

Strand Primary Academy

Strand Street, Grimsby, North East Lincolnshire DN32 7BE

Inspection dates

30 June–1 July 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders, managers and governors have not brought about fast enough rates of improvement in teaching and outcomes for pupils since the last inspection.
- Pupils' current rates of progress in writing and mathematics are too variable across key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- Outcomes for some pupils at the end of key stage 1 are inadequate, given their starting points in Year 1.
- The quality of teaching, although improving, is not yet consistently good across all classes.
- Some teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough, particularly for the most able pupils.
- Some teachers do not check pupils' learning carefully enough in lessons, and do not adjust the work set accordingly.
- Not all middle leaders hold their colleagues to account with enough rigour to ensure that pupils make at least consistently good progress.

The school has the following strengths

- The early years is well led and managed. Teaching is always good and children achieve well.
- Pupils reach above-average outcomes in reading by the end of Year 6. They read regularly and enjoy talking about their favourite authors.
- The needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well met. As a consequence, they make good progress.
- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare are good. Adults provide bespoke support of a high quality for pupils with social, emotional and mental health issues.
- Pupils feel well cared for and safe. They have a good understanding of how to keep safe and the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle beyond school.
- The vast majority of pupils behave well in lessons and around school. Most pupils enjoy coming to school and are keen to learn.
- Leaders, managers and governors have brought about fresh momentum to improving the school's work since the beginning of the academic year.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality and consistency of good and better teaching, by ensuring that all teachers:
 - have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, especially the most able
 - provide pupils with work that meets their needs
 - check pupils' learning fully in lessons and adjust the work accordingly to keep all pupils interested and challenged
 - encourage pupils to practise and reinforce key literacy and numeracy skills across a range of subjects
 - insist on careful presentation and organisation of work on the part of all pupils.
- Accelerate pupils' rates of progress in writing and mathematics in both key stage 1 and key stage 2, by:
 - providing pupils with consistent opportunities to spell accurately, use an array of punctuation and vocabulary for effect, develop more complex sentences, and sequence ideas so that their writing is fluent and of a high quality
 - ensuring that pupils have earlier opportunities to use and apply the calculation skills that they have mastered to solve investigations and problems
 - developing pupils' confidence in justifying their mathematical answers and the approaches that they have taken to reach them.
- Developing the skills of middle leaders, by:
 - supporting them in identifying more precisely the rates of progress all pupils are making in lessons, and in their work over time
 - raising their expectations and heightening their confidence in holding all staff to account for consistently good and better teaching
 - ensuring that they enforce rigorously the school's marking and assessment policy, so that pupils know exactly how well they are doing.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders, managers and governors have not taken decisive action, over time, to address rigorously all areas for improvement from the last inspection.
- As a result, teaching still requires improvement, particularly the teaching of writing and mathematics, and pupils' current outcomes across the school continue to be variable. They are not improving fast enough in all classes, especially in key stage 1.
- Not all middle leaders hold their colleagues to account with enough rigour to ensure that teaching is consistently effective and that pupils make at least good progress. There are inconsistencies in the ways in which middle leaders identify the rates of progress made by different groups of pupils in lessons and in their work over time. Not all middle leaders enforce rigorously the school's marking and assessment policy, so that pupils know exactly how well they are doing.
- Since the arrival of the new head of academy at the beginning of the academic year, and the executive principal at the start of the spring term, the momentum of improvement within the school has gathered pace. The desire for improvement that both senior leaders show is galvanising the work of most staff, including middle leaders.
- The vast majority of staff and governors now know where the school is performing well and where it could do better. School action plans focus on appropriate priorities and indicate a clear understanding of the rapid changes required.
- Senior and middle leaders hold regular meetings where the progress of pupils is discussed, and arrange support for those pupils who may be at risk of falling behind. There is a growing sense of collective commitment among staff to improving the outcomes for pupils.
- Senior leaders provide staff with good professional advice and guidance in school. Teachers also benefit from support from expert practitioners at Canon Peter Hall Church of England Primary School, Immingham and Macaulay Primary Academy, Grimsby, as well as from local academies and consultants from within School Partnership Trust Academies (SPTA). This support is helping to enhance the quality of teaching and learning, and to provide external checks on the accuracy of assessment information.
- The head of academy and executive principal appropriately link teachers' pay to their performance, which is measured closely against the national teachers' standards.
- Adults' willingness to confront rigorously the rare instances of discriminatory or prejudiced behaviour demonstrates their commitment to the school's strong sense of community.
- The curriculum largely meets pupils' needs and aspirations, although opportunities to reinforce their literacy and numeracy skills across all subjects are not consistently well developed. Experiences to develop the full range of pupils' scientific skills and their learning of a modern foreign language are not yet fully in place.
- Well-conceived daily assemblies, weekly personal, social and health education lessons, and the careful use of circle time all help to develop pupils' appreciation of each other's views and feelings. Most pupils develop a good understanding of British values, such as respect, patience and tolerance.
- In addition, the extra-curricular activities and wide range of visits on offer adequately promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. These include martial arts experiences, visits to the opera, art projects in the local secondary school, visiting poets and authors, and trips to local landmarks in Grimsby and Cleethorpes.
- Leaders work well with off-site providers to support a very small minority of pupils who require some alternative provision to meet best their individual needs. Leaders check pupils' attendance and progress, and make sure that the provision provides a safe learning environment for those pupils who attend. These arrangements help pupils to become more successful learners.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is good. Their outcomes are closely tracked, and their needs well met. As a result, they make good progress.
- The school's use of the primary physical education (PE) and sports premium has increased the range of sporting opportunities available to pupils. The school has not yet evaluated in full the extent to which the employment of specialist coaches has contributed to greater staff confidence in teaching aspects of PE.

- Leaders, including governors, ensure that they spend the pupil premium wisely. By the end of Year 6, disadvantaged pupils now make similar progress in reading and mathematics as other pupils. They benefit from bespoke support, both in and beyond the classroom, and extra resources to support their self-esteem and emotional development. Leaders and governors recognise the need to ensure similar outcomes in writing, and to close further gaps in all subjects, in some classes, across the school.
- The majority of the parents responding to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View, and to the school’s own questionnaires, are supportive of the school’s work. They believe that it is improving. Most staff responding to the staff questionnaire agree with them.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors are committed to improving more rapidly the school’s outcomes, and are regular visitors to school.
 - A new chair of the governing body has been appointed and membership of the governing body has been reorganised since the last inspection. These changes, together with range of information received on a regular basis from school leaders, mean that governors have an increasing understanding of the school’s work.
 - Governors are confident in holding senior leaders to account for the school’s performance and its safeguarding arrangements.
 - Governors keep a watch on how leaders spend additional funding, such as the pupil premium, to meet priorities, and whether this is having its desired impact.
 - Governors have an appreciation of the quality of teaching and its impact on outcomes for pupils. They know that not all teaching is yet consistently good enough, and have prioritised bespoke support from other schools. They do not always check closely enough the impact of this support on pupils’ outcomes across all years.
 - Governors know about the management of teachers’ performance and the links between this and teachers’ pay progression. They have put in place appropriate arrangements for evaluating the principal’s annual performance.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders, governors and staff work closely with the Local Safeguarding Children Board and with a range of external agencies and individual families to ensure that they keep pupils safe. All staff receive regular training on safeguarding. They know how to identify whether pupils are at risk and how to report any concerns. Safeguarding arrangements in the early years are secure. Almost all parents responding to Parent View and the school’s own questionnaires indicate that their children feel safe at school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Leaders and managers have not successfully dealt with all of the weaknesses in teaching that were identified during the previous inspection. As a result, the quality of teaching is still variable, and does not ensure that pupils make good progress in all years.
- Not all teachers have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. Work is not always sufficiently challenging. In some lessons, teachers do not check carefully enough the progress of all pupils, and adjust activities to continue to develop individual pupils’ skills to the full.
- The teaching of writing still requires improvement. The quality of handwriting is inconsistent across classes, and a small minority of pupils do not present their written work with care. Some teachers encourage some pupils to generate a large volume of writing rather than focusing on the quality of what they produce. They do not pay enough attention to showing pupils how to develop ideas, vary the sentences they produce and spell accurately. Pupils are not encouraged to introduce more complex punctuation and an array of vocabulary for effect. As a consequence, the quality of pupils’ writing is too variable.
- The quality of teaching of mathematics is also inconsistent. Some teachers allow some pupils to spend too much time completing too many calculations when they have already developed confidence and shown their understanding. Some pupils do not enjoy enough opportunities to use and apply the skills that they have developed to investigate and solve mathematical problems, and justify the answers they find.
- Some teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities across range of subjects for pupils to use their writing and mathematical skills to good effect, for example, in history, geography and science.

- The teaching of the most able pupils requires improvement. In some classes, there is little difference in the activities they complete and those of their peers, particularly in writing. In mathematics, the activities they are set do not provide them with sufficient opportunities to deepen their understanding.
- The feedback that teachers provide to pupils is not always effective in ensuring that pupils understand what they have learned and what they need to do to improve. A small minority of teachers do not follow the school's marking and assessment policy. Work in books shows that this can slow some pupils' progress.
- Pupils enjoy reading. Most staff plan for effective reading sessions in which adults listen to pupils read, and teach them techniques to make sense of unfamiliar words and phrases. Phonics (the sounds that letters represent) is taught with increasing effectiveness across the school, and this helps pupils to read fluently.
- In many lessons, teachers and teaching assistants establish a purposeful atmosphere for learning, with positive working relationships with the pupils. In most classes, the vast majority of pupils show good attitudes towards their learning and strive to do their best. For example, in a Year 4 writing lesson, pupils were motivated by a video clip of a rocket launch to write a set of instructions to make a foam rocket. Additionally, Year 6 pupils thoroughly enjoyed a percussion lesson with a specialist music teacher. They concentrated well to improve their understanding of simple musical notation.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The vast majority of pupils are respectful and caring of each other and of all the adults in school.
- Most pupils work and play happily together. They are keen to welcome visitors to the school, and help new pupils who join the school to settle quickly.
- Pupils speak positively about the 'Stars of Strand' awards and the Friday afternoon 'golden time' that they receive for good work and behaviour. They openly celebrate the achievements of their peers in the 'good work' assemblies.
- Pupils enjoy the different responsibilities they are given, including being members of the school council, and taking responsibility for fund-raising for a wide range of national charities.
- Pupils have a good awareness of different types of bullying, including racist and homophobic bullying and cyber-bullying. Pupils say that bullying is increasingly infrequent in school. Pupils also say that they feel safe and well cared for. They confirm that they can easily approach a member of staff if they have any worries. They are confident that staff will always make the time to listen to their views, and not tolerate any language or actions that may be offensive.
- Staff teach pupils well about how to keep themselves safe. They know, for example, about road and fire safety, and how to keep safe when using the internet and mobile phones.
- The growing array of sporting and outdoor learning experiences, opportunities for yoga and participation in relaxation therapy, together with an emphasis on healthy eating and hygiene at the daily breakfast club, enhance pupils' understanding of their general well-being.
- The very small minority of pupils who are educated away from the school site benefit from support that meets their specific needs. This results in their attending regularly and behaving well.
- Regular visits to local castles and museums, specialist art and technology lessons at the local secondary school, and visits to school by local residents and survivors of the town's blitz in the Second World War promote appropriately pupils' all-round spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The good links with local secondary schools prepare Year 6 pupils well for their ongoing learning. Similar care is paid to the movement of all pupils through the school. All spend time with their future class teachers and visit their new classrooms before the end of the summer term.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school makes clear its expectations of how everyone should behave. Each class has a clear set of rules, and pupils understand these well. As a result, conduct around school and behaviour in lessons have improved since the last inspection. Pupils are polite and friendly. In the playground and dining room, pupils are helpful and caring.
- The school's information indicates that instances of bullying and racism over time are increasingly rare.

- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They appreciate the rewards they get for positive behaviour, and understand that there are consequences for unacceptable behaviour.
- Pupils' attitudes to their learning have improved since the last inspection. The vast majority listen attentively to their teachers' explanations, are considerate of the views of their peers, and are keen to do their best. On occasions, a very small minority can lose concentration, particularly when activities do not motivate or challenge them, and disrupt the learning of others.
- The school's leaders work hard to encourage pupils to attend school regularly, although overall attendance is still below the national average and persistent absence is above the national picture.
- The majority of parents and staff responding to the Ofsted online questionnaires agree that pupils' behaviour is good.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement because their rates of progress in writing and mathematics are too variable across Years 1 to 6.
- Overall outcomes in writing have not improved sufficiently since the last inspection. They have not kept up with the pace of improvement seen in reading by the end of key stage 2.
- Pupils' overall attainment at the end of key stage 1 in 2015 was below the national average, and well below in mathematics. Current outcomes in writing and mathematics are not improving strongly enough, and represent inadequate progress for some pupils, given their starting points at the beginning of Year 1.
- Historically, pupils make better progress across key stage 2. In 2015, end-of-Year 6 outcomes were above the national average in reading and average in mathematics. They were well below average in writing. Overall outcomes in 2015 represented good progress in all three subjects, given pupils' well-below average outcomes at the end of key stage 1. However, visits to lessons and extensive sampling of pupils' work by inspectors show that these good rates of progress have not been sustained by many pupils currently in school. This is because the quality of teaching is not consistently good in all years.
- Pupils make variable rates of progress in mathematics. Pupils do not have regular enough opportunities to use the calculation skills they develop in a range of problem-solving activities in different subjects. Teachers do not always test pupils to explain their approaches to individual calculations, and to justify their findings.
- Outcomes in writing are inconsistent across the school because some teachers encourage pupils to write at length without considering carefully enough how they form individual sentences, vary the language they use, and spell accurately common and specialist words.
- The most able pupils do not achieve as highly as they should. The work they complete in some lessons lacks challenge. This situation is improving, although not rapidly enough. Inspection evidence confirms that some teachers are still not probing sufficiently the most able pupils with questions that deepen their thinking. They do not develop consistently their abilities to formulate ideas for themselves and to test their growing writing and mathematical skills in a range of different subjects and for different purposes.
- However, pupils' outcomes in reading are consistently good. By the end of key stage 1, the proportion of pupils who achieve the expected level in phonics is now in line with the national average. The vast majority of pupils read fluently and with good understanding. This is because they enjoy the regular reading opportunities in school, and read often at home.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, as well as those who have fallen behind and need to catch up in their learning, make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because adults track their progress carefully and make sure that they receive effective care and support.
- Disadvantaged pupils make increasingly good progress by the end of Year 6. In 2015, Year 6 disadvantaged pupils attained outcomes in line with those of other pupils nationally in reading, and were only eight months behind in mathematics. They were 16 months behind in writing. Gaps in writing are still not closing rapidly enough in some years in school, and current overall attainment is variable across classes.
- The growing proportion of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds achieve similarly to their classmates.
- Pupils achieve well in information and communication technology. They use specialist computer programs confidently to produce digital art and spreadsheets, plan their own computer games, and create interfaces for their own apps. Many pupils develop a range of physical education skills, participating in a range of traditional and non-traditional sports. Their skills are less developed in science and modern foreign languages.

Early years provision

is good

- Interesting and well-planned activities, together with effective support, help an increasing proportion of children to make good progress from their different starting points. Children are well prepared for transition to Year 1.
- Children get off to a good start because of the good relationships they form with the adults who are working with them. A focus on reading, writing and number, within imaginative and stimulating activities, means that many children learn to read, write and understand numbers quickly.
- In 2015, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year was above the national figure.
- Teachers encourage children to explore their environment and work well with one another at all times. Children are enthusiastic and enjoy the many different experiences indoors and outside.
- Adults provide many opportunities for children to learn what good behaviour looks like and how to play together cooperatively. As a result, most are considerate of one another, and behave well.
- Disadvantaged children make good progress with their learning, and the early years premium funding is used successfully to support their particular needs.
- Teaching is consistently good. Staff take carefully into account children's interests. For example, children enjoy playing in their own version of the European football championship, make music excitedly on the outdoor stage and readily complete collages of pirates, as part of their themed work, indoors.
- Early years staff have developed close working partnerships with parents. Parents are well supported in helping their children to continue their learning at home, and are readily welcomed into school.
- Children's welfare and safety are a high priority. As a result, children are happy, safe and increasingly confident, independent learners.
- The leadership of the early years provision is good. The early years leader ensures that all of the adults make effective use of all the assessment information to plan to meet children's overall interests and individual needs.
- Leaders understand the strengths and areas for continued development in the early years. They recognise that some of the outdoor resources could be renewed, particularly to provide a wider range of learning experiences in inclement weather.

School details

Unique reference number	138866
Local authority	North East Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10012080

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	171
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Wendy Prestwood
Head of academy	Jayne Smith
Telephone number	01472 354605
Website	www.strandpa.org.uk
Email address	info@strandPA.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	24–25 June 2014

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average, but rising of late.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are supported through the pupil premium is well above the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is average.
- The school provides a breakfast club.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been staffing changes, including the appointment of a new head of academy and executive principal, and changes to middle leaders' roles and responsibilities. Membership of the governing body has also changed, including the appointment of a new chair of governors.
- The school receives support from local primary academies within SPTA, and from Canon Peter Hall Church of England Primary School, Immingham and Macaulay Primary Academy, Grimsby.
- A very small minority of pupils experiencing difficulties in mainstream education in key stage 2 are educated at Phoenix Park Academy, Grimsby, Western Primary Resource Base, Grimsby, and Eastfield Primary Academy, Grimsby.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in a range of different classes, and one assembly. One class was visited jointly with the head of academy.
- Pupils' work was sampled informally in classes in a range of subjects. In addition, mathematics and writing books from Years 1, 2, 5 and 6 were sampled separately.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including the school's own information on pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, minutes of the governing body's meetings, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents pertaining to safeguarding.
- Inspectors held meetings with pupils in Years 3 to 6, and with governors and with school staff, including those with management responsibilities. In addition, a meeting took place with a representative from SPTA.
- Inspectors evaluated the 11 responses of parents to Parent View, and also took into account the views 30 members of the school's staff who completed the Ofsted online questionnaire. In addition, inspectors also evaluated responses by parents to the school's own recent questionnaire. No pupils responded to the online inspection questionnaire. The school has not sampled pupils' views formally during the current academic year.

Inspection team

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Ofsted Inspector

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