

# The Flying High Academy

Somersall Street, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire NG19 6EW

## Inspection dates

6–7 December 2016

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Outstanding</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The passionate, determined and uncompromising leadership of the headteacher has driven a relentless push for excellence. This has helped to secure rapid and continuous improvement across the school.
- The culture of a relentless determination to excel is shared, understood and promoted by all leaders in the school and across the school community.
- Governors are highly skilled and have a clear and incisive knowledge of the school. Consequently, they contribute effectively to the collective drive for excellence.
- The academy trust is highly effective in providing tailored support, particularly in terms of recruitment and training.
- The highly effective leadership ensures that teaching is at least good. There is particularly strong practice in upper key stage 2, where changes have had more time to embed.
- Pupils now make good progress from their starting points, with some accelerated progress in reading and writing. Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same good progress as others.
- The impeccable behaviour of pupils and their pride and aspiration is shown confidently across all times of the school day and through all aspects of school life.
- Pupils are keen to learn because the school's curriculum interests and enthuses them and is particularly effective at preparing them to be confident and responsible for their futures.
- The early years leader ensures that children make a positive start to school. Children benefit from carefully planned, interesting and well-organised learning tasks.
- Pupils say they feel safe, highly valued and well cared for. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about how well their children are being cared for.
- Teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their reasoning and deepen their understanding.
- Teachers do not always spot when the most able pupils, including disadvantaged most able pupils, are ready to be moved on to more challenging learning, to ensure that they make more rapid progress.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress, especially for the most able and disadvantaged most able pupils, by:
  - ensuring that teachers provide more opportunities for pupils to develop reasoning skills across the curriculum
  - ensuring that teachers more swiftly identify when pupils are ready to move on to challenge.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Outstanding

- The headteacher has a passion and determination to secure the best for every pupil. He has used his deep understanding of effective learning, teaching and leadership, combined with a thorough understanding of the needs of pupils and families in the local community, to create a shared vision of high aspiration and excellence. This culture is understood and subscribed to by all members of the school community.
- Leaders' transformation of the culture of the school is to be particularly celebrated and commended, when considering the very low starting point prior to academisation. Pupils and staff are now extremely proud to be part of the school and parents would overwhelmingly recommend the school to others.
- The headteacher, deputy and recently appointed early years leader, combine their skills carefully to provide strong senior leadership. They engage proactively with the highly effective support, challenge and training provided by the academy trust. This has secured well-designed, rigorous systems that extend across all layers of school leadership. Consequently, middle leaders consistently disseminate the drive for excellence in their particular areas of responsibility.
- Leaders are thorough in implementing the robust performance management systems, informed by accurate assessment and tracking systems. This has brought about significant improvements to teaching and learning, through a period of considerable staffing turbulence and change. Highly effective and targeted personal and whole-school programmes of training have secured rapid improvements in teaching, particularly in literacy and mathematics. Teaching in upper key stage 2 is particularly strong, as there has been more time for this to embed.
- Leaders have a detailed understanding of the abilities of their staff and have made careful decisions about deployment during ongoing change, to maintain the momentum of improving teaching and outcomes. Thorough and well-designed induction and mentoring of a number of newly appointed teachers in September, including newly qualified teachers, is ensuring that consistently good teaching has been quickly secured and is contributing effectively to the good and better outcomes for current pupils.
- The high quality of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is clearly evident in pupils' keenness to improve their work and the exemplary way that pupils support and care for each other. All staff are extremely effective in modelling and promoting the high expectations and aspirations for every pupil. These attitudes are deeply embedded and the central tenet of pupils as stakeholders is truly experienced by all, leading to the pupils themselves being the best promoters of the pledges and mottos they hold dear.
- The celebration of fundamental British values is also woven through school life. Democracy, respect and a highly developed awareness and valuing of diversity are particular strengths. Leaders challenge prejudice and explore challenging world issues head-on with pupils, ensuring that they are very well prepared to be confident, active citizens.
- Pupil roles across the school are highly developed, including a pupil council that leads assemblies and solves problems in school; a learning committee that contributes to

monitoring and evaluation of teaching; play leaders and play pals who show great care in ensuring a positive playtime experience.

- The overall curriculum is carefully planned to engage, enthuse and prepare pupils to confidently step out into the world. The recent 'Careers Day' was a clear example of this commitment, where pupils were able to meet and discuss opportunities with a wide range of visitors. The use of visits and visitors is another excellent feature of the school, ensuring that pupils are aware of challenges and opportunities beyond their community.
- Leaders have been highly effective in engaging parents in the vision and aims of the school. The pride in the school that is now felt by the community is tangible and particularly evident in significant improvements in participation in homework and parents' understanding of how to support their children's learning. The high level of overwhelmingly positive responses to the Parent View survey clearly exemplifies how much parents value the school.
- Leaders use the additional pupil premium funding highly effectively. Although the key driver is improving learning outcomes, recognition is given to the importance of pupils' well-being as a platform for achievement. The well-being team uses rigorous assessment and tracking to devise personalised programmes of support that are highly responsive and quickly adapted, to move pupils securely towards their targets. Teaching assistants are well trained and external providers carefully chosen, to provide excellent support for vulnerable pupils. Leaders also ensure these pupils have every chance to participate and be successful in all aspects of timetabled and extra-curricular activities.
- Leaders use the additional funding from the physical education and sports grant to very good effect. They have ensured that teachers have worked alongside expert coaches and received effective training to improve their teaching and coaching skills. Pupils have had many opportunities to take part in a range of sports, including archery and activities to support less confident children.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors share and contribute effectively to the culture to excel that is established across the school leadership team. The academy trust is highly effective in contributing to and strengthening local school governance.
- Governors have a strong understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development, particularly the relentless drive to continue to improve the quality of teaching and progress for all pupils. Minutes from governing body meetings and reports illustrate their ability to ask school leaders searching and challenging questions.
- The governing body is well organised and uses governors' skills and expertise effectively to add value to overall leadership. The governors assiduously test out and scrutinise the wide range of information they receive. This allows them to hold school leaders effectively to account to improve outcomes for all pupils.
- Governors have a thorough understanding of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and the use of the pupil premium and physical education and sports funding and have an accurate view of its impact. They have a thorough understanding of the headteacher's rigorous use of the management of teachers' performance to hold staff accountable for effective teaching and pupils' outcomes.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There are clear and rigorous systems and procedures in place, which are understood by all staff. Leaders keep precise records to ensure effective and timely work with external agencies. Staff and governors receive relevant training and updates, including on radicalisation and extremism.
- The culture of safeguarding in the school is evident in children feeling safe and parents' confidence in this. Learning about how to keep safe is woven into pupils' learning across the school curriculum.
- Case studies and records show that potentially vulnerable children and families are extremely well supported. Governors and school leaders particularly recognise the need to support the welfare of all pupils, hence the high level of investment in welfare provision. Leaders rightly prioritise the ongoing importance of early identification and removal of barriers for vulnerable pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Thorough records show timely intervention and at least good and often accelerated progress for current identified pupils.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Leaders' incisive and skilful drive for excellence has been effective in securing significant improvements in teaching and learning.
- These significant improvements are from a very low starting point. There has been a high level of staff change and turbulence since the school opened as an academy. This has continued this year, with a number of new teachers joining the school in September.
- Leaders' insistence that new recruits understand and rapidly respond to the core values and expectations of the school means that, despite ongoing recent change, teaching is now consistently good over time. Praise and high expectations of behaviour during learning are particularly quickly established, in line with school policy and the ethos of the school. Where there has been more consistent staffing over time, particularly in upper key stage 2, there is very strong teaching, especially of English and mathematics.
- Teachers use the school's accurate assessment and tracking systems well to inform their planning. As a result, all pupils are progressively being taught reading, writing and mathematics skills that are appropriate for national age expectations. However, not all teachers give pupils sufficient opportunities for reasoning, proving and deepening their understanding. In upper key stage 2, frequent opportunities are used effectively in English and mathematics, but these opportunities are not equally well developed in other subjects, such as science.
- Phonics is well taught and pupils use their knowledge to tackle tricky and unfamiliar words successfully in their reading and writing. Inspectors heard a number of pupils read from Year 2 and Year 6, including the most able readers. They were keen to read and were able to use strategies appropriate to their age to read confidently and discuss what they were reading.
- Writing is taught effectively across the school through interesting topics. Teachers make good connections between reading, creative writing and guided use of grammar and punctuation. However, opportunities to act on guidance for improvement, as required by the school's marking policy, are not consistently provided to extend pupils' skills.

- In mathematics, there have been recent rapid improvements, following teachers' rigorous implementation of a new mathematics policy and training. This has had an immediate impact on pupils' progress, by securely building skills and understanding in line with age-related expectations. Despite the generally high expectations, pupils' work books and inspectors' observations showed that pupils are not always moved on quickly enough to tasks that apply and further deepen their learning.
- Teachers plan teaching assistants' work effectively. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils receive support which promotes their academic and personal progress effectively. Consequently these pupils make at least good progress.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work is mostly consistent with school policy. Pupils in all years present their work well. Teachers do not consistently ensure that pupils have sufficient time to follow up on teachers' guidance as indicated in the school's policy.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Outstanding

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. There is a tangible ethos of respect and care. The aim to empower pupils, through the school pledges of 'respect, responsibility, perseverance, aspiration, pride, fun, confidence, and creativity' is woven through all aspects of school life.
- The school places particular importance on giving pupils the confidence to have a voice and to take ownership and pride in their school. This was clear to see when an inspector joined the weekly Year 6 school council assembly. The councillors confidently and articulately raised points about what was going well in school and issues that were falling short of their high aspirations. They ensured that their fellow pupils were able to fairly share their views and every pupil behaved impeccably from start to finish. The supporting teacher ensured that music, lighting and photo slides added beautifully to the overall feeling of quality that clearly supports the school motto of 'relentless in our strive for excellence'.
- Pupils work well together across the school, listening respectfully to teachers and each other. Pupils consistently take pride in their work across the whole school and celebrate their own and each other's successes. This is visible in displays that often centre on pupils' ideas, feelings and beliefs, including pupils having the confidence to post their 'wow' moments on the wall outside the headteacher's office.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe and feel very safe in school. They know who to speak to in school if they have any worries. They understand the different forms of bullying, including cyber bullying, and how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. Pupils said that bullying is rare, but were clear on what to do if it did occur.
- Parents who spoke to inspectors and responded to Parent View were overwhelmingly positive about the support their children receive. They are rightly confident that their children are happy and safe.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils are highly courteous and considerate towards each other and adults, including visitors in the school.

- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and enjoy coming to school. Pupils' behaviour around the school and in lessons is impeccable. Interruptions to learning are extremely rare.
- Pupils enjoy receiving rewards and celebrating achievement is a consistent feature in lessons and around the school. Pupils take a high level of responsibility for their actions and choices, due to the highly developed ethos of respect and active citizenship. School sanctions, where required, are considered fair and well understood.
- Attendance is currently in line with the national average. Persistent absence is slightly above national figures, but appropriate action is taken that includes highly tailored support for pupils and their families, which brings about sustained improvement.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Good

- Pupils' outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics are now improving in all years and some elements of this are rapid, because school leaders are relentless in their push for progress.
- Highly effective teaching in upper key stage 2 has driven accelerated progress in 2015 and 2016, particularly in reading and writing.
- Improving teaching in key stage 1 also secured attainment in line with national averages for the first time in 2016. The results of the phonics screening check in Year 1 were also above national figures in 2015 and 2016. Given the very low historic prior attainment in key stage 1 and particularly in the early years, this also represents accelerated progress.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in their books and in lessons. Highly effective leadership is ensuring that teachers are planning consistently for progressive age-related skills in reading, writing and mathematics.
- This means that current pupils are making at least good progress and securing strong age-appropriate skills and knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics. Incisive leadership is also ensuring that skills progression is strengthening in other subjects such as science, history and geography.
- Effective leadership is ensuring that pupils at risk of falling behind, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are being particularly carefully supported and tracked. This is ensuring that progress is at least good for these pupils.
- However, historic issues of poor teaching, although now stringently addressed, have meant that the most able and particularly the most able disadvantaged pupils have previously been unidentified and have therefore under-attained. This has particularly been the case in the early years and key stage 1.
- Although this has been identified by school leaders and is being acted on, scrutiny of pupils' work books and observations in lessons show that not all teachers are equally skilled at using assessment within lessons to spot when pupils are ready to be moved on to more challenging learning. This means that the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are not making the rapid progress of which they are capable.



## Early years provision

Good

- Children in the early years enter with skills and abilities well below those typically found for their age. In 2014 and 2015 the proportion of children attaining a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year was well below the national average. However, decisive actions by senior leaders and the appointment of an experienced and skilled early years leader during 2016 has now secured rapid improvement. Consequently, the difference between school and national attainment narrowed considerably at the end of 2016. This was still below the national average and none of the children exceeded age expectations in any aspect.
- Scrutiny of pupils' current learning journals and observations in lessons show that improvements are being built on securely. This now represents broadly good progress from the children's starting points and means that children are now better prepared for Year 1 than in previous years.
- The recently appointed early years leader sets high expectations across the whole teaching team. She is part of, and well supported by, the school senior leadership team. She is a highly effective early years teacher and this has brought about recent rapid improvements across the early years, but particularly for the Nursery pupils. Her deployment into the Nursery class is due to the senior leaders' commitment to ensuring that pupils make the best start possible at the school and to securing the relentless drive for excellence from the very start.
- The early years leader is effectively ensuring that teachers use careful ongoing assessment to plan targeted and structured opportunities to develop skills, particularly in phonics, letter formation and number skills. This is securing improving progress for all children, although opportunities are not taken to routinely extend and challenge the most able children.
- Children settle quickly into the welcoming environment because the adults working in the early years provide a variety of interesting, stimulating and well-organised activities. This means that children work purposefully and maintain concentration on tasks, with or without adult support. The environment in Nursery is particularly carefully resourced to encourage participation and independence, with carefully selected tactile items that support language development effectively. Nursery children were taking turns and enthusiastically exploring floor robots, to develop directional language. A child confidently explained to an inspector, 'If you press this arrow, it will reverse.'
- Adults encourage safe play and the use of resources and all of the children learn how to keep themselves safe when using the internet. Children are kept safe at all times and are well looked after by caring staff. This ethos ensures that children play happily and fairly together.
- Parents are rightly positive about the good start their children make in the early years classes. Parents are responding well to increased opportunities to be involved in coming into school to share home and school learning, for example when showcasing home projects for 'Autumn harvesters with moving parts'. Parents are confident their children are safe and well cared for and particularly value the approachability of staff.
- The early years is now well led and managed. The highly skilled and focused leader is involving and carefully guiding the whole team to improve the consistency and quality of teaching and learning. Her stringent guidance is ensuring that teaching in the early years is now good.



- The early years leader is part of the senior leadership team. This means she is well placed to further strengthen the push for progress across the early years and key stage 1 classes, particularly for more able children, including more able disadvantaged children, to ensure that children are identified, supported and challenged to make the rapid progress of which they are capable.

## School details

Unique reference number	140398
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	10019539

This inspection of the school 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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	383
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Smith
Headteacher	Tony Warsop
Telephone number	01623415790
Website	<a href="http://www.flyinghighacademy.co.uk">http://www.flyinghighacademy.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@ladybrookfha.org">office@ladybrookfha.org</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The Flying High Academy Ladybrook is larger than the average primary school. Most children attending the school come from the immediate area.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage and a very small number speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is above the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- In 2015 and 2016, the school met the government's current floor standards for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- The school has been part of the Flying High Trust since 1 January 2014 and the associated Candleby Lane Teaching School Alliance.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 27 lessons, including seven joint observations with the headteacher and senior leaders. Inspectors observed the teaching of early reading skills and pupils were heard reading. The inspectors talked to pupils about their school and looked at pupils' books while visiting lessons. The team scrutinised a large sample of pupils' work jointly with the headteacher and leadership team, to gain a view of the impact of teaching over time.
- Inspectors held discussions with the school's senior and middle leaders, representatives of the governing body and representatives of the Flying High Trust.
- Inspectors spoke to parents informally at the start of the school day and considered 289 responses to the Ofsted online parent questionnaire, Parent View. They also considered 11 responses to the staff questionnaire and 24 responses to the pupil questionnaire.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents including the school's self-evaluation, improvement plans, records of the monitoring of the quality of teaching, the most recent information on pupils' achievement and progress and information relating to safeguarding, behaviour, attendance and punctuality.
- Inspectors considered the range and quality of information provided on the school's website.

## Inspection team

Mandy Wilding, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Jane Moore	Ofsted Inspector
Moira Dales	Ofsted Inspector

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