

West Town Primary Academy

Midland Road, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire PE3 6DD

Inspection dates

23–24 May 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Since the Cambridge Meridian Academies Trust started working with West Town Primary School, leaders have made many improvements to the quality of education that pupils receive. Standards are rising and most pupils make good progress throughout the school.
- The highly effective principal, ably supported by the vice-principal, has successfully built a strong staff team committed to improving pupils' outcomes.
- Through determined and sharply focused actions, leaders, including subject leaders, have improved pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Members of the local academy council know the school well. They understand, and are fully committed to, their role in improving the quality of education. Governors are well informed about pupils' learning and hold leaders to account for pupils' achievement.
- The curriculum is well designed and provides stimulating activities that engage pupils. It actively promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and increases their understanding of British values.
- Positive relationships have been established between staff and pupils. Leaders set high expectations of behaviour and these are consistently applied by staff throughout the school. The vast majority of pupils have responded positively to this and, as a result, behaviour is good.
- The provision of care and guidance is a strength of the school. In particular, support for vulnerable pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is highly effective and nurturing. Their progress is carefully monitored and, as a result, they make good progress.
- Teachers plan learning activities that enable the vast majority of pupils to make good progress. However, expectations of the most able pupils are not high enough in some subjects and throughout the school.
- Early years provision is good. However, the outdoor learning environment is not well enough developed to allow children to follow their interests, make choices and be as purposefully engaged as they could be.
- Overall, current pupils' attendance is in line with the national average. However, a small proportion of pupils do not attend school often enough.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that the most able pupils are sufficiently challenged in all lessons and across all subjects, so that they achieve the best they can.
- Improve the early years provision by developing the new outdoor learning environment so that children have every opportunity to achieve all they can.
- Continue to tackle the poor attendance of a small number of pupils so that persistent absence does not impact on their progress and achievement.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Current leaders have improved the school considerably. They work closely with governors, who share a detailed knowledge of the school's strengths and of the areas that still need to improve. Leaders regularly monitor the quality of teaching and learning, through observing lessons, visiting classrooms and looking at pupils' books. This ensures that the school is well placed to continue to improve in the future.
- The principal's determined and ambitious leadership has created a positive ethos and a strong team of staff who are fully committed to improving the school. She is very well supported by the vice-principal and assistant principals.
- The roles and responsibilities of senior and middle leaders have been strengthened so that all teachers make an effective contribution to school improvement. Leadership is shared widely and the different skills of individual staff are used well to secure improvements in the quality of teaching and learning across the school. Leaders at all levels are appropriately held to account by governors to improve outcomes for pupils.
- Leaders were disappointed with the key stage 2 reading outcomes in 2016. In response, they effectively analysed how the curriculum needed to be improved and successfully changed it to ensure that it better meets the needs of the current pupils. Reading has been a key focus throughout the school this year, particularly in the development of pupils' vocabulary and their comprehension skills. As a result, reading is taught effectively and pupils now make good progress in reading.
- Leaders have a detailed and comprehensive knowledge of the learning of individual pupils and groups of pupils. They have set up robust systems to discuss and support the progress of any pupil who is at risk of not doing their personal best in reading, writing and mathematics. Also, past assessments and tests are carefully analysed to check for weaknesses in provision of particular aspects of the curriculum. Staff training is then arranged to address these aspects in order to ensure that pupils' needs are appropriately met.
- Staff training, and systems to support the development of staff, are good, not only for teachers, but also for teaching assistants. Many teaching assistants make a positive contribution to the good progress of pupils, especially of those who find learning more difficult. Less-experienced teachers develop their practice effectively through the support they receive from more-experienced colleagues.
- Leaders have developed an engaging curriculum of well-planned activities that capture the imagination of pupils and support the effective development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Learning is often enhanced with 'wow projects', such as pupils spending the day as a Second World War evacuee, or visiting a primary school in a contrasting location. These events help to stimulate pupils' imaginations and broaden their understanding. As a result, pupils make meaningful connections across subjects and are motivated by the purpose of their work. Leaders have identified that the outdoor learning environment needs developing further to enhance pupils' learning.
- Strong leadership of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or

disabilities by the very knowledgeable inclusion leader ensures that funding is well spent. Highly personalised provision and close monitoring of pupils' progress ensure that teaching, including programmes of support, is well suited to pupils' needs. Consequently, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well.

- Leaders make astute use of the additional government funding to support disadvantaged pupils. They check effectively on the achievement of these pupils and put in place additional support for any at risk of falling behind. For example, funding is used particularly effectively to support pupils to develop their language and communication skills. As a result, disadvantaged pupils make good progress. They reach similar standards to the other pupils in the school and, on occasions, outperform them.
- The primary physical education and sport premium is spent well. Specialist teachers have been brought in to deliver high-quality physical education lessons. Additionally, pupils have benefited from access to a wide variety of after-school sports clubs, competitive events and activities. As a result, more pupils are participating in a wider range of sports.
- The school benefits well from the support of the multi-academy trust, which provides resources, specialist teachers and effective training programmes for staff. The trust enables teachers to work closely with colleagues from other schools, including the local secondary school. This has improved the quality of teaching, pupils' outcomes and the transition for pupils moving on to Year 7. As a result, pupils are better prepared for the next stages of their education.

Governance of the school

- Cambridge Meridian Academy Trust provides strong challenge to leaders about the quality of the school's work. The trust works effectively with the local academy council to ensure governance is effective.
- The local academy council provides good support and challenge to leaders. Governors ensure that their statutory responsibilities, especially in safeguarding pupils' welfare, are fully met and effective. Governors rigorously check the arrangements for the appraisal of staff. Salary increases are linked to the contribution that staff make to school improvement and to pupils' progress. Both the pupil premium funding and sports funding are managed efficiently under their scrutiny.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have shown vigilance in establishing a culture where pupils are kept safe. Relevant policies and procedures are up to date and are well understood by staff. Staff know what to do should they have any concerns about children's and pupils' safety and welfare.
- The most vulnerable pupils are given a high priority. Record-keeping is effective and the school works well with external agencies to ensure that concerns are quickly followed up.

- There are regular safeguarding training updates for all staff and governors and those new to the school. Staff are aware of the key messages of government guidance on keeping pupils safe in school.
- Pupils say that they feel safe at school and are confident that staff will quickly resolve any issues or concerns they may have.
- The majority of parents who completed online questionnaires and who have responded to the school's own reviews agree that their children are safe and well cared for.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The high expectations of the leadership team have resulted in improvements to the quality of teaching and assessment across the school. These raised expectations are seen in the work in pupils' books, visits to lessons, discussions with pupils and the school's own regular checks on the quality of teaching.
- Teachers have developed positive relationships with pupils based on a good knowledge of pupils' individual strengths and interests. Classrooms are generally calm and friendly places where pupils can be seen enjoying their learning experiences. Teachers often model correct sentence construction and use effective questioning to develop pupils' language skills. This enables pupils to think about their learning and explain their answers more successfully. Teachers plan relevant activities that engage pupils well and most pupils make consistently good progress from their starting points.
- Reading has a high profile in the school and is taught well. Teachers' strong knowledge of phonics is used to plan interesting activities for younger pupils. As a result, pupils quickly learn to use letter sounds to work out unfamiliar words. Pupils were able to speak at length about their reading books and demonstrated clear understanding of what they have read.
- Pupils' achievements in writing are improving over time. Evidence in pupils' books shows that the teaching of writing effectively incorporates spelling, grammar and punctuation skills. Teachers ensure that pupils have plenty of opportunities to produce extended pieces of writing across the curriculum to improve their writing skills.
- The quality of mathematics teaching is good. Pupils are making greater progress as teachers rigorously check on pupils' understanding and set them appropriate next steps for learning. Pupils are encouraged to develop and use their reasoning skills by solving increasingly complex mathematical problems.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive good support from skilled teaching assistants who understand their particular needs. Teaching assistants work closely with the teachers so they are clear about their role in a lesson. As a result, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are able to access all aspects of the curriculum fully and subsequently achieve well in all subjects across the school.
- Teachers' planning ensures that learning activities are matched to pupils' needs. In the majority of lessons, the most able pupils are set work that is more challenging. However, at times it is not sufficiently demanding and teachers do not extend their thinking or move them on to the next task quickly. Consequently, the progress of the most able pupils across some subjects is not as rapid as it could be.

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 school and have positive attitudes towards their learning. They like their teachers and want to please them. As one pupil commented, 'Our teachers make learning fun.' Pupils are generally confident learners who are a credit to themselves, their teachers and the school. Pupils wear their uniform with pride.
- Pupils respect for others is notable, exemplified by their conduct during assembly. One pupil said, 'We need to treat each other as we want to get treated ourselves.'
- Through a well-planned programme of personal, social and health education, pupils develop a good understanding of how to stay safe in a variety of situations, including when using the internet. Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school and have confidence that staff will help them if they have a worry or concern. Pupils also learn how to be healthy through eating a balanced diet and taking plenty of exercise.
- Pupils display growing levels of maturity as they move through the school. By Year 4, many are able to take on age-appropriate leadership roles such as running the school's healthy snack bar and being 'play pals' at breaktimes to help and care for younger pupils.
- Most of the parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and who spoke to inspectors during the inspection, agreed that pupils are well looked after and safe at West Town Primary Academy.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Good behaviour is evident throughout the school due to the consistent implementation of the school's effective behaviour policy.
- Leaders analyse the number and nature of behavioural issues and are active in putting appropriate support in place to improve behaviour. The frequency of incidents of poor behaviour has reduced over time.
- Leaders give pupils' attendance a high priority. They have implemented a range of successful initiatives to encourage pupils to attend regularly. As a result, pupils' attendance overall has improved and is currently in line with the national average. However, leaders are aware that a small proportion of pupils still do not attend school often enough.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Children join the early years with skills that are much lower than is typical for their age, particularly in communication and language. However, because of the effective use of

assessment, leaders ensure that children's specific and individual needs are identified early in their time in school. Consequently, children make good progress in the Reception Year. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year is beginning to increase, although it currently remains below the national average.

- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the national phonics check at the end of Year 1 has been steadily rising. The school's current assessment information demonstrates that pupils are making better progress in developing and using their understanding of phonics throughout the school. In Years 1 and 2 they are on track to achieve in line with the national average. This is because phonics is taught more systematically and pupils are taught to use their phonics skills accurately when they read books.
- In 2016, by the end of key stage 1, the proportion of pupils who met the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was below the national average. However, because of recent improvements in the quality of teaching, pupils currently in Year 2 are making better progress in these subjects. School analysis shows that a high proportion of pupils are on track to attain closer to the national average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of the academic year.
- In 2016, at the end of key stage 2, attainment was well above the national average in writing and mathematics, but below in reading. Leaders have taken action to ensure that reading standards are better this year, and current pupils across the school are making at least good progress from their starting points in reading, as well as in writing and mathematics. School analysis shows that pupils in Year 6 are on track to attain above the national average in all three subjects by the end of the academic year. Pupils are well equipped with the necessary academic skills to be fully ready for the next stages of their education.
- In all year groups, teachers successfully meet the needs of the very high numbers of pupils who speak English as an additional language and those that join the school at various times with no English. Pupils receive targeted support to help them to improve their speaking skills quickly. For example, teachers model how to structure sentences and check that pupils understand new vocabulary as soon as it is introduced. Consequently, these pupils make similar progress to their English-speaking peers.
- This year, disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, are making better progress than previously due to more effective teaching and the good use of the pupil premium funding. The school's current assessment information indicates that differences in attainment are diminishing between disadvantaged pupils in the school and other pupils nationally.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. Their needs are quickly identified by staff and they are supported effectively in their learning. A number of parents told inspectors that they were pleased with the way that the school helped their children to succeed.
- Generally, the most able pupils achieve well because of effective teaching and appropriate challenge, but this is not yet consistent in some subjects and across the school. As a result, some of the most able pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

Early years provision

Good

- The majority of children start in Reception with skills and abilities below those that are typical for their age. They make good progress from their starting points. The proportion of children who attain a good level of development by the time they leave Reception has been below average over time. Due to the good teaching, levels of attainment are rising.
- The early years provision is well led and managed by the knowledgeable, enthusiastic early years leader.
- Staff know the children well and have ensured that the welfare requirements of the early years are met. Children are supported to be ready and willing to learn. Rules and routines are established quickly so that children settle promptly and respond well to their teachers' expectations of behaviour.
- Teaching is strong across the early years. Adults ask insightful questions and give children time to reply. Staff model the effective use of language. As a result, children quickly learn to speak in whole sentences, which are increasingly grammatically correct.
- The school engages well with parents. Information is frequently shared with them and they are regularly invited into school. Parents who spoke to inspectors said they are happy with the provision in the early years. They value the care and attention given to their children.
- Teachers ensure that children have opportunities to engage both in activities led by adults and in tasks that they can choose for themselves. Indoors, the learning areas are welcoming and stimulating. The well-organised resources are generally accessible so that children can investigate, explore their own ideas and use the new skills they are learning. Leaders have recognised that the outdoor area is less well developed and does not yet offer children a consistently good range of experiences which enable them to learn well.

School details

Unique reference number	140855
Local authority	Peterborough
Inspection number	10031340

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	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	326
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Eddie Woods
Principal	Jane Dooley
Telephone number	01733 852400
Website	www.westtownprimary.org
Email address	office@westtownprimary.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- West Town Primary Academy is larger than the average-sized primary school and converted to an academy in June 2014. The school is part of the Cambridge Meridian Academies Trust.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well above the national average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who receive special educational needs support, or who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan, is in line with the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of key stage 2.

- The principal also leads a second school in the trust, spending three days a week at West Town Primary Academy.
- The school meets requirements for the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish online.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in every class and attended an assembly. Several of the observations were carried out jointly with the principal, vice-principal and an assistant principal.
- A wide range of pupils' workbooks were looked at by inspectors throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors held meetings with the principal, the vice-principal, senior leaders, subject leaders, the inclusion leader, the inclusion support assistant, the attendance and welfare officer, the early years leader, the business manager, newly qualified and trainee teachers, the chair of the governing body, another governor and the chief executive officer of the trust.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils informally in class, and around the school at break and lunchtimes to seek their views about the school.
- Inspectors met with several groups of pupils more formally to discuss many aspects of school life.
- Inspectors heard some pupils in the early years, Year 1 and Year 3 read. Inspectors talked to pupils about their reading habits and looked at their reading records.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's website and a range of school documents, including: assessment information; minutes from the local academy board meetings; the school's own evaluation; improvement plans; and records about behaviour, safeguarding children, and attendance.
- Inspectors considered the 16 parent texts, and 16 responses made by parents to the Ofsted online Parent View questionnaire. They also spoke to some parents before and after school, and during the inspection. Additionally, inspectors looked at the 17 views expressed by members of staff in response to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Fiona Webb, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jacqueline Bell-Cook	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Copping	Ofsted Inspector

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