

Academy 360

Portsmouth Road, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear SR4 9BA

Inspection dates

17–18 May 2016

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Weak teaching over time in the secondary phase has resulted in pupils failing to achieve as well as they should.
- In the secondary phase, all pupil groups make inadequate progress and reach significantly below average standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 11.
- The secondary curriculum does not meet the learning needs of pupils. Older pupils' personal development and welfare needs are not fully met.
- Prior to the arrival of the recently appointed secondary leadership team, a pattern of declining standards in key stage 4 was not tackled.
- Some secondary subject leaders' skills to drive the required improvements in their subjects are not well developed. They do not systematically check for impact on the quality of teaching and improvements in pupils' outcomes.

The school has the following strengths

- The executive principal and the senior secondary leaders, who have been in post since September 2015, are tackling the weaknesses in the secondary phase with great determination. This is bringing noticeable improvements across the school.
- Good leadership is provided by the primary headteacher and the well-established primary school leadership team.
- Good-quality teaching across the early years and primary phase ensures that pupils make good progress. By the end of Year 6, most pupils are working at the levels expected for their age.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs or disability both within the main school and those taught in 'the Hub' is strong. Consequently, these pupils make at least expected progress and their personal development needs are well met.
- Behaviour across the school is good. Pupils are courteous and behave well in lessons and at social times.
- Some new appointments have improved the impact of teaching on progress during this school year.

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least good in order to raise standards for all groups of pupils, particularly in the secondary phase by:
 - planning and delivering teaching in the secondary phase that is well matched to pupils' needs and that ensures gaps in learning are promptly addressed
 - having higher expectations for pupils' outcomes based around the school's better-established secondary phase assessments and ambitious pupil progress targets
 - consistently implementing the school's marking policy in the secondary phase to provide feedback to pupils so that they can improve their work
 - developing teachers' questioning skills in the secondary phase to better probe pupils' understanding, extend their thinking and deepen their learning
 - ensuring that pupils' progress across key stage 1 is consistently good and that more pupils are working at expected levels when they leave Year 2
 - improving the teaching of grammar, punctuation and spelling in the primary phase so that pupils' outcomes improve to at least the standards found nationally by the end of Year 6
 - refining the recently introduced primary pupil assessment and progress tracking system so that it provides more detailed information on the progress of pupil groups.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership by:
 - establishing a stable secondary subject leadership team particularly in English and mathematics
 - secondary subject leaders systematically planning actions to rapidly improve the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes in their areas of responsibility
 - increasing the rigour of monitoring and evaluation of school performance by secondary subject leaders
 - further improving the quality of the secondary curriculum so that it better meets the needs of pupils
 - developing the involvement of governors with the primary phase, so that they can better support and challenge leaders and know where existing strong practice can be used across other areas of the school

improving the planning, monitoring and evaluation of pupil premium spending and ensuring that eligible pupils across the school benefit and their learning improves.

An external review of the school'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

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Secondary subject leadership for English, mathematics and science is not well established. The mathematics subject leader is new to post and there is temporary leadership for English. While these leaders are benefiting from guidance from senior leaders and external support, their skills to create effective action plans and to check for improvements require further development. At present, their capacity to drive improvements in their subjects is dependent upon this support and the influence of senior leaders.
- The school's spending of the pupil premium has not been managed well as a means to improving the academic performance of older pupils. In the primary phase, disadvantaged pupils make good progress and gaps compared with other pupils nationally are closing. In the secondary phase, the funding has helped to support improvements in pastoral support, but has had very limited impact on improving pupils' outcomes. Leaders' and governors' monitoring of the impact of this funding has not been robust enough.
- The executive principal has brought about discernible improvements to the school since coming into post in September 2015. He has established a stable and effective secondary senior leadership team, developed a financial recovery plan to address a significant budget deficit, and taken action to begin to improve the quality of teaching and the exceptionally low secondary outcomes.
- The recently appointed secondary headteacher and two secondary deputy headteachers have promptly identified key priorities for improving the effectiveness of this phase. Senior leaders' swift actions to tackle weaknesses in teaching are beginning to bring improvement. Their work to improve behaviour is having a measurable impact that is recognised by pupils. Senior leaders are developing a course offer which is becoming better matched to pupils' needs.
- The primary phase headteacher and team of primary assistant headteachers lead a good-quality primary provision. They have well-established systems for checking the impact of actions taken to further develop the quality of teaching and to improve good outcomes for pupils from Reception to Year 6.
- The leaders of provision for pupils who have special educational needs or disability are effective in ensuring that the learning needs of these pupils are well served. Effective links with other agencies ensure that appropriate support is provided for these pupils. However, coordination between the different leaders and different school phases requires improvement to improve the experience of pupils at transition points.
- Important improvements are being made to strengthen the accuracy of assessment information in the secondary phase. The use of regular assessments which are checked by internal and external moderation are providing the school with considerably better information on secondary pupils' progress and attainment. Senior leaders have started to use this information to drive the much-needed acceleration in learning for secondary pupils.
- The assessment system in the primary phase is enabling teachers to gain a good understanding of the age-related expectations in the national curriculum. However, while the system is providing leaders with clear information about pupils' overall attainment, it does not readily provide information on the progress of all groups.
- The primary curriculum is well planned to meet the interests and needs of pupils. Visits to interesting local cultural centres such as the Sunderland Empire Theatre broaden pupils' horizons. There have been recent improvements to the secondary curriculum, which is in the main broad and balanced. While opportunities for secondary pupils' personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) development have increased, this aspect is not well developed. A wide range of extra-curricular opportunities enriches the curriculum.
- The school works closely with adult, family and community learning. This helps build partnerships between the school and the local community. Training for parents helps them to support their children with their learning at home.
- The additional funding for primary sport and physical education (PE) is used effectively to increase the opportunities pupils have to enjoy physical activities, understand healthy eating and participate in competitive sport. This is providing pupils with access to a wider range of sports, increasing participation, raising their self-confidence and helping them to understand how to adopt healthy lifestyles. Primary teachers' PE teaching skills have been improved by working alongside specialist PE teachers and coaches.

■ The governance of the school

- There have been several changes to the governing body since the last inspection. Governors are ambitious to ensure that outcomes by the end of Year 11 improve rapidly. They have a clear understanding of the priorities for improvement in the secondary phase and provide effective support and challenge for leaders in this aspect of the school. Their understanding of the primary phase of the school is less well developed. As a result, support and challenge to primary leaders on aspects of primary outcomes are not as strong as in secondary.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school has a strong culture of safeguarding and there are robust systems and practice in place. The leader with responsibility for safeguarding ensures that timely support is provided for pupils through very effective links with parents and external agencies. Staff receive regular and appropriate training. For example, training on how to deal with extremism and radicalisation has improved staff skills. The governor recently responsible for safeguarding is swiftly gaining understanding of the policy and practice across the school. External advice is well used to ensure that the school is following best practice.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- The quality of teaching over time in the secondary phase has been weak and this is why pupils' outcomes by the end of Year 11 are inadequate. The new secondary leadership team are tackling weak teaching and there are early signs of improvement. However, in too many secondary lessons, work is not well matched to pupils' needs and expectations of pupils are not high enough. Teachers do not use questioning effectively to assess pupils' learning or to deepen their understanding. The school's marking and feedback policy is not consistently followed and this limits pupils' progress.
- The quality of teaching in the early years, the primary phase and 'the Hub' is good. As a result, pupils in these parts of the school make good progress from their starting points in all subjects. Here teachers make good use of regular assessments to plan lessons which are largely well matched to the needs of pupils. As a result, pupils including the most able, are provided with work which they find interesting and challenging, and are able to make good progress over time.
- In the secondary phase, some teachers are making effective use of the recently available accurate assessment information to match learning to pupils' needs and to close learning gaps. However, this practice is not used consistently enough and too often pupils are presented with work which is either too easy or too difficult. In too many lessons, the most able secondary pupils are not given sufficiently challenging work so they do not achieve the high grades of which they are capable. This is especially evident in science and mathematics where the most able pupils have, over time, made considerably less progress than would be expected.
- The school's marking and feedback policy is used consistently in the primary phase. Pupils understand the policy and respond well to the marking guidance to further improve their work. In the secondary phase, marking is more variable. On occasions, there are large gaps of incomplete work which have not been addressed by teachers, and weaknesses in pupils' work evident at the start of the year are still being repeated much later in the year. Where the marking policy is better applied, secondary pupils' work is starting to improve.
- In the primary phase, teachers' good subject knowledge is evident in the quality of their explanations and the way they model learning for pupils. This helps pupils to grasp key learning and provides effective frameworks to structure their responses in lessons.
- In the primary phase, teachers use questioning skilfully to probe and deepen pupils' learning. In the secondary phase, there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking skills or to gain confidence in sharing their views with others.
- A well-structured approach to the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) is adopted with younger pupils. This is ensuring that pupils make good progress from their starting points with the development of important early reading skills.
- In the primary phase, regular reading of quality texts and probing questioning by teachers helps pupils to develop a love of reading and better comprehension of books. Older pupils from Year 5 and through the secondary phase are encouraged to read books and complete online quizzes which provide feedback on their understanding of the book. This has a variable impact, with some older pupils not fully engaged with this approach. The very practical step of moving the school library to the centre of the school demonstrates the importance placed on reading by school leaders.

- Most teachers set appropriate homework to support learning. Regular learning of spellings, reading and mathematics skills supports primary pupils' progress in English and mathematics. Revision guides and homework clubs are helping Year 6 pupils to be well prepared for end-of-year assessments. There is an expectation that secondary pupils will receive regular homework. However, the monitoring of secondary pupils' homework is not strong enough.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Opportunities for secondary pupils to put forward their ideas in lessons and the use of teachers' questioning, which encourages pupils to expand their explanations and views, are under developed. This limits pupils' abilities and confidence to share their ideas with a wider audience.
- The new secondary leaders have taken steps to improve personal development and welfare for older pupils. However, the PSHE curriculum is a work in progress. Plans are in place both to improve the leadership and implementation of the PSHE curriculum from September 2016. It is too early to judge the impact of these plans.
- The school has provided effective guidance to Year 9 pupils in selecting appropriate examination choices for future career and education routes. Year 11 have received a range of information, advice and guidance to help them select their next stage in training or education.
- Pupils' personal development is good in the primary phase. Teachers provide pupils with many opportunities to discuss their thinking with other pupils and to share their ideas. Teachers provide clear guidance on how to improve their work in line with the school's policy. As a result, primary pupils develop a good understanding of how to be a successful learner.
- Assemblies celebrate pupils' achievements both within and outside school, and effectively develop their personal skills and aspirations. For example, Year 7 pupils were provided with guidance on life skills by an inspirational speaker. Primary-aged pupils were praised for their sporting achievements and encouraged to reflect on how to make positive changes to their lives.
- Pupils understand the different forms of bullying and confirm that they are confident that generally bullying incidents will be dealt with appropriately by staff. The school's records show that incidents of bullying, including any racist bullying, are followed up thoroughly.
- Leaders make appropriate use of alternative provision when the need arises. Effective checks are made to ensure that this provision has a positive impact on the learning and personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils who attend such provision. Well-planned arrangements ensure successful transition back into school for pupils returning from this provision.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are courteous, polite and show respect to one another, to adults and to visitors.
- The new executive principal and secondary leadership team have set high expectations for behaviour in the secondary phase to which pupils have responded well. Incidents of poor behaviour have fallen substantially. Older pupils also report that the behaviour across the school has improved greatly. Behaviour in the primary phase is good in both lessons and social times.
- Pupils show pride in attending the school. For example, wearing of a new uniform is well adhered to right across the school. Leaders have carefully thought this through so that the uniform is appropriate for different age ranges in this all-through school. Year 11 pupils were keen to explain that their distinctive black blazers encourage them to provide good role models as they are easily identified as the oldest pupils in the school.
- During breaktimes and lunchtimes, pupils are well behaved and engage in lively games or quieter sociable activities. Carefully planned 'zones' around the school are well designed to match the range of interests and ages of the pupils. For example, older pupils have access to activities such as table tennis in an area which replicates the common-room experience that they may experience when they move to their later stages in education.
- Attendance is improving but remains below average. Pupils understand that regular attendance and good punctuality support their learning. The school has strong systems to improve levels of attendance and to identify the support required for any pupils who show signs of poor attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

are inadequate

- Pupils' progress across key stage 3 and key stage 4 is too slow, particularly in English, mathematics and science. As a result, by the end of Year 11, pupils' attainment is significantly below national averages and pupils underachieve. The school's current pupils' progress information is showing early signs of an improving picture as teaching starts to improve. However, it will take time for these improvements to close gaps in learning. Consequently, secondary pupils' outcomes remain too far adrift of national averages for both attainment and progress.
- Pupils start school in the early years with skills and abilities below, and often well below, average in reading, writing and number. Across the early years and primary phase, they generally make good progress, although this is not as consistent in key stage 1.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is very similar to that found nationally. Primary pupils have extensive opportunities to write across a range of topics. This has a positive impact on the quality and creativity of their writing, which is evident in the high-quality displays around the school. However, primary pupils' attainment in spelling, grammar and punctuation is weaker than that expected for their age.
- Progress for disadvantaged pupils in the primary phase is good. Well-targeted support funded by the pupil premium ensures that these pupils make good progress. As a result, the school is closing gaps in mathematics, writing and particularly in reading. In the secondary phase, progress for these pupils is starting to improve from a low base.
- Most-able pupils make good progress and many make better than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics across key stage 2. In contrast, across key stage 3 and key stage 4, many of the most able pupils do not make expected progress and fail to achieve standards that they are capable of by the end of Year 11.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability in the primary phase and 'the Hub' generally make expected progress from their starting points. This is because the school carefully reviews the support required for these pupils, and staff provide work which is matched to pupils' social and learning needs.
- By the end of Year 1, pupils make good progress from starting points in developing their phonics skills. As a result, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in 2015 was close to the national average. However, these pupils do not always build on these skills to reach the expected level in reading by the end of Year 2.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils are in the main well prepared for starting Year 7. However, over time, the good progress made through the primary phase stalls in the secondary phase. Over the last three years, pupils leaving Year 11 have not been well prepared for their next stage of learning. There are early signs that the current secondary leadership team is turning this situation around. Year 9 pupils are better prepared to start Year 10, and Year 11 pupils have benefited from improvements in teaching.

Early years provision

is good

- Children start in the early years with skills and abilities that are generally below, and often well below, those typical for their age. From their starting points, children make good progress. The proportion of children currently working towards a good level of development is improving in comparison to more recent years. Consequently, an increasing proportion of children are well prepared to start Year 1.
- Children learn successfully in a well-organised and vibrant provision with readily available quality resources for learning. This inspires their interests and encourages them to be active learners. For example, children were able to talk confidently about how a snail has a hard shell which is used for protection.
- The quality of teaching is good. The strong teaching in Reception provides an effective balance of teacher-led activities and opportunities for children to explore and learn by themselves. Opportunities to practise and reinforce reading, writing and number work are well developed. Staff use questioning effectively to reinforce and develop children's learning.
- Staff make good use of regular assessments to plan work that is well matched to children's needs. As a result, children work with concentration and sustained effort, and this helps them to make good progress.

- Early years leadership is good. The assistant headteacher has a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the early years. Effective systems are in place to check that actions taken have the required impact. Well-planned developments to the outdoor provision and training to improve the quality of teaching are improving children's outcomes.
- Staff set high expectations for behaviour and relationships are very positive. As a result, children grow in confidence, feel safe and their personal development needs are well met.
- Progress for children supported by early years pupil premium funding is good. The early years pupil premium has been appropriately targeted to provide additional staffing, training and resources to improve children's communication, phonics and writing skills.
- Early years staff work well with parents. Well-established systems promote communication between the school and parents. Training for parents helps to provide support and guidance on how they can help their children make good progress in school. Parents are actively involved with assessments of their children's achievements. The school works in partnership with parents and parents are positive about the support provided by early years staff.
- There are good partnerships with other professionals. This helps the school address children's developmental or special educational needs promptly.
- Children feel safe and secure. Safety is paramount to staff, and children are well supervised in safe, secure classrooms and outside learning areas. Safeguarding is effective and all welfare requirements are met.

School details

Unique reference number	135622
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	10012067

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

Type of school	All-through
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	756
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julie Kelly
Principal	John McGuinness
Telephone number	0191 561 6832
Website	www.academy360
Email address	enquiries@academy360.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	18–19 June 2014

Information about this school

- This all-through school is smaller than typical secondary schools.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care and for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is well-above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability support or with an education, health and care plan is well above that found nationally.
- The academy makes use of a range of alternative provision for pupils where necessary.
- The academy provides a local authority resource base known as 'the Hub'. This provision currently caters for 30 pupils with severe learning difficulties, all of whom are registered on the roll of the academy.
- The executive principal, secondary headteacher and secondary deputy headteachers joined the school in September 2015. The primary headteacher and primary assistant headteachers are the same team as at the previous inspection.
- The school meets the government's current key stage 2 floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- The school does not meet the government's current key stage 4 floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.
- The school is currently sponsored by Gentoo, a social housing group that contributes to the regeneration of the surrounding area. It is planned that the school will become part of the Laidlaw Schools Trust by September 2016.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about key stage 4 results on its website.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed parts of 47 lessons. The executive principal, headteachers and senior leaders joined the inspectors for 10 of the observations in lessons during the inspection.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around school and reviewed the school's promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The inspectors observed pupils in the playground and during lunchtime.
- The inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in their books and in the learning journals of children in the early years. School leaders joined the inspectors for this part of the inspection.
- Inspectors held meetings with the executive principal, headteachers, senior leaders, subject leaders and the special educational needs coordinator. The lead inspector met with four governors including the chair of the governing body.
- Three groups of pupils from different phases in the school discussed their opinions about the school, their attitudes and their learning with inspectors. Inspectors listened to a total of six key stage 1 and key stage 2 pupils read.
- Inspectors took account of the three written responses to Ofsted's online parent questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors held discussions with parents at the end of the school day.
- The lead inspector considered the 57 staff questionnaire responses received.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including minutes from meetings of the governing body, pupils' outcomes information, the school's evaluation of its own performance and the school development plan. Behaviour and attendance records and information relating to safeguarding were also scrutinised.

Inspection team

Michael Reeves, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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Debbie Redshaw	Her Majesty's Inspector
Judith James	Ofsted Inspector
Hugh Steele	Ofsted Inspector
Karen Holmes	Ofsted Inspector

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