

Percy Shurmer Academy

Longmore Street, Balsall Heath, Birmingham B12 9ED

Inspection dates	10–11 May 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
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	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The executive principal, supported by the head of school, the senior leadership team and the multi-academy trust, provides very strong leadership and has established a culture of high expectations within the school.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are now good across the school. Teachers and other staff share the school leader's high expectations of what pupils in the school can and should achieve.
- The school is particularly effective in supporting pupils who suffer from hearing impairment through its hearing resource base. This support ensures that pupils within the base and other pupils with hearing impairment in the school achieve well.
- All pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs or disability, make good progress from their starting points.
- Children in the early years make good progress and successfully develop and build on their early skills. Teachers plan activities that are very well matched to their interests and abilities.
- The school's management board is a highly effective force in providing challenge and support to leaders. Members of the board have a wide range of skills that they use well to ensure that the school continues to improve.
- The school places a high priority on ensuring that pupils are well prepared for life as citizens in modern Britain.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always ensure that tasks set for lower-ability pupils are fully matched to their needs.
- Teachers do not consistently apply the school's policy on feedback and marking of pupils' books. Some comments are too focused on praising achievement and do not provide sufficient indication of how pupils can improve their work.
- Middle leaders do not evaluate the impact of the initiatives they introduce or the actions they take to improve learning.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and thereby continue to accelerate the progress of all pupils by ensuring that teachers:
 - plan activities that are well matched to the needs of different pupils, particularly lower-ability pupils
 - consistently provide pupils with feedback in their books, in line with the school's marking policy, that gives them clear guidance on how they can improve their work.
- Further strengthen leadership by ensuring that middle leaders evaluate their actions in order to determine which are having the greatest impact on improving teaching and learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The executive principal provides very strong and determined leadership. She recognised that not all pupils were making the progress of which they were capable. As a result of action taken, she has successfully addressed the weaker teaching that was identified at the last inspection. She has established a culture of high expectations for all members of the school community which is shared by all members of staff. Pupils are aware that they are expected to behave well and show respect to others and this is reflected in the calm and orderly atmosphere that exists in the school.
- The executive principal, who also leads a neighbouring school within the multi-academy trust of which Percy Shurmer Academy is part, is well supported by the head of school and the four assistant headteachers. Collaboration between the two schools has increased leadership capacity as the leadership teams work very closely together. This arrangement also provides wider opportunities for staff training, including the development of new teaching approaches. It has also been used successfully to implement and moderate the new assessment system in relation to pupils' progress within the national curriculum.
- A systematic approach to evaluating the quality of teaching, conducted by leaders from both schools, as well as external support from the multi-academy trust, is used to plan further improvements. All members of staff have benefited from a range of professional development activities, including opportunities to observe and work alongside outstanding teachers in the partner school.
- Middle leaders carry out their roles effectively. They are fully committed to improving teaching and learning within their areas of responsibility and recognise their accountability for pupils' progress. They monitor the quality of teaching within the school and provide feedback to their colleagues. However, middle leaders do not systematically review or evaluate the impact of their actions to determine which are making the greatest impact.
- School leaders have developed the curriculum well in order to meet the needs of pupils who attend Percy Shurmer Academy. The school prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. In addition to the lessons that cover the subjects prescribed by the national curriculum, pupils are provided with a range of opportunities to broaden their horizons. The school has its own garden which is tended by pupils. It is central to the school's strategy to develop pupils' awareness of nature as well as promoting healthy living. All year groups are also working towards gaining level 1 of UNICEF's 'rights respecting school award', which is focused on children's rights around the world. Pupils enjoy and benefit from a range of trips and visits, such as to the Think Tank or Birmingham library. They are also strongly encouraged to develop an interest in reading, through newly developed reading areas, new engaging reading materials for all ages and interests, and the support of a part-time librarian.
- The pupil premium funding is used very effectively to ensure that disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as others in the school and participate fully in all aspects of school life. Targeted support during lessons, together with booster classes and the effective use of skilled support assistants, ensure that these pupils make good progress. Disadvantaged pupils have access to a wide range of subsidised activities such as breakfast club, after-school clubs and extra-curricular activities. All these activities are very well attended and popular with pupils. Leaders check closely, and regularly over the school year, the impact of the pupil premium grant.
- The primary school sports funding is used effectively and has increased the range of sporting opportunities available to pupils. The school employs a sports coach who has developed the range of sporting activities in the school and provided training for all staff, including support staff. As a result, staff confidence in teaching physical education is increasing. Pupils take part in football competitions with other schools and are able to try new sports under the supervision of trained coaches. The purchase of new sports equipment has led to increased participation in sporting activities at lunch time and after school, and a growing number of pupils are developing their physical fitness.
- The school supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils are given a clear understanding of right and wrong and have a good knowledge and understanding of a range of faiths and beliefs different from their own. There is a strong emphasis on broadening pupils' horizons and developing their understanding of the multicultural society in which they live.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The school's management board is a highly effective force in providing challenge and support to the school's leaders. Members of the board have, between them, a wide range of educational, financial and business skills. The governing body uses its experience well and as a result has a clear

understanding of what is happening in the school and where further improvements can be made.

- Members of the management board carry out a wide range of regular monitoring and evaluation activities and contribute very effectively to ongoing school improvement planning. They visit classrooms regularly and meet with school leaders to review progress. They have an extremely good understanding of assessment information that is available to them and use this to track the progress of all groups of pupils. They also have a clear understanding of the effectiveness of teaching and its impact on pupils' progress.
- Members of the management board ask challenging questions of school leaders and use their respective skills well to monitor particular aspects of the school's work. These activities are reported on during board meetings. They have a clear understanding of how teachers' performance is managed and the links between this and their pay progression. They manage the finance and resources that are available to the school well, including the pupil premium, and measure the impact of spending on pupils' achievement.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Robust systems are in place to ensure that the safeguarding of pupils is a high priority. Regular training for all staff ensures that they are in a strong position to identify pupils who are at potential risk. Vulnerable pupils and their families are well supported. Good links are in place to work with outside agencies when required and robust procedures ensure that issues are followed up as effectively as possible.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- The quality of teaching across the school has improved significantly since the last inspection. It is now at least good with some that is better. The executive principal, with the support of the management board, has taken effective action to address any weaknesses in teaching. Through collaboration with their partner school, training is planned and delivered to match the individual needs of all staff in order to help them provide improved learning experiences for pupils. This ongoing training and collaborative work with outstanding teachers in the partner school is creating a culture of continuous improvement of teaching and learning in the school.
- Teachers plan and teach lessons that interest and engage pupils. For example, in a Year 5 geography lesson, pupils looked at slides showing the life of farmers in developing countries and then had to write a first person account of what life must be like in the conditions they had observed. The teacher then read some of the pieces of writing aloud to the class, which led to a whole class discussion about poverty. Pupils showed high levels of perception and empathy as they discussed what it meant to be poor and what the consequences are for people who live in the less wealthy parts of the world.
- The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) has improved significantly since the last inspection. This is due to improved staff training and the introduction of a whole-school approach to reading. From the time they start in school in the Reception classes, children are taught how to recognise sounds and how to blend them to build words. Teachers consistently and successfully encourage pupils to use their phonics knowledge in all reading and writing activities.
- The school actively encourages pupils to become regular readers. New, inviting and comfortable reading areas have been developed in the school. A wide range of reading materials, selected to engage the interest of all pupils, including those who are reluctant to devote time to reading, have been purchased in order to make reading more attractive and create life-long reading habits.
- The school has introduced a new system to assess pupils' progress matched to the expectations of what they should be able to do at different ages in all subjects. Assessment information is used effectively to ensure that teachers understand how well pupils are achieving and use this information to plan lessons that meet the varying needs of pupils. Teachers meet with their school colleagues and with colleagues from other schools to ensure that their assessments are accurate and consistent. Teachers regularly evaluate the progress of the pupils in their class and report these to the executive principal.
- Classrooms are bright and attractive places that promote and celebrate learning and achievement. The school employs an artist in residence and, as a result, the quality of the art work on display is of a high standard. Displays on the walls also provide good prompts to help pupils with the subjects they study. Examples of successful pupils' work also feature on display boards. Teachers use computerised teaching boards and computers effectively to deliver their lessons and support pupils' learning.
- Teaching assistants work very well alongside teachers to support groups and individual pupils. They are well trained and have a clear understanding of what their role is in lessons. They make a valuable

contribution to pupils' learning, particularly with disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs or disability.

- The school is particularly effective in supporting the learning of pupils with hearing impairment. On site there is a hearing resource base where 15 deaf pupils are taught. This resource base is well led and the support it gives to the pupils allows them to make progress which is in line with the progress of other pupils in the school. The expertise of the hearing resource base is also used effectively across the school to support the progress of the many pupils with hearing impairment who attend the school.
- Teachers generally plan and teach activities that are adjusted to the different range of abilities within their classes. They use questioning well to probe pupils' understanding and adjust the questions to the different abilities. However, some tasks for the less able pupils are not sufficiently well matched to their needs and as a result their progress is not as rapid as it could be. Activities are not always sufficiently broken down well enough and this leads to pupils making errors that reoccur.
- The school marking policy is usually adhered to by most teachers. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and identify errors in written work and mathematics. However, not all teachers identify the next steps in learning and explain how work could be further improved in line with the school's policy.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders are developing a sense of community based on the values represented by the acronym 'PERCY', which stands for: proud of who we are; excellence for all; resilience; caring for each other; you are valued. These values are evident around the school and pupils showed a good awareness of them in their discussions with inspectors. The introduction of pupils' 'passports to success', encouraging pupils to take responsibility for their own development, illustrates how the school is putting these values into practice.
- The personal development and welfare of pupils are at the heart of the school's work. Every opportunity to ensure that pupils get the message of tolerance and respect, which the school is so keen to communicate, is seized upon. It can be seen in lessons, in assemblies, on the display boards around the school and in the way pupils relate to each other. Pupils are given many opportunities to explore and reflect on society's cultural diversity. For example, each year group takes it in turn to lead assemblies to mark religious festivals such as Diwali, Hanukah or Easter.
- Pupils are polite and well mannered. Their uniforms are impeccable and they show great pride in their school. In discussions with inspectors they made clear that the school provides them with a safe environment. They are also keen to be involved in the improvement of their learning environment, well-illustrated by the contribution made by the school council in improvements around the school site. Pupils readily take on additional responsibilities, for example looking after the school's garden, which provides them with a contrasting experience to their inner city life.
- Pupils are very aware of how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, both within school and when they are away from school. They recognise the potential dangers that the internet poses and say that the school provides them with comprehensive information on how to stay safe.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of the different types of bullying, including homophobic bullying, and why all types of bullying are unacceptable. They say that bullying is extremely rare and this is confirmed by the detailed records that the school keeps.
- The school delivers a programme of sex education to all year groups. This is done with sensitivity and takes into account the varied cultural backgrounds of pupils. It is successful because of the effective way in which parents are kept informed of the content and purpose of the lessons. The school also runs 'mothers and daughters' information workshops on female genital mutilation.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- There have been significant improvements in pupils' behaviour since the last inspection. This is illustrated by the calm and orderly atmosphere that prevails throughout the day around the school.

- Expectations of how everyone should behave are made clear and are understood by pupils. They appreciate the rewards they get for positive behaviour and understand that there are consequences for unacceptable behaviour.
- Pupils display positive attitudes to learning. They listen carefully and show respect when adults or other pupils are talking. They are keen to do well in lessons and to achieve high standards. They work well together and are keen to share ideas.
- Attendance is above the national average for all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs or disability and disadvantaged pupils. This is as a result of robust procedures that the school has put in place to ensure that parents and their children understand the impact that good attendance has on the progress the pupils make in school.
- The behaviour of pupils in classrooms and around school is very positive. They are polite towards adults and respectful to each other. There are very few occasions when pupils do not behave as they are expected to, but if this happens, adults use very effective strategies to engage them in their learning.

Outcomes for pupils are good

- Outcomes for pupils have improved since the last inspection. All groups of pupils now make good progress in all key stages and, as a result, standards of attainment have risen across the school.
- In 2015, pupils in Year 2 attained standards in all subjects that were in line with the national average. This indicates good progress from their starting points in the school. The proportion of pupils who achieved the expected level in the Year 1 phonics screening check has risen over the last two years and is broadly in line with the national average.
- In 2015 pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 was in line with the national average in reading, broadly in line with the national average in writing and slightly below the national average in mathematics. However, leaders' analysis of Year 6 progress during the spring and summer term of 2015, when the new leaders started at the school, shows that pupils made accelerated progress and outperformed the targets set for them by previous leaders.
- In order to address issues in mathematics, the school is undertaking an action research programme in mathematics in collaboration with its partner school. Evidence gathered during the inspection, including work in pupils' books, lesson observations and school's own assessment information, indicates that pupils are making progress that is in line with, or better than, expected progress.
- The actions taken by leaders to raise attainment are also showing good impact in reading and writing results for all groups across the school. A new scheme to teach phonics, a clear focus in lessons on accurate writing, and the implementation of new strategies to improve reading are having a very positive effect on pupils' literacy. The impact of these actions was tangible when inspectors visited lessons and looked at pupils' work in their books. Evidence that pupils are working at or above age-related expectations and making good progress in literacy was also documented in the current school's assessment and progress data.
- Pupils with special educational needs or disability make good progress from their starting points. One of the strengths of the school is to ensure that the needs of the more vulnerable pupils are accurately identified so that effective support is provided. Pupils who need extra help receive effective support on a one-to-one basis or through small group support from teachers and teaching assistants.
- Disadvantaged pupils are also very effectively supported by the school and any gaps in attainment with their classmates and all pupils nationally are narrowing rapidly. This is because the school monitors their progress closely, uses the pupil premium funding very effectively and provides well-planned additional support where it is needed.
- The school has a rigorous assessment system that is aligned with the new curriculum and identifies progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This system allows the school to track individual pupils' progress and address issues. For example, the system identified that the proportion of girls making good progress in Year 2 was lower than the proportion of boys making good progress. Leaders investigated the issue and found that this was because a number of girls in this year group, who attend the school's hearing resource base, were not diagnosed early enough in their life and had missed out on early parts of their education.

Early years provision

is good

- Most children start the Reception Year with skills which are typically below those expected for their age, particularly in language and communication. They make good progress from their starting points due to effective teaching that is based on an accurate assessment of their individual needs. In 2015, the proportion of children who reached a good level of development was slightly below average. However, current school data and evidence gathered during the inspection shows that progress rates are accelerating and more children are on track in 2016 to reach a good level of development.
- Teaching in the early years is good. Initial assessments of children's abilities and needs are accurate and are used to measure their progress throughout the year. The classrooms and outdoor areas are lively and stimulating places. They are set up to support learning in all aspects of the early years curriculum and teachers ensure different activities are incorporated during lessons. For example, in a lesson observed during the inspection, children added adjectives to a story being read aloud by the teacher before enjoying a range of activities such as writing, drawing, counting and making shapes. Outdoors, children talked enthusiastically about what they were going to do in the school garden.
- Accurate teaching of phonics by all staff helps children to make good progress in reading. Children are also well supported to develop their writing skills and use their phonics knowledge to make accurate attempts at writing words. Adults ensure that children form their letters and numbers correctly and all adults model speech well.
- Children's behaviour is good. They cooperate well with each other, know how to take turns and listen to what other people are saying.
- Leadership of the early years provision is good and has led to improvements in the opportunities children have across all the areas of learning, both indoor and outdoor. As a result, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development is increasing. The new early years leader is a specialist leader of education who also works at the partner school. This arrangement allows for effective sharing of good practice between the two schools and opportunities to check the accuracy of children's assessments.
- Teachers and other adults ensure that safeguarding and welfare requirements are fully met. As a result, children are happy and safe. The good progress children make in Reception Year ensures that they are well prepared for Year 1.
- Parents are encouraged to contribute to their children's learning and are valued partners in their children's education.

School details

Unique reference number	138410
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10012426

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	455
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jan Moss
Headteacher/Principal/Teacher in charge	Ruth Murad
Telephone number	0121 464 3431
Website	www.percyshurmeracademy.org
Email address	contactus@percysurmeracademy.org
Date of previous inspection	18–19 June 2014

Information about this school

- Percy Shurmer Academy is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- Children in Reception classes attend full time.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, supported by the pupil premium funding, is above average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language is well above average. More than 90% of pupils have a language other than English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability supported through school action (pupils who need extra help with their learning) is below average. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics for pupils in Year 6.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The executive principal was appointed in January 2015.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed pupils' learning in 29 lessons and, in addition, made a number of short visits to lessons. A number of lessons were observed jointly with the executive principal and other members of the leadership team.
- The inspectors looked at work in pupils' books and listened to pupils read. They met three groups of pupils to gain their views of the school. The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at break time, lunchtime, and at the start and end of the school day, as well as in lessons.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including the following: assessments and records of pupils' progress, the school's checks and records related to safeguarding, child protection and attendance, records of how teaching is managed, and the school's improvement plans.
- Inspectors held meetings with the executive principal, the head of school, four assistant headteachers, the head of the hearing resource base and three middle leaders. The lead inspector met with four members of the management board, including the chair of the management board. There was also a meeting with the regional director of the multi-academy trust that the school is part of.
- There was not a sufficient number of answers to the online questionnaire, Parent View, for the responses to be published. However, inspectors talked to parents at the start and the end of the school day. They also looked at the 35 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Patrick Amieli, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Travis Latham	Ofsted Inspector
Derek Barnes	Ofsted Inspector

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