

# Acre Rigg Academy

Acre Rigg Road, Peterlee, County Durham SR8 2DU

## Inspection dates

20–21 March 2018

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	<b>Good</b>

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The headteacher has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further development. Following disappointing key stage 2 results in 2017, she took assertive and timely action to develop middle leadership and improve the quality of teaching throughout the school. These actions are paying dividends.
- Governors challenge and support senior leaders robustly. Members of the local governing body, together with the trust's chief executive officer (CEO) and the chair of the trust's board, have a deep knowledge of the school and its community.
- Overall, pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, are making better progress in reading and mathematics this year than they did in the 2016/17 academic year. A far greater proportion are working at the standards expected for their age now.
- The provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is improving rapidly. Consequently, these pupils' diverse needs are increasingly well met.
- Newly and recently qualified teachers are supported well. These teachers appreciate and benefit from the bespoke coaching and mentoring programme on offer in the school.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is improving. Teachers are using assessment information more incisively to plan work at just the right level of difficulty for pupils with low and average starting points. Challenge for the school's most able pupils requires further development.
- Pupils behave well in and around school. They take on roles of responsibility eagerly and fulfil their duties responsibly. A very small minority of pupils in lower key stage 2 lose concentration in lessons and disrupt the learning of others very occasionally.
- The school's recently formed pastoral team go the extra mile to help the pupils and their families. As a result of their work, many more pupils now arrive punctually for school every day. Improving pupils' attendance is a key priority in the school.
- Parents are overwhelmingly happy with leaders, teaching and the school as a whole. They appreciate the school's work to ease their children's transition into and from key stage 2.
- All staff, including lunchtime supervisory staff, understand how to keep pupils safe. Safeguarding systems and procedures are robust.

## **Full report**

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

- Work proactively with parents to ensure that pupils' attendance improves so that the proportion that attends school every day is at least in line with the national average.
- Build on the work already undertaken to improve pupils' progress in reading and mathematics and ensure that the most able pupils are challenged to achieve the highest standards.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The headteacher's evaluation of the school's effectiveness is precise and uncompromising. She has managed a period of turbulence in staffing well, strengthened the senior leadership team and established a powerful pastoral team. Relationships throughout the school are good. All are committed to the 'imagine, believe and achieve' vision at Acre Rigg Academy.
- Leaders have overhauled the school's assessment systems and procedures. Teachers' assessments of the standards pupils reach and the progress pupils make are more accurate. Assessment information is routinely checked by leaders in school. In addition, its reliability is regularly reviewed by teachers from schools throughout the trust. Leaders are making effective use of pupils' Year 2 English and mathematics workbooks to ensure that work completed and understood in the infant school is not repeated in Year 3.
- Leaders' whole-school improvement plans are clear. They, quite correctly, are underpinned by specific plans to develop reading and mathematics throughout the school.
- Standards in reading are rising because of the robust action taken by the subject leader for English. Pupils now have a 30-minute reading lesson before and after morning break every day. Pupils access high-quality texts such as 'Moonfleet' by J. Meade Falkner. This rich, daily diet is developing pupils' knowledge and use of sophisticated vocabulary. The school's stock of reading books has been replenished. A reading 'pod' has been established in every classroom so that pupils have a comfortable and enticing place to choose and read books for pleasure. More pupils, and their parents, are beginning to understand the usefulness of reading together for pleasure at home.
- Similarly, pupils are making better progress this year in mathematics. Their mathematics lessons are now supplemented by additional arithmetic sessions every day. The leader for mathematics checks the standard of teaching and makes sure that pupils use their developing skills to reason and solve mathematical problems on a regular basis.
- The government's additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is being spent increasingly well. Leaders and teachers plan additional, short and sharp intervention activities when gaps in pupils' knowledge are identified. Furthermore, leaders have identified that not enough of the school's most-able pupils are making the progress of which they are capable. This is an area for development.
- Staff training and development is of high priority throughout the school. Induction procedures for new staff are robust. Leaders' expectations are made explicit from the outset. The high proportion of newly and recently qualified teachers appreciate their mentors' support and challenge, especially in relation to the management of pupils' behaviour.
- Leaders have employed a family worker, parent support adviser and pastoral manager.

This team's work to support vulnerable pupils and their families has had some notable successes. For example, pupils' punctuality has improved markedly. However, pupils' attendance remains slightly below the national average. This is an area for further development.

- Leaders are providing a rich curriculum in which pupils' interests are piqued through exciting opportunities. For example, in English pupils look forward to and benefit from regular visits made to school by a local storyteller. An increasing proportion of pupils attend after-school sporting clubs. Effective use of the primary physical education and sport funding enables pupils to excel in athletics, tag rugby, basketball and cycling. Pupils' success in sport has raised their self-esteem and the status of the school in the local community.
- Pupils have a good knowledge, appropriate to their age, of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) issues. Leaders, through effective partnership work with outside agencies, have created a friendly environment in which everyone's differences are celebrated and welcomed.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also good. As a result, pupils are desperate to take on roles of responsibility to lead and serve throughout the school. For example, there are active school councillors, dedicated mini police (through a project with Durham Constabulary), 10 young sports leaders and two young sports ambassadors for Durham Local Authority.
- In January 2018, representatives from the Tudhoe Learning Trust, together with an education development partner from Durham local authority, carried out a 'diagnostic review' in the school. Leaders welcomed the review. It confirmed the areas for development already outlined in leaders' improvement plans.

## **Governance of the school**

- Members of the local governing body act in accordance with the trust's scheme of delegation. They are highly skilled and provide challenge and support to leaders in equal measure.
- Governors are extremely knowledgeable about the school's strengths and areas for development. For example, they know that the Year 6 pupils' ability to reason was weak in the 2017 mathematics tests. Governors know the actions that leaders have taken to put this weakness right. They know which actions have been successful and which require further development.
- Members of the governing body can point to striking examples of where their work has led to whole-school improvement. They discovered, through a 'pupil voice' survey, that pupils were not clear about which aspects of their topic work were history and which were geography. This led to a whole-school 'explorers' day in which the pupils learned how to be active geographers.
- Governors are pleased that the pastoral team's work has led to a reduction in fixed-term exclusions and improved punctuality. They realise that not enough pupils attend every day.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders act in accordance with the trust's procedures for the safe recruitment of staff. Officers from the trust made a small number of administrative amendments to the school's record of recruitment checks during the inspection to ensure that it now complies with statutory guidance.
- The school's staff and governors are well trained in all aspects of safeguarding, including the government's counter-terrorism strategy, 'Prevent'. Systems and procedures to record, report, analyse and address the small number of incidents of inappropriate behaviour are well established. Governors challenge trends in behaviour appropriately.
- The provision for vulnerable pupils, including those who are subject to child protection plans, is good. The designated safeguarding leader ensures that these pupils have ready access to the support to which they are entitled.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Leaders have worked diligently to implement robust systems to track the attainment and progress of individual pupils and different groups of pupils. However, this is not yet so for the most able group of pupils.
- Assessment information in the school's tracking system is increasingly accurate. This is because leaders within school and teachers' peers from across the trust check the reliability of assessments on a regular basis. In addition, the newly and recently qualified teachers' judgements are becoming more and more reliable as they learn from leaders' coaching and mentoring, gain experience and grow in confidence.
- Teachers use the assessment information about pupils' strengths and weaknesses well, including by looking at the work in pupils' Year 2 books from the infant school. They use this information well to plan learning that is at just the right level of difficulty for the majority of pupils. Their challenge for the most able pupils, however, is not robust enough. Adult's expectations of this group of pupils are not high enough.
- Teachers' subject knowledge, especially in relation to reading and mathematics, is stronger now than it was at this time last year. Teachers are using the considerable amount of reading and mathematics training they have attended to deliver interesting and memorable learning experiences for their pupils. The pupils appreciate teachers' efforts. The older pupils have noticed that teaching in these areas has improved a great deal since last year.
- The questions that teachers ask in lessons probe pupils' understanding well. Inspectors heard many instances of 'How do you know that?' and 'Can you explain that?' during observations of teaching and learning. Teachers have taught their pupils to give a reason for every answer. As a result, pupils' explanations of their ideas are thorough and, sometimes, thought-provoking for the rest of their classmates.
- 'Fix-its' are well established throughout the school. When pupils do not understand a concept in an English or mathematics lesson during the morning session, they get an additional 'fix-it' session in the afternoon. These sessions usually ensure that pupils are ready to learn and make progress at the start of each school day. They have not

worried about their learning and progress overnight. This is an example of how the school is proactive in addressing pupils' social and emotional needs.

- The CEO of the Tudhoe Learning Trust described the 'sea change' in the school's teaching, learning and assessment honestly. He said that the Year 6 pupils used to be 'polished' and 'hot-housed' in Year 6 to achieve success in statutory tests. Now, teaching, learning and assessment is a whole-school undertaking. There are no hiding places. Teachers in every year group are accountable for pupils' progress. The expectation is that all pupils make good or better progress from their individual starting points. The CEO understands that pupils' attendance is linked to their outcomes. Undisputedly, pupils who attend every day make the greatest academic progress at Acre Rigg. These pupils are prepared well for their secondary schooling.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils understand which repeated actions constitute bullying. They can explain the dangers of social media in relation to cyber bullying. Pupils from every year group said they would report bullying to an adult straight away. They have confidence that their concerns would be followed through.
- The school's work in relation to LGBT issues is particularly strong. Pupils told members of the inspection team all about different types of families, including those with a mum and a dad, one mum, one dad, two mums and two dads. They were adamant that everyone is equal and that everyone at Acre Rigg is valued.
- Most pupils enter the school from the next door infant school. Leaders are developing stronger links with this provision to ensure that pupils' progress does not stall during transition from Year 2 to Year 3. The parents of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities identified that their children's transition into key stage 2 was managed well. Teachers at Acre Rigg took account of these pupils' physical and emotional well-being on entry and, as a result, the pupils settled well and quickly into junior school life.
- Leaders identified a need to help pupils who have social, emotional and mental health needs, particularly those who may be prone to anxiety. A counsellor has been employed on a part-time basis and is beginning to make inroads into the school's waiting list of referrals. Older pupils take their role as 'time-to-talk' mentors very seriously. They know their friends thrive when their emotional needs are met well.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Leaders' work to improve pupils' behaviour is paying off. The number of pupils who receive a fixed-term exclusion from school is reducing year on year and is now very small.
- The work of the pastoral team to reduce the number of prejudice-related behavioural incidents has been successful. Again, there has been a significant reduction in these

types of incidents since the 2015/16 academic year.

- The vast majority of pupils behave well in and around school. They enjoy undertaking roles of responsibility and grow in stature when carrying out their assigned duties. Very occasionally, when the work they are given is not matched well to their needs, a small minority of pupils in lower key stage 2 disrupt the learning of their friends in lessons.
- Leaders are working with a host of external agencies to make sure parents bring their children into school every day. Despite this work, pupils do not attend school often enough and the number who are persistently absent is too high. This is a key area for development in the school.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- In 2017, only 50% of the Year 6 pupils achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, some 11% below the national average.
- The progress that these pupils made in reading, writing and mathematics during their time in key stage 2 at the school varied enormously. Writing was, and still is, a strength of the school. The progress that pupils made in writing placed the school in the top 20% of schools nationally. In mathematics, the school was in the bottom 40% and, most worryingly, reading was in the bottom 20% of all schools.
- Inspectors and subject leaders carried out joint and in-depth checks of current pupils' work in both reading and mathematics. As a result of the assertive actions undertaken by senior and middle leaders, the vast majority of pupils who are on the school's roll now are making much better progress in reading and mathematics this year than previously. This includes disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities. However, the most able pupils are not making the progress of which they are capable because teachers' expectations of them are not consistently high across the school.
- Pleasingly, pupils' skills in English and mathematics are being developed in other areas of the curriculum. For example, Year 6 pupils' mathematical skills were developed when comparing the value of exports in geography. Similarly, in Year 5, pupils' writing skills were developed in science when they wrote a playscript that explained the findings of Sir Isaac Newton.
- The curriculum is designed and built around the needs and experiences of the pupils. Pupils are making good progress in the acquisition of skills in curriculum areas such as geography, history, science and music.
- The pupils who are currently in Year 6 are being prepared much better than the most recent previous cohorts of pupils for the rigours of the key stage 3 curriculum that face them at secondary school in September.

## School details

Unique reference number	138554
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10045065

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	247
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Derek Turner
Headteacher	Julie Craggs
Telephone number	0191 5862915
Website	<a href="http://www.acreriggacademy.co.uk">www.acreriggacademy.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:acreriggacademy@durhamlearning.net">acreriggacademy@durhamlearning.net</a>
Date of previous inspection	4–5 June 2014

## Information about this school

- Acre Rigg Academy is a junior school for pupils aged between seven and 11. It is the same size as an average-sized primary school.
- The school is a sponsored academy. It is one of seven primary schools in the Tudhoe Learning Trust. The trustees of the Tudhoe Learning Trust are the school's accountable body. They have delegated many powers to the local governing body. The trust's CEO, who is also the trust's executive headteacher, reports directly to the trustees.
- The headteacher is a senior leader within the Tudhoe Learning Trust and sits on Durham local authority's behaviour panel.
- Just under 50% of class teachers are new to the profession. They are either newly or recently qualified teachers.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is higher than the national average.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their first



language.

- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities receiving support is above average. The proportion who have an education, health and care plan is also above that usually found.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum requirements for attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons across a range of subjects in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6. Some observations were carried out jointly with senior leaders.
- During visits to lessons, inspectors spoke with pupils and looked at their work to find out more about how well they are learning.
- The lead inspector met with four members of the local governing body, including the chair of the governing body, and the trust's CEO. In addition, a telephone conversation was held with the Tudhoe Learning Trust's chair of trustees.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school. Formal meetings were held with groups of pupils from Years 3 and 4, and Years 5 and 6.
- The lead inspector discussed the school's effectiveness with an education development partner from Durham local authority.
- Discussions were also held with the deputy headteacher, the coordinator for special educational needs and the subject leaders for English, mathematics, science, computing, modern foreign languages and music.
- The lead inspector also held a meeting with four lunchtime supervisory assistants.
- Inspectors read with three pupils from each of Years 3, 4, 5 and 6.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school more broadly and looked at a range of documentation. This included policies, leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness, the school's improvement plans, safeguarding records and information about pupils' attendance, attainment and progress.
- Five free-text responses to Ofsted's online Parent View survey were considered alongside the 14 responses to Ofsted's survey of the views of staff. Inspectors considered the school's own recent surveys of pupils', parents' and staff's views. Inspectors also talked to parents dropping their children off at school at the beginning of the first day of the inspection.

## Inspection team

Belita Scott, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Donna Callaghan	Ofsted Inspector
Alison Stephenson	Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

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](http://www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings).

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted).

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2018