

Sudbury Primary School

Watford Road, Wembley, Middlesex HA0 3EY

Inspection dates

17–18 November 2015

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an academy that requires improvement

- Some leaders and governors are currently in a dispute with each other and staff are taking sides. The resulting disharmony is limiting the ability of leaders and governors to drive improvements in this otherwise successful academy.
- Governors do not speak with a common voice about the effectiveness of the decisions they make.
- Governors have not always taken consistent, timely actions which have recently been necessary as a result of concerns raised.
- Staff do not consistently implement the academy's policy for managing behaviour.
- Teachers do not all teach phonics skills (the sounds that letters make) as effectively as other aspects of reading. As a result, too many pupils enter Years 2 and 3 without the expected level of skills in phonics.
- Most-able pupils are sometimes asked to practise skills they are already secure with, instead of being offered more challenge as soon as they are ready.
- Senior and middle leaders are not clear about how the actions they have taken have secured improvements. Their plans are not clear enough about the intended impact of actions on outcomes for pupils.

The academy has the following strengths

- Outcomes for pupils are consistently good at the end of all key stages in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils make consistently good progress across the whole academy.
- Good teaching is evident across the whole curriculum. Teachers effectively use information about pupils to decide what to teach and how to enthuse pupils.
- Pupils behave well in and out of lessons, applying well the values which the academy teaches them.
- Leaders have been successful in closing gaps between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and others.
- Speakers of English as an additional language achieve as well as their peers because of the skills teachers use to meet their needs.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils develop a good understanding of cultures other than their own. The promotion of spiritual, moral and social education is good.
- Leaders make effective, systematic checks on the safety of the premises and the suitability of staff.
- The early years provides a safe, challenging setting which prepares children well for Year 1.

Full report

What does the academy need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that any recommendations of an urgent, independent review of the work of the governing body are promptly acted on. This review should be completed and the outcomes obtained no later than the first half of the spring term 2016.
- Sharpen the plans leaders use to decide on priorities for academy improvement so that they can evaluate the impact of their actions on all groups of pupils more thoroughly and accurately.
- Improve the quality of teaching, and outcomes for pupils, so that both become outstanding by ensuring that:
 - teachers provide more effective guidance to help all pupils rapidly acquire skills in using the sounds that letters make (phonics)
 - most-able pupils are helped to extend their skills and deepen their understanding in mathematics as soon as they are ready
 - teachers always follow and apply the principles of the agreed policy on behaviour.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leaders have, by and large, effectively driven academy improvement, but they do not have the respect of all staff. Some staff are disgruntled with senior leadership and, in particular, the headteacher. This, and ongoing disharmony with governors, is limiting the effectiveness of leaders to improve the academy further.
- The headteacher and senior leaders have ensured that good-quality teaching and good outcomes for pupils have been sustained since the last inspection. Leaders have ensured that their high ambitions for academy improvement are clearly understood and shared by all. Most staff and parents who expressed their views believe that leaders have made improvements to the academy. However, over one in four staff who responded to the inspection questionnaire do not agree that the academy is well led and managed. Not all staff and parents believe that leaders and governors are doing enough to ensure the safety of pupils. However, policies, procedures and checks which leaders make on staff, the premises and activities are robust and meet statutory requirements.
- Senior leaders make wide-ranging and well-organised checks on the quality of teaching at regular intervals. This usually ensures a consistently good quality of teaching. However, leaders have occasionally been too slow to intervene when teaching has been less effective at sustaining good pupil progress. Arrangements for the appraisal of teachers' performance include helpful opportunities for teachers to reflect on their own effectiveness.
- The plans which senior leaders use for improvement identify appropriate priorities and set realistic, yet challenging, timescales. However, these plans are not always clear enough about how actions are intended to improve outcomes. As a result, leaders, including middle leaders, are sometimes vague about the impact of their work.
- The curriculum is well structured, and identifies a clear progression of skills and knowledge in most subjects taught. It prepares pupils well for their future lives. This is because leaders have made sure that the curriculum helps pupils to deepen their understanding of the wider world and make connections between subjects. For example, in art, pupils' knowledge of the history of artistic movements is developed alongside skills and techniques. The curriculum also helps pupils develop a secure understanding of the principles on which British values are based. This is demonstrated in the considerate way in which pupils treat one another and the value they place on debate.
- Leaders and teachers share a strong commitment in promoting and supporting pupils' cultural development. They learn to play a musical instrument and study French culture as part of language lessons from Year 1. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is also well catered for.
- Partners in the local educational community have recognised the effective way in which leaders use pupil premium funding to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders from other schools benefit from the work which leaders have done in this regard. The primary sports premium has also been used well to improve skills and knowledge of staff and pupils. Leaders are promoting equality of opportunity due to the effective use of these funds.
- **The governance of the academy**
 - There is disharmony both within the governing body and in relationships between governors and some members of the leadership team and staff. Governors disagree with one another about whether decisions on teachers' pay have been determined effectively. Governors act promptly to fulfil their duties when responding to complex staff management and safeguarding matters. However, they are less resolute and consistent in their actions in following up these issues. As a result, some staff say they have lost confidence in governors' ability to fulfil their duties.
 - Governors have a good understanding of the impact of the spending of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and to promote primary sport. They articulate explanations about the impact of actions and outcomes for pupils well, drawing on a wide range of information.
- The arrangements for safeguarding meet requirements.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

is good

- Teaching is typically good across the academy and in the full range of subjects taught. Teachers plan lessons and activities which are usually well matched to the needs of pupils. They use assessment information well to make sure that pupils make at least good progress from their individual starting points. However, the progress of some pupils in developing phonics (the sounds that letters make) skills has declined or stalled because teachers have been less effective in applying the academy's agreed policy on teaching reading skills.
- Teachers set high expectations for pupils and make sure that they understand how to improve their work. They usually uphold and exemplify positive responses to pupils' needs. However, on occasion, pupils say that not all teachers consistently apply the agreed behaviour policy. Inspectors also noticed this very occasionally during the inspection.
- Support staff are effective in making sure that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive the encouragement and additional help they need. This ensures that pupils complete their work on time and understand the next steps in their learning.
- Teachers' mathematical subject knowledge has helped to increase the proportion of pupils who master mathematical skills and progress to very high levels of attainment by the end of Key Stage 2. However, work seen in books during the inspection shows that some pupils are asked to practise skills they are already secure with, rather than being offered more challenging work as soon as they are ready to attempt it.
- Typically, good teaching of reading enables most pupils to make at least good progress and develop an enjoyment of books. The teaching of phonics is more variable. Some pupils are not given effective support when learning to blend sounds so they can attempt to read unfamiliar words.
- Pupils receive very effective guidance when writing at length. Teachers make sure that pupils have enough time to finish and improve their writing. Speakers of English as an additional language benefit from the approach teachers take when demonstrating grammatically accurate spoken language. This helps these pupils to use the correct order of words in their writing.
- Specialist teachers use their expertise well to develop pupils' subject-specific skills. The music teacher uses assessments of pupils' recorder playing in Year 3 to decide on a suitably challenging instrument for them to play in the Year 4 band. The teacher of French ensures that older pupils have sufficient skills to attempt to write about the water cycle in a foreign language.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is good

Personal development and welfare

- The academy's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Senior leaders make sure that checks on the safety of the premises are carried out consistently. However, the timing of fire drills is not considered thoughtfully enough.
- Pupils say they feel safe and can explain how teachers help them to learn safety awareness for themselves. They understand some important guiding principles to help them stay safe when online. Nearly all parents and staff agree that pupils are safe, although a few of those responding to the inspection questionnaires do not share this view.
- Pupils are provided with responsibilities and guidance which develop their self-confidence and awareness as they grow older. They have influenced some developments to academy policy. For example, their suggestion for an interactive system of rewards and sanctions has been adopted.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' attitudes to lessons are very positive. Learning is rarely held up because of poor behaviour. Pupils know how to collaborate effectively when they are working in groups.
- Pupils sustain good behaviour and positive relationships when at play and during lunchtime.
- Teachers do not always apply agreed policies on the rare occasions when pupils demonstrate less positive behaviour. When this occurs, it serves to entrench problems rather than help overcome difficulties.

- More serious poor behaviours such as bullying or racist incidents are rare. When they do occur, leaders act swiftly and thoroughly to make sure it ceases.
- Attendance is improving and is typically above the national average. Leaders have recently begun to analyse the attendance of groups of pupils more frequently and in greater detail. This is helping them to identify poor attenders more promptly and offer suitable challenge and support to their families.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Outcomes for pupils are good by the end of all three key stages. The proportion of children attaining a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year is increasing and is above the national average. Attainment is broadly in line with national averages by the end of both key stages. In 2015, attainment at Key Stage 2 dipped slightly compared with the previous year. However, results continue to be in line with the national average and represent at least good progress from individual pupils' starting points.
- The proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check dipped sharply in 2015. This was because leaders were slow to recognise and respond to the impact some weaker teaching was having on these pupils.
- A greater proportion of most-able pupils reached the higher level 6 in mathematics 2015 than was seen nationally. However, work in current pupils' books indicates that they do not make as much progress as they could. This is because too much time is devoted to practising existing skills instead of challenging them to consider mathematical ideas more deeply.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make the same good progress as other pupils, given their starting points, as do the many pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- Disadvantaged pupils entitled to additional funding make strong, sustained progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Outcomes in 2015 show that gaps between the attainment of these pupils and others both in the academy and nationally had narrowed to less than three months in all three subjects.
- Leaders are aware that some groups of pupils achieve less well than others in reading and have plans in place to address this.

Early years provision

is good

- The early years prepares children well for the next stage of their education in Year 1. Children's skills on entry are assessed thoroughly and the proportion who now go on to attain a good level of development from often low starting points represents good progress.
- Teaching staff in the early years are effective in ensuring that activities and resources are well matched to the stage of development of individual children. This enables them to make good progress in improving their early skills in reading, writing and mathematics. However, phonics skills are not consistently taught as well as other aspects of literacy.
- Teachers speak clearly and positively to children and gently encourage them to correct grammatical mistakes made in spoken language.
- The early years leader checks on the impact of teaching on standards rigorously and regularly. She has ensured that the quality of teaching has remained typically good.
- The outdoor and indoor areas are well equipped and organised, engaging the interests of children well. They provide a safe, secure environment for play and learning.
- Children behave well in the early years. Adults promote their personal development and well-being effectively and work closely with parents to ensure that children's individual needs and interests are well considered.

School details

Unique reference number	138608
Local authority	Brent
Inspection number	10001304

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

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	930
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robert Wharton
Headteacher	Uma Pandya
Telephone number	020 8385 4444
Website	www.sudburyprimary.co.uk
Email address	admin@sudbury.brent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	8–9 June 2011

Information about this school

- Sudbury Primary School is a much larger than average-sized primary school. The academy has a Nursery which offers part-time places.
- The predecessor school converted to become an academy in 2012.
- Pupils come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well above average and accounts for nearly all pupils. About three-quarters of pupils speak English as an additional language. This is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for additional funding, the pupil premium, is broadly in line with the national average. This is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or who are in the care of the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is a little above average.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards for primary schools, which set the minimum expectations of pupils' attainment and progress.
- When inspection was announced, the deputy headteacher was leading the academy because the headteacher was on a leave of absence. Governors requested that the headteacher returned while the inspection was in progress, which she did. Immediately afterwards, her deputy resumed the role of acting headteacher.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons to observe learning and teaching, some with members of the senior leadership team. They looked at pupils' work in books and on display, and heard some pupils read. The lead inspector conducted a tour of the academy with the deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors talked with groups of pupils and spoke with them informally around the academy. They also spoke to a number of parents at the beginning of the second day of the inspection. They observed pupils at play and during the lunch break.
- Meetings were held with a number of senior and middle leaders to discuss their work and their impact on outcomes for pupils.
- Inspectors also met with members of the governing body and a representative of the Brent Schools Partnership, of which the academy is part.
- The inspection team reviewed a range of documents including the academy improvement plan, documents related to safeguarding, records of meetings of the governing body and information about the outcomes for pupils.
- The 60 responses to the online parent questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into account, as were 59 responses to an electronic staff survey completed during the inspection.

Inspection team

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