

City Road Primary Academy

Cavendish Road, Rotton Park, Birmingham, West Midlands B16 0HL

Inspection dates

17–18 May 2017

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

- There is too much inconsistency in the quality of teaching, and as a result, the outcomes of pupils are too low in some classes.
- Leaders' checks on the quality of teaching are not rigorous enough to ensure that inconsistencies are rapidly addressed.
- An effective middle leadership is not yet established to share the workload of leading improvement within the school.
- The pupil premium funding is not used consistently well to promote the achievement of disadvantaged pupils of all abilities.
- Teachers do not consistently provide the appropriate tasks to match the pupils' abilities.
- Pupils do not routinely understand what to do because teachers do not always explain the task clearly.
- Most-able and middle-ability pupils are not set work that challenges them.
- Not all teachers use effective questioning to deepen pupils' understanding and develop their reasoning skills.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their language and communication skills and address specific grammatical errors.
- Teachers do not provide enough opportunities to deepen pupils' understanding of the text by using inference and deduction.

The school has the following strengths

- The principal and deputy principal have worked hard to create a stable staff team who are now motivated to raise pupils' outcomes.
- Governors are now in a much stronger position to challenge and support school leaders. They recognise that there is inconsistency in the teaching and that outcomes are not high enough for some pupils.
- Effective systems and procedures are in place to support pupils. Pupils are well cared for and feel safe. The school's care and warmth for pupils is a real strength.
- Teaching in the early years is tailored well to the needs of the children. As a result, they make good progress.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - strengthening the role, impact and accountability of middle leaders in improving the quality of teaching and pupil progress
 - increasing the frequency and rigour of checks on the quality of teaching to ensure that inconsistencies are rapidly addressed
 - sharpening pupil premium plans so that they focus more on identifying the appropriate strategies to address the barriers to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.
- Ensure that teaching is consistently good or better so progress accelerates for all groups of pupils by:
 - providing the appropriate tasks to match the abilities of all pupils
 - explaining tasks carefully to the pupils and checking they know exactly what to do
 - using questioning more effectively to deepen pupils' understanding and improve their reasoning skills
 - having high expectations at all times, especially for most-able and middle-ability pupils by providing work that is consistently challenging.
- Improve the quality of teaching in reading and writing by:
 - developing pupils' ability to use inference and deduction to deepen their understanding of the text
 - provide pupils with enough opportunities to develop their language and communication skills and address specific grammatical errors.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since the last inspection senior leaders have worked hard to create a stable staff team who work together well and support each other to make improvements. Senior leaders are moving the school forward through the implementation of numerous initiatives. Systems have been introduced to improve teaching and raise standards. However, leaders' checks on the quality of teaching are not rigorous enough to ensure that inconsistencies are rapidly addressed. Consequently, the impact of these initiatives is not yet sufficiently embedded to address variability in the quality of teaching and in pupils' progress and attainment.
- Leaders, especially those who are new to their role, are not yet sufficiently skilled in driving improvements in their area of responsibility. Middle leaders are not yet secure in holding others to account to drive improvements.
- The use of pupil premium funding does not have a consistent impact on accelerating the progress of disadvantaged pupils of all abilities. The spending plan does not explain the reasons for the strategies chosen, nor does it explain how and when the plan will be evaluated. As a consequence, leaders do not evaluate initiatives early enough to identify which ones are the most effective.
- Arrangements for the management of staff performance are in place. Staff value effective professional development and it has led to improvements. For example, the teaching of mathematics is more effective in developing pupils' problem-solving skills.
- The curriculum is balanced and provides pupils with interesting topics and themes to study. For example, one particular project is about athletes and each class is named after an athlete. The pupils explained how they all enjoyed researching information about the athlete and presenting their findings as a class to the rest of the school. Opportunities for writing are built into the curriculum. The curriculum is evaluated through book scrutinies and pupil questionnaires. The progress of pupils in each subject is assessed at the end of each half term.
- Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. There are plenty of enrichment activities and special events, such as Chinese New Year and Diwali to deepen their learning. The pupils learn about the various religions and visit a different place of worship each year.
- Many opportunities are built into the curriculum for pupils to learn British values. For example, they are taught about democracy and the importance of voting. They are taught how to debate and to show respect and tolerance for others' points of view. They know about the rule of law and the importance of keeping people safe.
- Leaders know pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities very well and monitor their progress in detail. They ensure that additional funding to help these pupils is deployed effectively. Consequently, these pupils make good progress from their starting points because of the support they receive.

- Leaders use the additional funds from the primary physical education (PE) and sport premium to employ a sports coach and provide a range of activities. Pupils have many opportunities to take part in sports and competitions, including dodgeball, football and tag rugby. The coach works alongside teachers to help them improve their skills in teaching PE. As a result, the quality of sports teaching has improved and pupils' engagement and attitudes towards the subject is positive.
- The school works well in partnership with local schools on joint training. The school has had a new external adviser this year who is providing effective support in brokering professional development for staff to address the key areas for improvement.

Governance of the school

- Governors have addressed the recommendations from the external review of governance. They have redefined their roles. They come into school regularly and meet with leaders. As a result, they have an understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement and are a far more effective force in the leadership of the school. Minutes of meetings show that governors challenge leadership.
- Governors are keen to bring about more rapid improvement. They recognise that the principal has successfully overcome many challenges to stabilise the staff and to involve parents more in school life. They recognise that the school is strong on the pastoral side and that pupils' attitudes to learning are much improved. However, governors know there is work to be done to improve pupils' outcomes. They are reconsidering the strategy for pupil premium funding to ensure that additional resources and interventions have a sustained impact on the progress of disadvantaged pupils.
- Governors correctly identify that developing the responsibilities of middle leaders is a priority for improving the quality and consistency of teaching and pupils' progress across year groups and subjects. They recognise the need for greater accountability of middle leaders and more coaching for staff to improve aspects of teaching.
- Governors work hard to ensure that all safeguarding practices are effective.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders review and update procedures regularly.
- Senior leaders and governors have ensured that there is a culture and ethos of keeping children safe in school and they go to great lengths to ensure that pupils are safe. They have a passionate belief that pupils need to feel safe and cared for if they are to succeed with their learning.
- The school works well to identify any child who may be at risk of harm. Leaders report concerns and ensure that support is tailored well. The school works well with agencies to safeguard pupils. Record-keeping is detailed and thorough. As a result, the most vulnerable pupils in school are well cared for and protected. Children missing in education procedures are followed up well.

- Staff are well trained in child protection. They follow procedures well. Safety is taught throughout the curriculum. The single central record is well maintained and up to date. Induction procedures for new staff are effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is inconsistent. Teachers do not consistently provide tasks that match the abilities of all pupils. Sometimes pupils have tasks to do that are too easy for them and do not move their learning on quickly enough.
- Questioning does not get pupils to deepen their understanding and improve their reasoning skills. For example, questions are sometimes limited to checking pupils have the correct answers. Teachers do not exploit the potential to get pupils to justify their answers.
- In some lessons, teachers do not have high enough expectations. They do not provide work that is sufficiently challenging, especially for the most able and middle-ability pupils.
- Teachers regularly give pupils guidance to enable them to improve their work. However, they do not always explain tasks carefully to the pupils and check they know exactly what to do.
- Pupils practise their writing skills in a range of subjects within the curriculum. However, teachers do not provide pupils with enough opportunities to develop their language and communication skills and address specific grammatical errors. Misconceptions, either spoken or written, are not picked up and addressed quickly enough.
- Developments in the teaching of reading have led to improved attitudes to reading and some knowledge of books and authors. However, teachers do not provide enough opportunities in reading for the pupils to use inference and deduction to deepen their understanding of the text.
- The teaching of phonics is structured and paced well and led by skilled staff, who make sure the pupils pronounce the sounds correctly. Pupils enjoy learning letters and sounds. They make use of their phonic skills to enable them to read unknown words. The effective teaching of phonics ensures that more pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are on track to reach the required standard this year.
- In mathematics, pupils have opportunities to apply their skills and knowledge in practical work and problem-solving. The work in their books shows that the pupils make sound progress over time in the basic skills, fluency and calculations.
- Pupils work collaboratively and help and support each other. They make use of displays, prompts and resources to guide and support their learning. The learning environment is well organised and stimulating.
- The teaching and support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities ensures that they make progress. This is because the deployment and training of support staff are carefully planned to meet the specific needs of individual pupils. Inspectors saw some good examples of additional resources being used

effectively in classrooms to meet pupils' needs. For example, specific resources are used to meet the needs of pupils with dyslexia.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are confident and display positive self-esteem. They have an understanding of how to be a successful learner and have positive attitudes to learning. Pupils readily make use of extra resources in the classroom to support their learning if needed. They show pride in their work.
- Pupils respond quickly to instructions from staff. They hold doors open for everyone and exercise self-control and care. Pupils show respect for each other and one another's ideas.
- As a result of the pastoral guidance and support offered for their personal development, pupils feel safe. They are taught how to keep themselves safe from a number of risks such as e-safety and stranger danger. Parents who met inspectors spoke very positively about the care, guidance and support pupils receive and how well they are looked after.
- The school ensures that pupils know about different forms of bullying. Pupils say that everyone gets along together and that instances of bullying are rare. They have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying, including prejudiced-based bullying. They say that on the very rare occasions that bullying does occur, teachers deal with it swiftly and effectively.
- Pupils and families are well looked after to improve their emotional well-being. Staff arrange extra help in school and signpost families to various agencies for support.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite and well mannered and they move round school in an orderly fashion. Pupils respond quickly to instructions from staff.
- Pupils' behaviour and conduct in class and at break and lunchtime is good. Pupils display self-discipline. A clear behaviour policy sets out the consequences of poor behaviour along with pupils' roles and responsibilities. A range of rewards promotes positive behaviour.
- Disruption in class and around the school is rare. Pupils respond quickly to instructions, enabling lessons to flow smoothly. Skilled pastoral care is provided for pupils with particular behavioural needs. Staff monitor behaviour closely and take appropriate actions where necessary.
- There has been a marked improvement in attendance for all groups of pupils. It is closer to national averages now. Leaders have put in place robust system to ensure that attendance is celebrated and absence is challenged. The school works well with families to help improve their children's attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2016, progress in reading and writing in key stage 2 was significantly below average. Results of national assessments showed that the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standards at the end of key stage 2 was below the national average in reading and writing. Pupils made better progress in mathematics in 2016 and as a result, pupils achieved broadly in line with national averages. Only a few pupils attained the higher standards in reading, writing mathematics.
- Similarly, in key stage 1 the pace of progress was inconsistent. As a result, attainment in key stage 1 was well below the national average in writing and mathematics both at the expected level and the higher standard.
- While improvements are being made, the pace of change is slow. The progress of pupils from their starting points is too variable across subjects and year groups. This is reflected in current assessment information and work in pupils' books. Inconsistent expectations of pupils' performance lead to erratic patterns of progress and attainment. This is due to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching over time.
- In writing pupils do not make the progress they should because they do not have the opportunities to develop their language and communication skills and address specific grammatical errors.
- Pupils enjoy reading. They choose texts appropriate for their age, and pupils in all year groups apply their knowledge of phonics to sound out unfamiliar words in the text. However, their deeper understanding of what they read is weaker. Consequently, pupils are not making the progress they should.
- In all subjects across the school, disadvantaged pupils do not make consistently strong progress. As a result, gaps in attainment remain between them and other pupils. The school's use of pupil premium funding to target and support the achievement of disadvantaged pupils of all abilities requires improvement in order to achieve greater consistency across classes.
- The most able and middle-ability pupils are not routinely set challenging tasks to enable them make better progress and attain the higher standard.
- Achievement in mathematics is showing signs of improving because pupils have more opportunities to develop their basic skills of calculation and apply these skills in problem-solving situations.
- Pupils' knowledge of phonics is good. This as a result of effective teaching. Over the past two years, pupils' attainment in phonics has been closer to the national figure at the end of Year 1. Disadvantaged pupils are now making much stronger progress in phonics. By the end of Year 2, most pupils who made slower progress during Year 1 have caught up. Pupils use their phonics skills well in reading.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well because they are given support with their learning.
- Pupils are not yet well prepared for their next stage in education.

Early years provision

Good

- Children enter the early years with skills and knowledge below those that are typical for their age, especially in communication, language and literacy. The vast majority of children speak English as an additional language and a high proportion begin Nursery and Reception with little or no English. The mobility of children is high, with approximately a third having joined the Reception classes after the beginning of the year. As a result, key activities focus on developing the children's language acquisition and vocabulary.
- Children make good progress in early years because teaching is good. Staff know the children well. They plan activities carefully to ensure that gaps in development are addressed. Mixed-ability groupings ensure that children are exposed to more fluent speakers of English. As a result, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of Reception is close to the national average. Consequently, children are well prepared for Year 1.
- Disadvantaged children are provided with extra support where needed. This means that those in danger of falling behind, or those who already need to catch up, can receive the extra targeted support required.
- Leadership and management of the early years is good. Although new to the post, the early years leader has an accurate picture of the setting's strengths and weaknesses. She is well aware that some tasks for most-able children are not extending them sufficiently and has plans in place to address this. Children are provided with opportunities to develop their communication and language through real-life experiences, practical activities and role play. For example, staff brought in real fish, lobster tails, large prawns and mussels for the children to touch, feel and smell, which increased their range of vocabulary.
- There is a happy atmosphere in lessons and behaviour is good. Staff have high expectations of manners and courtesy, which they model well for the children. As a result, children learn and play together well. Children settle quickly because routines are well established and the quality of provision meets their needs well.
- Phonics is taught well and children enjoy practising their letter sounds. They use their phonic skills to write words and simple sentences. For example, the children were enjoying using their phonic skills making a booklet about the life cycle of a frog.
- There is clear evidence of involving parents in the children's learning. The school encourages parents to attend workshops providing practical and visual activities to support learning. Staff keep parents informed about their child's progress on a day-to-day basis and at meetings that are more formal.
- The outdoor learning area is used well in Nursery to impact on children's development but not in Reception. Leaders are aware of this and are taking appropriate action to improve its usage.
- Staff keep the children safe and leaders fulfil the welfare health and safety requirements. Staff have the relevant training and safeguarding in the early years is effective.

School details

Unique reference number	139571
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10032580

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	471
Appropriate authority	Local advisory board
Chair	Helen Yorke
Principal	Jackie Gazeley
Telephone number	0121 464 3348
Website	www.cityroad.bham.sch.uk
Email address	enquiry@cityroad.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	24–25 February, 2015

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the accessibility plan on its website.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about the accessibility plan.
- This is the second inspection of the school since it opened on 1 July 2013. It is sponsored by the Birmingham City University Academy Trust. It is governed by a local advisory board, which includes parents, members of staff, local community representatives and representatives of the Birmingham City University Academy Trust.
- It is larger than the average-sized primary school. A greater proportion of pupils leave and join the school during the school year than is the case nationally.
- The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium funding is above the national average.

- The majority of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. More than half of the pupils are of Pakistani heritage. The proportion of pupils who to speak English as an additional language is more than four times the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The early years comprises of a Nursery class for three-year-olds and two Reception classes.
- The school runs a breakfast club and after-school clubs for pupils.
- There have been a number of changes in staff since the last inspection.
- The school meets the government's floor standard (the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress).

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in lessons. Three lessons were conducted jointly, involving senior leaders.
- Pupils' work was reviewed during lessons and a more detailed scrutiny was made of pupils' books with subject leaders. Pupils read to inspectors and inspectors spoke with pupils throughout the inspection in order to gather their views.
- Discussions took place with the principal, senior and middle leaders, a group of teachers and teaching assistants and the external adviser. Discussions also took place with members of the local advisory board and directors from the Birmingham City University Academies Trust (BCUAT), which is the academy's sponsor.
- A range of documents was reviewed. These included: the school's self-evaluation summary; action plans for school improvement; records of the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning; performance management documents; minutes of meeting of the local advisory board; the school's own assessment information; and records related to behaviour, attendance and the safeguarding of children.
- The behaviour of pupils was observed in lessons, in assembly, at breaktime and at lunchtime as well as when moving around the building.
- There were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire for parents (Parent View) to generate a result. Inspectors took account of the school's survey of parents and spoke to parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors also took account of the views of staff.

Inspection team

Lynda Townsend, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Sue Cameron	Ofsted Inspector
Julie Griffiths	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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