

Kingsmoor Academy

Ployters Road, Harlow CM18 7PS

Inspection dates	15–16 June 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

- Pupils are making good progress in all year groups. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection.
- The quality of teaching has improved during the past year. New staff have quickly settled and are contributing well to the school's work.
- The principal provides very effective leadership.
- Children in the early years learn well in a welcoming and bright environment.
- Senior leaders know the school well. Their work to improve teaching has been very successful.
- Pupils behave well in lessons. They feel safe and enjoy coming to school. Pupils' attendance has risen significantly since the previous inspection.
- Governors provide a good level of challenge for school leaders.
- Support from the multi-academy trust has promoted recent improvements.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all of the subjects in the national curriculum are equally well taught. Some, and in particular art, music and design and technology, are improving but have been neglected in the past.
- A new senior leadership team is in place. Roles and responsibilities are becoming clearer but are not yet fully embedded.
- Pupils in key stage 2 are given too many worksheets in science and mathematics lessons. This limits the opportunities for them to gain important independent skills necessary for when they transfer to secondary school.
- Pupils' attitudes to their learning are generally positive but, in a small number of classes, they do not always work as hard as they can.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all subjects in the national curriculum, and especially art, music and design technology, are taught equally well.
- Improve pupils' independent learning skills in key stage 2 by reducing their reliance on worksheets in mathematics and science.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The school has improved in all areas of its work since the previous inspection in 2014. The principal was appointed in September 2015 and has brought about rapid improvements in a short period of time. Her exceptional leadership, vision and commitment to providing high-quality education for pupils has improved the quality of teaching and raised standards of learning.
- School leaders have a clear understanding of the quality of teaching. Several teaching staff have changed over the past year and this could have stalled progress. Good leadership and very clearly communicated expectations meant that progress actually accelerated, and systems were very quickly established and embedded across the classes. Senior leaders have coached less experienced teachers and have supported their improvements well.
- An ethos of continual improvement has been built within the school. This stems from the principal, whose expectations are very high, and is passed through the staff and is now having an impact on pupils. Parents, too, commented that pupils are now working at much higher levels than in the past. These parents are very positive about recent changes to the leadership of the school.
- The senior leadership team has been restructured completely since September 2015. The roles and responsibilities are predominantly established, although leadership of special educational needs or disability and inclusion are currently in a state of handover from one leader to another. Ways of working are embedding but the impact of all senior leaders in monitoring the quality of learning is inconsistent. There is some very high-quality practice, involving precise and detailed evidence gathering, which has contributed to the recent improvements. In contrast, the effectiveness of the monitoring of subjects other than English, mathematics and science is less well developed.
- Leadership of special educational needs or disability, despite recently moving from one leader to another, is effective and has resulted in improved outcomes for these pupils. The deployment of teaching assistants is well organised and leaders know how effective their work is through careful checking.
- The school's curriculum is based on ensuring that pupils gain key skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Many of the other subjects in the national curriculum are taught through theme-based topics. For example, pupils in Year 4 have undertaken some very high-quality geography work in a topic concerning 'earthquakes'.
- Extra-curricular activities are wide and varied. They start before school, continue through lunchtime and stretch beyond the school day. The uptake of these clubs and activities is exceptionally high, as almost every pupil in key stages 1 and 2 participates in one or more of them. Sports coaches add significant value to these clubs and spread an important message about healthy lifestyles to pupils.
- The school's work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective. Elected school councillors act as advocates for their fellow pupils. In Year 6, with the EU referendum approaching, pupils were considering the evidence that the two sides have presented and were writing balanced summaries in advance of their own vote. This adds to their understanding of how democracy operates and promotes British values.
- Communication between home and school is good. Newsletters and a straightforward website carry important information and are easy to access. Of the parents that responded to the online questionnaire, the majority were very positive about the school. Inspectors also spoke to parents at the start of the school day; all were very positive about the school, its leadership and their child's overall experiences.
- School leaders have worked effectively with representatives of the Academy Transformation Trust to bring about improvements. These representatives know the school well and provide valuable support.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governance has improved and is now contributing much more to the school's improvements.
 - Governors hold the headteacher to account for the school's performance. Although governors are talking to, and working alongside, other senior leaders, they are not yet fully accountable for the impact of their work.
 - Governors make focused visits to school to improve their understanding of how things are going. The outcomes of this work are then reported back during governor meetings.
 - The school makes good use of additional funding it receives to support disadvantaged pupils. The positive impact of the pupil premium and sports funding is reported to governors, who monitor this area of the school's work effectively.

- Governors have a wide range of useful skills, experience and knowledge which are well used to support improvements.
- Governors ensure that performance-related pay systems are in place to hold teachers and leaders to account for the impact of their work.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Systems to check the suitability of staff during recruitment are in place and meet requirements. Training for important areas such as child protection are up to date. The school works well with outside agencies to support the most vulnerable pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teaching has improved in all parts of the school since the previous inspection. It is now consistently good and, in one or two classrooms, some outstanding teaching is leading to very rapid progress. Where the teaching is especially effective, pupils make very rapid progress. In these classes, relationships between the teacher and pupils are extremely effective and pupils are very keen to learn.
- Teachers plan lessons that take account of previous learning. They set pupils targets for each lesson that raise their own expectations of what can be achieved. Pupils, and especially the most able pupils, say that this helps them to understand exactly what they need to learn.
- Teaching assistants provide good support. Where this has the most impact on learning, they skilfully direct and encourage pupils to do their best work. In some isolated cases, teaching assistants are not sufficiently involved in the learning and watch the teacher rather than supporting pupils.
- Teachers provide pupils with guidance that is helpful and based on moving forward. Many pupils respond to this and show that they have understood.
- The teaching of phonics in key stage 1 is good. It is systematic and involves teachers and teaching assistants working together to support pupils in gaining good, well-established skills of reading and writing.
- The school has adopted a revised assessment system to take account of changes to the national curriculum. It presents leaders and teachers with a clear understanding of how individual pupils and groups are achieving over time. Teachers use this system to evaluate the effectiveness of their own teaching and what they need to revisit in order to ensure that pupils have understood things.
- Teachers in key stage 1 provide pupils with age-appropriate worksheets and writing frames that help them to develop skills and understand how to lay their work out well. Their use, however, continues too far into key stage 2 when pupils no longer need them. This is particularly the case in science and mathematics where, for example, pupils need to learn how to draw a table for recording results on their own, rather than have one prepared for them. Equally, in mathematics some worksheets provide pupils with pre-drawn sums so that all they have to do is put the numbers in them. The over-use of these resources, particularly in Years 4 and 5, is slowing the development of the independent skills that pupils will need in secondary education.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils adopt very positive attitudes to their learning in most classes. Here, they work hard and relish the challenges that they are provided with. In a very small number of classes, pupils' attitudes have not improved as quickly and, although predominantly positive, the pace of their work is not as quick as it should be when they are not being directly supervised by a teacher or teaching assistant.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They enthuse about certain subjects, including mathematics and science, and are highly appreciative of the work of the sports coaches and visiting volunteers that run clubs and activities.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They are confident that, in the event of something happening that worries them, they can turn to an adult who will help them.
- The school works well with external agencies to support the welfare of the most vulnerable pupils. At present, the records of meetings, e-mails and discussions concerning individual pupils are held in different files. This is under review and leaders are working to collate the information in order to provide a more easily accessible overview of each pupil.

- Pupils make healthy choices at lunchtime. They eat salads and vegetables and many spoke of how these foods are 'good for your future health – especially when you also have an active lifestyle'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Lessons run smoothly because pupils behave well in and around the school. This has not always been the case and pupils, staff and parents spoke of how behaviour has improved in the past year. Disruption is uncommon and the school's behaviour system is understood by pupils and is consistently implemented by teachers.
- Pupils have a clear understanding about bullying and how it can take many forms. They told inspectors that bullying is rare and that it is dealt with effectively when it occurs.
- The school's work to improve attendance has been very successful. Rates of absence are below the national average now, and the levels of persistent absence are similarly low. The impact on the attendance of some individual pupils, whose attendance has been poor in the past, is striking.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils are making good progress. Changes to the way that English and mathematics are taught have resulted in swift progress in both these areas. This means that, from low starting points, standards of reading, writing and mathematics for the majority of pupils currently in Year 6 are at age-related levels. The accelerated progress that these pupils have made means that they are ready for secondary school.
- Pupils' outcomes at the end of Year 6 were below the national average in mathematics and writing in 2014 and 2015. Recent and concerted efforts to raise standards in both of these subjects across all year groups have resulted in much higher standards. The quality of pupils' writing has improved substantially since September 2015; pupils' presentation is better and their use of grammar and punctuation is much more sophisticated.
- The standard of pupils' reading is good. Pupils use phonics strategies to segment and then blend words and are able to work out how to read new and unfamiliar words when they encounter them. Pupils say that they enjoy reading and make good use of the reading books on offer to them. The proportion of Year 1 pupils on track to meet the expected level in the phonics screening check is around 70%: this represents a significant improvement on recent years.
- Pupils in Year 2 are making good progress after a period of staffing changes. Work in their books shows that they are now making accelerated progress in mathematics and writing.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making good progress. The attainment gaps between this group of pupils and others has closed in some year groups, including Year 6. In other year groups, gaps remain but are closing because of the additional support that the school is providing for these pupils.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability are also making good progress. In previous years these pupils have underachieved along with other pupils. The support that pupils who have special educational needs or disability receive is more precisely targeted at their individual needs and this is supporting their improved outcomes.
- Pupils' learning in a broad range of subjects is improving. After a focus on raising standards in basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics, other subjects have been targeted. In most classes, pupils are learning well in science, history and geography. In particular, the experimental work in science is very popular with pupils. One pupil said that he enjoyed science because 'there are no wrong answers when you experiment'. There are some subjects that are not as well developed; art, music and design and technology are taught but with insufficient focus on developing skills as pupils progress through the school.

Early years provision

is good

- Children enter the Reception class with varying levels of skills and knowledge. Around three quarters have skills and knowledge that are below those typical for their age. Children in the Reception class have made good progress this year and the proportion on track to reach a good level of development is broadly in line with national levels. This is an improvement on previous years when the proportion achieving this has been below the national figure.

- Teaching in the Reception class is good. Teaching assistants contribute very effectively and children respond very well to their input. For example, during a phonics lesson, two teaching assistants worked very productively with groups of children to support their learning; children sustained their concentration over a period of time and were delighted with their own progress.
- Children enjoy the opportunities to learn and play in a very welcoming and well-structured environment. They behave well and integrate into the rest of the school with confidence during lunchtime.
- On occasions, children become distracted when they are being directly taught because their misconceptions are either not known or are not taken into account. This means that learning slows because a concept is not understood and the teacher has not assessed the situation quickly enough.
- Children are prepared effectively for the transition into Year 1. They have started to use the same kind of books that they will encounter next year, and will soon embark on a series of visits to familiarise them with their new classroom and teaching staff.
- Parents are positive about the early years. They feel able to approach the staff and like the open communications that they receive.

School details

Unique reference number	138996
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10011874

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	190
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Geraldine Elliott
Principal	Lesley Brennan
Telephone number	01279 306 136
Website	http://kingsmooracademy.attrust.org.uk/
Email address	admin@kingsmooracademy.attrust.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	4 June 2014

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups, and pupils who speak English as an additional language, are average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium funding is above average. The pupil premium is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children that are looked after.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is above average.
- The school's website meets requirements with regard to the information that it provides.
- The school met the government's current floor targets in 2015. These express the minimum expectations for what pupils should achieve by the end of their time in the school.
- The school is sponsored by the Academy Transformation Trust.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in lessons and visited smaller groups of pupils in additional sessions. In all lessons, inspectors looked at pupils' books in order to evaluate the quality of learning over time.
- Inspectors carried out a scrutiny of pupils' work for all subjects in the national curriculum.
- Inspectors met and talked with significant numbers of pupils during lunchtimes and in a more formal meeting.
- Inspectors met with two governors. There was also a meeting with a representative from the Academy Transformation Trust.
- Inspectors considered the 33 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. They also spoke with parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors reviewed records provided by the school, including information about pupils' progress, minutes of meetings of the governing body, and documents relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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