

Edgar Stammers Primary Academy

Harden Road, Coalpool, Walsall, West Midlands WS3 1RQ

Inspection dates

29–30 November 2016

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Since the last inspection, leaders have not sought to improve the quality of teaching with the required urgency and single-mindedness. As a result, much teaching, especially in key stage 2, remains weak.
- Leaders' checks on teaching have failed to ensure that all teachers comply with the school's expectations. There has not been enough effective training for teachers and middle leaders.
- Teachers often fail to provide work which builds on what pupils can already do. Time in lessons is not used well. Work set for the most able pupils is commonly too easy.
- Teachers give pupils few opportunities to apply what they have learned in new ways. Pupils rarely develop their writing skills in other subjects.
- Most current pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are not making expected progress in English and mathematics. Achievement in science is poor.
- In 2016, the proportion of pupils who left key stage 2 having attained the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was low. Their progress in reading was particularly weak. Very few pupils attain the higher standards at key stage 1 or key stage 2.
- Pupils do little homework and do not read enough at home. Leaders have taken only the first steps in engaging parents with helping their children to learn.
- Activities to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding lack depth and coordination.

The school has the following strengths

- The teaching of phonics in the early years and Year 1 is effective. In 2016, the proportion of Year 1 pupils who attained the expected standard in the phonics screening check rose to be in line with the national average.
- Safeguarding is effective.
- Pupils' attendance has improved, although it remains below the national average. Records show that the frequency of incidents of poor behaviour is falling sharply.
- Many children who enter the early years with abilities that are below those typical for their age make good progress.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that all teachers:
 - set work for pupils that is securely based on their prior knowledge and understanding
 - plan classroom activities which use time productively to maximise pupils' learning
 - provide pupils with the opportunity to write in a range of contexts within different subject areas
 - require pupils to apply the knowledge and understanding they have acquired in new ways.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that leaders recognise in their planning and their allocation of resources the absolute priority of improving the quality of teaching
 - providing training and ongoing support for middle leaders to ensure that they are skilled and confident enough to fulfil their roles
 - making sure that key stage 2 teachers understand how to implement a clear school policy for the teaching of reading, and checking that they comply with it
 - developing a rich programme of teaching and activities to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness
 - establishing a more effective two-way communication with parents so that leaders are able to harness parents' energies in improving attendance and supporting pupils' learning.
- Increase the proportions of pupils at all stages, including the early years, who attain the highest standards by identifying all those pupils with the potential to do so, and ensuring that teachers set challenging work which requires them to think deeply.

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

Inadequate

- Leaders have not addressed effectively several of the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. They have not recognised the overwhelming importance of improving the quality of teaching and learning. The responsibility for advising teachers on how to plan lessons and for checking on their work has been given to middle leaders, some of whom have lacked the confidence and range of skills to fulfil these roles effectively. A high turnover of staff has worsened the difficulties. The result is that much teaching, especially in the older years, remains weak.
- Staff, including those teachers who are at an early stage of their careers, told inspectors that training in areas other than safeguarding did not provide all the guidance they required. Some teachers remain unclear about how they should teach reading and assess pupils' reading progress.
- Senior leaders evaluate teachers' performance formally using as a starting point how well their pupils make progress. However, clear recurring weaknesses in classroom practice show that teachers are not held effectively to account.
- Leaders have a broadly accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, but a limited grasp of the underlying reasons for the school's inadequacy. They have prepared detailed plans for improvement, but these are not sharply focused on those issues where the school urgently needs to improve.
- The school aims to provide a broad curriculum and leaders introduced changes at the start of this academic year in response to their own evaluation. However, weaknesses in the ways that subjects are taught mean that pupils' experience of – and progress in – many areas of learning, such as science, are limited. Nonetheless, trips to places of interest and visitors to the school, such as the artist in residence, add significantly to pupils' enjoyment and understanding of their work. Sporting and creative extra-curricular activities make an effective contribution to pupils' development.
- Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness through assemblies and some taught lessons. Pupils' books and their inability to recall work on other cultures and religions show that the current haphazard provision has made little impact on pupils' understanding. Much more needs to be done to broaden pupils' horizons and promote British values by encouraging the tolerance of others.
- Leaders have made limited efforts to survey parents' opinions, and to engage parents' support and interest in their children's work. The school's low expectations for homework reflect a reluctance to ensure that parents fully understand how they can contribute to their children's learning.
- Leaders spend the pupil premium to support a wide range of projects aimed at increasing pupils' attendance and improving their attitudes to learning, and on additional teaching. They evaluate the impact of expenditure. However, as the progress of disadvantaged pupils across the school remains below that of other pupils nationally, leaders are not spending the money effectively.
- Leaders are now skilled at identifying those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and when necessary at working with other agencies to meet their needs. Better support for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs has contributed to improvements in these pupils' behaviour. Although better provision has

not yet resulted in more rapid progress because of weaknesses in teaching, additional money to support pupils who have special educational needs and disabilities is now mostly being well spent. The PE and sport premium is spent effectively to improve the quality of teaching in physical education and increase pupils' involvement in voluntary physical activity.

- Leaders have recently amended their procedures for assessing pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics, and these are now accurate. Teachers regularly check their judgements with each other and with teachers from other schools in the academy trust and the local area.
- Leadership in the early years is proving effective because actions are clearly based on leaders' assessment of the greatest priorities.
- Since the last inspection, the academy trust has provided advice and coordinated the strategic approach to improving the school. Crucially, it has been far too slow to respond to signs that improvement has been slow and fragile. However, following the recent serious weaknesses monitoring inspection, trust advisers have recognised the need to take a much more robust approach.
- In the light of the ineffective support provided for less experienced teachers, it is recommended that the school does not appoint newly qualified teachers.

Governance of the school

- Over time, governance has not been effective.
- Under the academy trust's scheme of delegation, much of the responsibility for checking on the work of the school lies with the local governing board. Although since the last inspection governors have become increasingly aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses, they have not identified quickly enough when leaders' strategies were having little or no impact.
- Governors visit the school regularly, and have worked closely with leaders as 'link governors' to develop their understanding of particular issues such as attendance. They are now anxious to complete their training in areas where they are less confident, such as the interrogation of information about pupils' progress.
- The governing board regularly makes sure that the school's procedures keep pupils safe in all respects. They ensure that the right checks are made on all staff who work at the school or otherwise come into contact with children. Governors make sure that the school site is safe, and that staff meet pupils' medical needs.
- In June 2016, governors accepted an independent review of governance conducted in response to the last inspection. The review recognised governors' deepening understanding of the school, and recommended a greater role alongside the trust in strategic planning. It also identified the need for a strategy for communication with parents. The academy trust has now resolved to provide governors with all monitoring reports from trust consultants.
- The new chair of the local governing board, who has considerable educational experience, has a realistic view of the school which provides a good basis for improved governance. Governors check on how leaders spend the additional money provided for particular groups of pupils. They are working with the trust to ensure that the school has enough money to meet the challenges it faces and to use it effectively.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's arrangements meet all statutory requirements. Leaders have rightly placed the highest priority on making sure that all the school's pupils are safe. The school's policies are up to date, reflecting the latest guidelines. Staff have been fully trained and know the school's procedures very well. They are well able to identify and support any pupil at risk.
- Inspectors found that staff keep detailed and well-organised records and work well with parents and other agencies to help pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. They check carefully that those agencies have taken action in response to any referrals the school has made.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Teaching is inadequate because it often fails to meet the needs of all or some of the pupils in the class. Leaders have not built on the improvements under way at the time of the last inspection. With the exception of the teaching of phonics, the weaknesses identified in May 2015 persist. This is because, as leaders admit, there has been no rigour in identifying poor teaching and no effective checking that teachers have improved their practice.
- Commonly, teachers set work which is not properly based on what pupils already know and understand. The work is typically too easy, although sometimes less able pupils are faced with tasks which they are unable to complete. In both cases, pupils make inadequate progress because they learn little or nothing new. Inspectors found scant evidence that teachers are using information from pupils' spoken or written responses to adjust the learning so that it is at the right level to meet pupils' needs.
- Pupils' time is often not well used. For example, in a lesson for pupils in Year 2 and Year 3 focusing on the writing of instructions, the organisation of the lesson meant that pupils wrote very little. Teachers rarely set clear and exacting expectations for what pupils are expected to achieve within the lesson.
- Inspection evidence confirmed leaders' concerns that teachers, especially of the older year groups, have struggled to put together sequences of lessons or 'learning journeys' which meet stated objectives. In particular, they have not succeeded in helping pupils who have fallen behind, while providing new and challenging learning opportunities for the rest of the class, and especially the most able pupils.
- The teaching of reading in key stage 2 is inadequate. Teachers provide a range of activities in reading lessons and listen to pupils read. However, the texts are often not at the right level and pupils do not understand what the activities achieve. Teachers do not assess pupils' acquisition of the different reading skills precisely and frequently enough to provide tasks which are closely matched to pupils' needs. Teachers often fail to recognise the help pupils need to understand new vocabulary.
- Teaching in mathematics and in writing is heavily weighted towards the learning of skills, and pupils do not have enough opportunity to apply this learning in new ways. In mathematics, pupils are infrequently asked to apply their knowledge to practical situations or to use it in other subjects. Pupils are given little opportunity to write at length, either in English or elsewhere in the curriculum. In English and mathematics

and more generally, pupils are rarely asked to think for themselves and so embed and deepen their understanding.

- There was little written work for inspectors to see from other subjects, and this was often limited to recording factual information. There was no evidence that pupils had made significant progress in science, for example, because teachers had not encouraged pupils to think scientifically. Homework makes very little contribution to pupils' learning, because teachers do not set it regularly or insist that it is done.
- In the early years, adults teach phonics well because teaching follows a structured sequence and links the development of reading skills with those for early writing. Leaders have ensured that teachers in Year 1 have also adopted this good practice.
- Pupils respond enthusiastically when teaching is stronger. For example, work on the Ancient Greeks provided some younger pupils with the opportunity to write in different styles and contexts and developed their historical understanding. However, this better practice has not yet led to a sustained improvement in pupils' progress, nor have leaders been able to use it to have a significant impact on the quality of teaching across the school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils are safe and feel safe in school. They report that recently there have been only isolated instances of bullying and that these are sorted out. All pupils know who to turn to if they are unhappy.
- Pupils lack a little confidence and determination as learners. They are not always clear about the purpose of the work they are doing or how the school is supporting them. Their attitudes are more dutiful than enthusiastic. If they finish their work in class, they are not inclined to ask for more. Pupils told the inspectors that they often forget to do homework or to return reading books which they had taken home.
- Pupils are generally kind to each other, but frequently spoke over each other in discussion with the inspectors. During the inspection, they had few opportunities to listen to each other express a sustained opinion in class and so build up a respect for each other's views. Pupils collaborated well in class when asked to work in a pair or small group.
- Teachers have provided guidance about how to stay safe online, and pupils recall visitors from the emergency services explaining how they helped to keep people safe.
- The school takes steps to encourage pupils to be more independent, such as by acting as ambassadors for an aspect of the school. The school environment is attractive and well maintained, and there is some equipment provided to encourage pupils to use playtime constructively.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- In a small minority of classes and when teachers' management of behaviour is not in line with the school's policy, pupils become excitable and talk over the teacher and each other. Pupils confirm that their lessons are occasionally disrupted in this way but

report that teachers deal with this behaviour successfully. More commonly, pupils do not fully apply themselves when they are not directly encouraged or supervised by an adult.

- A few younger children are occasionally a little boisterous on the corridors, but pupils' behaviour outside the classroom is generally courteous and responsible. At breaktime they queue patiently for their drinks, and then play happily together. Pupils respect the school buildings, and inspectors saw no litter during the inspection.
- Attendance remains below the national average, although it has improved markedly in the last year. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has declined. Leaders have worked tirelessly with a small group of parents to explain the importance of attendance and to reward improvements. Punctuality has also improved, although too many pupils are still late to school.
- Behaviour is improving. Leaders' earlier identification of pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs and better provision for them has led to a significant improvement in the behaviour of a small but important minority of pupils. The school is now a consistently orderly community, and there has been a sharp reduction in the use of fixed-term exclusion and other more serious sanctions. There have been no racist incidents or permanent exclusions this academic year.
- Pupils follow instructions and are very willing to learn. They are respectful in lessons, even when the work is not well matched to their needs. The large majority take the trouble to present their work well and want the school to succeed.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Progress in English, especially at key stage 2, has been weak, and pupils are underachieving considerably. Current progress in English and mathematics across the school remains below that of pupils nationally, and so pupils whose current attainment is below that expected for their age are not catching up. Persistently low standards in reading and little or no progress in many other subjects mean that the school is not preparing pupils in the older years adequately for key stage 3.
- Information supplied by the school and evidence from workbooks shows that progress is uneven across the different year groups, and that most pupils currently in the school are making less than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics. There is only occasional written evidence of meaningful progress in other subjects. Achievement in science is weak.
- Unvalidated information indicates that the proportion of pupils who left Year 6 in 2016 who met the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was well below the national average. Pupils' progress across the key stage was below average in reading, and no better than average in writing and mathematics. At key stage 1, the proportion of pupils who met the expected standard was broadly average.
- In 2016, very few pupils at either key stage 1 or key stage 2 attained the higher standard or were working at greater depth. This is because leaders do not identify all those who have the potential to attain highly and because work for the most able pupils only rarely presents a real challenge. Their progress is often slow and further hampered by a lack of opportunities in all subjects to apply their learning in new and interesting ways. The most able pupils are rarely required to think deeply and creatively.

- Disadvantaged pupils make up the majority of the school's population. Over time, their progress in English has been consistently well below that of other pupils nationally and has only recently begun to show some signs of improvement. The progress of disadvantaged boys is a particular concern. The expenditure of the pupil premium, although sensibly planned, has not made up for basic weaknesses in teaching. There are too few disadvantaged pupils in the group of most able pupils to make a separate judgement about their progress.
- The academic progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities remains too variable and is often weak. Leaders are providing better guidance to classroom staff on how to support these pupils in their work, but staff have yet to act on it consistently. At times during the inspection, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities were presented with work they could not do.
- The school's promotion of reading at key stage 2 is inadequate. Although a few pupils take books home regularly and use the school library, records show that most older pupils rarely read for pleasure, and at the time of the inspection some had not changed their reading book since the start of September. The most able readers can read a text appropriate for their age quite fluently, but their comprehension and their ability to draw conclusions are limited. Weaker readers in key stage 2 can use phonic strategies to sound out unfamiliar words when prompted to do so, but are reading well below their chronological age.
- Younger pupils now make good progress in phonics, and as a result the proportion of pupils who have attained the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check has risen year on year. In 2016 it was in line with the national average. Nevertheless, a high proportion of pupils in Year 2 who had not attained the standard in 2015 were unsuccessful in the re-test.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The majority of children start both the Nursery Year and the Reception Year with skills and abilities which are below those typical for their age. Most children make expected progress. Unvalidated information shows that the proportion of children who left Reception having attained a good level of development in 2016 was well below the national average and very similar to the proportion in 2015. The proportion of children who exceeded the expected standard in any of the early learning goals was very small.
- Teaching in the early years is improving. Adults have a tendency to give children instructions, rather than asking them the questions which would encourage them to think further about their experiences and want to learn more. Adults sometimes do not consider carefully enough how to use events, equipment or situations to stimulate children's curiosity and make connections between different ideas.
- Children's progress in the early years is variable. Information supplied by the school and confirmed by inspection evidence shows that those who join the setting with skills and abilities well below those typical for their age make the most rapid progress. However, expectations for the most able are sometimes too modest, and activities do not provide enough challenge. As a result, some do not make the progress they should.
- Leaders' work with parents is at an early stage. Staff visit homes as part of children's

introduction to the setting, and parents are welcome to contribute to assessments. However, in general, the school has not done enough to enlist the support of parents as partners in their children's learning.

- Children's behaviour is good. Leaders quickly establish expectations of good conduct. Children treat each other thoughtfully and helpfully, and play happily together. They are able to manage tasks such as painting without close supervision.
- Leaders in the early years make sure that all staff are aware of children's abilities and what the next steps should be for each individual. They ensure that staff share good practice within the provision and that they learn from other local settings. Leaders make sure that all children are safe and that all welfare standards are met. They work effectively with other agencies to support children with particular needs.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the early years and have planned well to improve the provision. They have recognised the importance of addressing the comparative weakness in children's literacy skills, and responded by placing a greater emphasis on writing, linked to the teaching of phonics. They identified shortcomings in the quality of questioning and provided appropriate training for staff. These recent changes have not yet had time to improve children's achievement, however.
- The pupil premium is spent effectively in the early years, for example on working with families to engage children fully in the life of the school and addressing children's speech and language needs.
- The secure development of children's phonic knowledge and the establishment of good patterns of behaviour help to prepare children for key stage 1. Nevertheless, the high proportion of children who have not reached the early learning goals in writing, in numeracy and in speaking show that there is much work to be done before pupils benefit from the best possible start to the next key stage.

School details

Unique reference number	139610
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	10020047

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	315
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian McGuff
Headteacher	Pam Willetts
Telephone number	01922 471 390
Website	www.edgarstammers.walsall.sch.uk/
Email address	postbox@edgarstammers.walsall.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 May 2015

Information about this school

- Edgar Stammers Primary Academy is larger than the average primary school. Children attend full time in the Reception class, but for morning or afternoon sessions only in the Nursery classes. The school runs a breakfast club, which operates on a cafeteria basis.
- Edgar Stammers Primary Academy is sponsored by Education Central Multi Academy Trust (ECMAT).
- The very large majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly above average, and increasing.
- The headteacher is also the headteacher of Woodhouse Primary Academy in Birmingham, which is sponsored by the same academy trust. In September 2015, she joined Edgar Stammers Primary Academy to work in the school for three days a week. The headteacher is a local leader of education (LLE). One deputy headteacher joined

the school in January 2016. There has been a considerable turnover of staff, and five teachers have joined the school since September 2016.

- In 2015, the school did not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 17 lessons and made short visits to other lessons. Three observations and brief lesson visits were conducted jointly with senior leaders. The inspectors also observed pupils' conduct at break and lunchtime and visited the breakfast club.
- The inspectors held discussions with senior leaders, other leaders, class teachers, members of the local governing board and a representative of the school's sponsor.
- Three groups of pupils, two selected at random, met with the inspectors. Inspectors also spoke with many other pupils informally. One inspector listened to pupils in Years 3 and 5 read.
- The inspectors, sometimes alongside school leaders, scrutinised in depth all the work produced by several pupils in a range of year groups. They looked at work recorded electronically. The inspectors considered information about pupils' current performance.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of documents, both electronically and on paper. These included: development plans and evaluations of the school's progress; curriculum plans; minutes of the local governing board, and the review of governance conducted in response to the last inspection; reports on visits made by advisers from the academy trust; policies; wall displays; and records showing how the school supports vulnerable pupils.
- There were not enough responses to the online Parent View questionnaire for inspectors to take these views into account. Inspectors looked at six responses to a school questionnaire for Year 6 parents. They also spoke to a substantial number of parents delivering their children to school. There were no responses to the questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

Martin Spoor, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Lindsay Nash	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Malam	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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