farm Primary, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be inadequate overall.
- Since 1 September 2013 there has been high staff turnover. The headteacher who joined the academy at that time is leaving as soon as a replacement is found, and the deputy headteacher is returning to classroom duties. A new deputy headteacher is due to take up her duties in September 2015.
- Local arrangements for governance have changed twice since the school became an academy. Currently, the local governing body consists of three governors who form a temporary 'Interim Executive Board' which was established in February 2015. It is anticipated that local governance arrangements for the academy will not be resolved until Easter 2016.
- Since January 2015 the academy has received support from a National Leader of Education who is also the headteacher of Fleetdown Primary School.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in all year groups by:
 - ensuring all teachers use information about pupils' progress to plan challenging and interesting activities
 - providing feedback to pupils that is used effectively to improve learning
 - giving teaching assistants precise instructions, so that they know what they have to do to improve pupils' learning.
- Raise attainment and accelerate pupils' progress in mathematics and English, especially in writing, by ensuring that:
 - teachers know the needs of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and those who speak English as an additional language, so that they plan learning for them effectively
 - there is a sharp focus on improving pupils' reading and accurate writing skills
 - gaps in knowledge and understanding of disadvantaged pupils are analysed precisely and systematically and addressed through precise planning, especially in mathematics.
- Provide children in the Nursery with a strong start to their education by:
 - deepening the knowledge of staff about the best ways children of this age learn, so that they plan a range of interesting activities to ignite children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning
 - maintaining a precise record of what each child knows and can do, so plans are focussed on the next

steps in learning

- ensuring that there are carefully planned links between classroom and outdoor learning, providing opportunities to discover, develop their own ideas and solve problems
- helping children to talk confidently and communicate easily with one another when playing, and in conversation with adults.

■ Improve the quality of pupils' behaviour and safety by:

- improving the quality of behaviour in the morning playtimes
- reducing the incidence of low-level disruption in classes
- increasing the skills of all staff in behaviour management
- expecting pupils to show high levels of respect for each other, and to adults, and avoid using derogatory language which undermines the promotion of British values
- analysing records in order to identify, and respond to, the reasons for pupils' poor behaviour, and incidents and accidents in the Nursery.

■ Raise the level of attendance by taking robust action to ensure that pupils attend regularly and arrive at school on time.

■ Rapidly improve leadership and management at all levels by:

- resolving the uncertainty about the leadership of the academy
- accelerating the formation of a substantive local governing body which will provide strong strategic direction for the academy and hold leaders fully to account
- providing a training programme to improve teaching, with a particular focus on appropriate challenge and engagement with pupils and the use of information about pupils' progress
- improving the arrangements for checking the quality of teaching by leaders at all levels
- defining the roles and responsibilities of all leaders and ensuring there is sufficient time to carry them out
- reviewing the curriculum to improve its breadth and balance.

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

An external review of the academy's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are inadequate

- Leadership and management are inadequate because pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching have not improved quickly enough since the school became an academy.
- The capacity to improve without significant support is limited. This is because the leadership of the academy is neither secure nor effective. There is high staff turnover, including changes of local governors. The Interim Executive Board is temporary, and the academy faces changes at senior leadership levels. Staff with specific responsibilities have limited time and insufficient training to make them effective in carrying out their roles and raising achievement.
- A well-written action plan based on a thorough review of the academy's strengths and weaknesses has been produced. Leaders have put in place a new structure for September to allow middle and senior leaders time to drive improvements forward.
- In 2013 leaders introduced systems to track pupils' progress. This information is not used effectively by staff to ensure that all pupils have an equal opportunity to succeed. The needs of some disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are not identified rapidly or clearly to help them make faster progress. There is too little challenge for the most able across the academy.
- Senior leaders make clear their expectations for high quality teaching and for giving feedback to pupils about their work. However, they do not check often enough that these are being met. Their reviews of pupils' books and teachers' assessments about how well their pupils are progressing, are not rigorous enough. They do not identify what needs to be done to raise achievement at a faster rate.
- In the Nursery, children do not engage in activities that inspire their curiosity to learn indoors or outdoors. Staff do not develop children's speaking skills well enough, so they are unable to talk confidently to one another or converse clearly with adults. In Years 1 to 6 the curriculum lacks breadth and balance. It does not engage pupils' interest and enthusiasm for learning, especially boys.
- The academy is developing pupils' understanding of democracy, but it is not effective in promoting the British values of tolerance and respect, in tackling discrimination or in fostering good relationships. Staff do not have high enough expectations that pupils will show respect for one another and adults. This also limits pupils' moral and social development.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is not having the impact that it should. While in the past these pupils have sometimes outperformed their classmates, this is no longer the case. In mathematics the gap between their attainment and that of other pupils nationally is widening.
- The primary sports funding has been used well to raise teachers' skills and increase the range of sports activities available at lunchtime and after school. However, there has been no rigorous evaluation of the impact of these activities on pupils' physical well-being and participation.
- The academy chain did not act quickly enough to challenge and support the school when it became an academy. It has been too slow to ensure continuity in effective local governance or senior leadership. In recent months the academy chain commissioned a National Leader of Education to help the academy improve. This has assisted the academy in identifying key priorities for development and considering alternative teaching methods. This has yet to have a significant impact on pupils' achievement.
- It is clear from surveys and discussions with parents that the majority support the academy. However, a larger proportion than is usually found expressed dissatisfaction, and would not recommend the school to their friends.
- Statutory requirements to keep pupils safe are in place and ensure that vulnerable pupils are looked after effectively.
- Inspectors strongly recommend that the academy should not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.

■ The governance of the school:

- The arrangements for the school to have a local governing body have changed twice since it became an academy. Consequently it has not had consistently strong strategic direction by which leaders are held fully to account.
- The Interim Executive Board that meets monthly is led by an experienced Chair of Governors. He has a very clear understanding of the academy's strengths and areas for development. The Chair of the Board has developed a sharply focused development plan with clear, challenging and achievable targets that must be met each month. This is beginning to drive the academy forward. Plans to form a substantive local governing body, however, are at a very early stage and are not due to be completed until Easter 2016.

- Members of the Board are fully aware of the quality of teaching, and the academy's performance in comparison to other schools nationally. As a new and temporary body, they have had little involvement in the arrangements to reward good teaching and tackle underperformance. Members are not sufficiently aware about the ways in which additional funding is allocated to support sports activities and disadvantaged pupils, or the impact of these on pupils' achievements.
- Members of the Board ensure finances are spent correctly. Systems to check the academy's budget have been implemented, and spending is reviewed monthly.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are inadequate

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- Some pupils and parents say that behaviour is not typically good. A significant minority of pupils show a lack of respect and tolerance for one another. Some use derogatory and offensive language towards their classmates, to younger pupils, and especially to girls. They do not always listen carefully to their teacher or respond quickly to their teacher's instructions.
- The academy keeps records of pupils' poor behaviour, but these are not analysed for trends or to identify the underlying causes, particularly in the Nursery.
- Behaviour in the playground during the mid-morning break is boisterous because there is not enough for pupils to do. Staff members supervising these sessions do not manage pupils' behaviour well. At lunchtime and in the dining hall, behaviour is good. Pupils eat their meals happily together, talking pleasantly to one another. There are also many sporting activities for them to enjoy with their friends.
- While some pupils demonstrate good attitudes to learning this is not always the case. When activities are dull, lack challenge, or fail to catch their interest, pupils, particularly boys, lose concentration. This lack of engagement results in low-level disruption which impedes pupils' learning.
- Overall attendance is very low, and pupils often arrive late. While the number of pupils who are persistently absent is reducing, it remains high, especially in Year 4 and Year 6.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement.
- Most pupils in the academy survey said they feel safe in school, but some in their discussions with inspectors, said they did not. Some younger pupils are upset by the misbehaviour of the older ones, and by the aggressive behaviour and language of a small number of parents when meeting their children from school.
- Pupils know about different kinds of bullying and feel confident to speak to staff about their concerns.
- The academy works closely with other professionals to keep vulnerable children safe. Training for staff in safeguarding pupils is kept up to date.
- The academy implements the statutory requirements for the employment of staff and checking their suitability to work with children.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Too much teaching underestimates what pupils can achieve and holds them back.
- Teachers do not use assessment well enough to pitch work at the right level, including for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Teaching is not helping disadvantaged pupils and those with a legacy of underachievement to catch up quickly enough. Staff lack the knowledge to give effective support to those who are new to speaking English.
- Writing is not taught consistently well. Pupils' books show that there has been some improvement recently, but overall the methods used to promote writing do not engage pupils well enough. They do not capture pupils' enthusiasm or motivate them, boys especially, to want to write because they are not encouraged to use their own ideas. This leads to restlessness and inappropriate behaviour that inhibits learning. Some staff do not manage this behaviour well.
- Pupils' writing is confined to too narrow a range of formats. They mostly write stories, diary entries, or just recount events. Teachers do not ensure that pupils acquire secure skills in punctuation, grammar and spelling and apply them consistently.
- Mathematics teaching makes learning fun. Pupils say they can see how mathematics is important in their

daily life. Teachers plan work that is designed to meet pupils' differing needs, but expectations are not high enough to take learning along at the right pace. As a result attainment is not as high as it should be.

- The methods chosen to enable pupils to learn to read are new and in some classes are ineffective. -
- Pupils say, and inspection evidence confirms, that teachers do not give them enough information about how to improve their work. At its best, marking makes clear to pupils what they do well and how they can move on in their learning. Although staff ask questions and make comments, they do not often check that pupils have responded to them.
- Teachers do not always use additional adults, or teaching assistants, well enough to support the learning of pupils in different groups throughout lessons.
- Homework is set, but too often goes unmarked. This diminishes its value in the eyes of parents and pupils, and contributes little to their progress.

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- The achievement of pupils is inadequate because their overall progress is too slow. Gaps in pupils' previous learning are not tackled quickly enough especially in reading and writing. Children in the Nursery make limited progress in all the areas of learning.
- In 2014, pupils in Year 6 did not meet the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics, reading and writing. There has been little improvement in this situation over the past year. The academy's information about pupils' achievement in Year 6 in 2015 shows that attainment is low in reading and mathematics, and very low in writing. Pupils are not well prepared for secondary school.
- Attainment in Year 2 was broadly similar to the national average in 2014. Staff changes during the course of the year mean this is unlikely to be sustained this year, especially in writing where achievement is low. Consequently, pupils are not ready for their work in Year 3.
- Pupils' skills in writing across the academy, while showing improvements in recent months, are weak because they do not have sufficient skills in spelling, grammar and punctuation. Pupils have not gained a rich range of vocabulary to enable them to use their own ideas to write imaginatively and for a variety of different purposes.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to extend or apply their reading skills. A new initiative to speed up progress in reading is not yet showing sufficient impact.
- A new method to enable pupils to improve their mental mathematics skills is showing early signs of building their confidence in calculation. It is too soon to see the impact of this initiative on their overall rates of progress or attainment.
- The most-able pupils underachieve because work is not challenging enough. Few teachers pitch work at the right level. Except in mathematics, the work is often the same for all pupils. Very few pupils in Year 6 reached levels above those expected for their age in 2014.
- There is a wide gap between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally. In 2014 disadvantaged pupils were almost four terms behind other pupils nationally in mathematics and reading, and five terms in writing at the end of Key Stage 2. The gap between these pupils and others in their class was narrower. They were three terms behind in mathematics and two terms in reading and writing. The academy's current information shows that the gap in mathematics is wider this year. It also shows that disadvantaged pupils, from their varied starting points, are not catching up as fast as they should, as they move through the academy.
- The precise needs of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are not always identified clearly enough to enable them to achieve well. Some pupils make good progress because of effective support, but this is not typical. Not all staff members have sufficient knowledge to identify pupils' particular needs and ensure that work is matched correctly.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language do well in mathematics, but not in reading and writing. There is little specific provision for those who are new to speaking English.

The early years provision

is inadequate

- Leaders and managers do not ensure consistently good provision across the early years. There is far too much variation in the quality of early education which children experience.
- Children in the Nursery make a poor start to their education because the quality of teaching is not good enough. In contrast, children currently in Reception achieve better in reading and writing. This stronger

provision helps them catch up in readiness for their transfer to Year 1, despite very weak provision in the Nursery.

- High staff turnover has had a negative impact on the quality of provision in the Nursery. Current staff are inexperienced and do not have sufficient knowledge about how young children learn effectively.
- Indoor and outdoor activities lack challenge and do not inspire children to be curious, or to sustain their interest. Consequently their behaviour deteriorates. There are too many recorded incidents of poor behaviour and accidents. Staff have not analysed them to find the underlying causes to ensure that children are kept safe.
- Adults in the Nursery do not encourage children to use a broad vocabulary. This limits children's skills in speaking confidently to one another and communicating their ideas clearly to adults.
- Overall, children's progress is slow because staff members do not keep a precise record of what they know and can do, or plan activities that offer increased levels of challenge based on their previous learning.
- In Reception, most children achieve well. In 2014 they reached levels of attainment that were above average. Through effective teaching, children are on course to do well in 2015, especially in reading, writing and mathematics. Members of staff in this year group have high expectations of what children can do, and motivate them to do well.
- This year, Reception children have made a secure start with reading and writing. They write simple sentences confidently and enjoy using their knowledge of phonics (the sounds letters make) to write familiar stories. In mathematics they are proud of their skills in calculating numbers using addition and subtraction.
- The wide range of activities provided in Reception help children to develop good learning habits and to learn well through play. They sustain their interest and often play happily with their friends. Their behaviour is good and they are kept safe.
- The partnership with parents starts early. For example, staff in the Nursery make home visits to new entrants to find out about their interests and ease their transfer into school life.

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	139639
Local authority	Bromley
Inspection number	450026

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	438
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jim Rouncefield
Headteacher	Nicola Abrahams
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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