

Unity Community Primary

Allesley Drive, Cheetham Hill, Manchester, Greater Manchester M7 4YE

Inspection dates

24–25 April 2018

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

- School leaders, including governors, are ambitious for this new school. They have worked successfully with staff, parents and carers to create a vibrant learning community where pupils are safe, secure and taught well.
- The trust and the local governing body provide a good level of support and challenge to leaders. They know the school well because they visit regularly and focus their work on raising standards.
- Pupils' outcomes at the end of key stage 1 were below the national average in 2017. However, evidence from this inspection shows that current pupils are making strong progress in English and mathematics.
- Leaders are highly effective in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Personal development and welfare are outstanding.
- Leaders have developed a wide and interesting curriculum which helps pupils to learn about different cultures and religions, and broadens their understanding of the arts and the role of business and enterprise in modern society.
- The teaching of reading is a particular strength. Teachers make regular assessments of pupils' progress and ensure that a good level of support is provided for any pupils who are in danger of falling behind in this key area.
- Pupils love their school because everyone is valued and treated with respect. Pupils are well behaved in lessons and during play times. However, too many pupils are persistently absent from school. Although attendance has improved this year it remains below the national average.
- On occasions, teachers do not address misconceptions in pupils' understanding of spelling, grammar and punctuation quickly enough and this limits pupils' progress. Progress is also affected by the poor standard of some pupils' handwriting and presentation.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are supported well and make strong progress from their various starting points.
- Good support is provided for disadvantaged pupils and those who are vulnerable. Leaders ensure that staff have a detailed knowledge of pupils' individual needs and they use this information to good effect.
- Senior leaders make regular checks on the quality of teaching. However, the role of subject leaders has not yet been developed.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years. They make strong progress in all areas of learning.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes in writing by ensuring that all teachers:
 - more effectively develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of grammar, punctuation and spelling
 - have high expectations about pupils' handwriting and presentation.
- Strengthen leadership and management by developing the role of subject leaders so that they contribute fully towards improving pupil outcomes across the whole curriculum.
- Further improve attendance so that it matches more closely the national average.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since the school opened, in September 2015, leaders and governors have worked successfully to create a caring and compassionate school. Staff feel valued and pupils make strong progress in their learning. Leaders' high expectations have underpinned the successful start to this new school.
- Leaders regularly monitor the performance of teachers and support staff to ensure that the quality of teaching is effective. They also ensure that staff receive high-quality training and support. As a result, the quality of teaching has steadily improved and is now typically good. As a result, pupils benefit from well-planned and well-organised lessons.
- Provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is very effective, with additional funding spent wisely. The school's assessment systems help to ensure that referrals for extra support are made quickly and that intervention programmes are effective. As a result, these pupils progress rapidly from their starting points.
- Leaders ensure that the funding that the school receives for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively. Carefully planned intervention programmes are provided, and the funding is also used to ensure that pastoral support is available for those pupils who need it. As a result of this support, disadvantaged pupils make good progress in their learning and in developing their social skills.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness exceptionally well. Pupils cooperate well and regularly show tolerance and respect for each other. They learn about major world religions and different beliefs. The school's work is underpinned by the trust's 'Six Values', which are closely linked to the British values of tolerance and democracy.
- Staff and parents are fully supportive of the school's leadership team. All of those who responded to the Ofsted surveys said that the school was well led and managed. All members of staff also said that they enjoy working at the school and feel well supported.
- Leaders track pupils' progress well in the core subjects of English and mathematics. Swift and effective action is taken to help pupils to catch up should they be falling behind. Teachers are proactive and identify actions to strengthen pupils' progress. Disadvantaged pupils benefit from targeted support from their teachers and teaching assistants.
- A well-planned curriculum is in place, and the topics chosen are engaging and develop pupils' curiosity and interests. Effective teaching means that pupils generally make strong progress in the wider curriculum. However, there was some variation in the quality of work seen in different year groups as not all middle leaders are playing an effective role in monitoring and improving their subject areas. Leaders have good plans in place to ensure that there is greater consistency across all subjects.
- The additional physical education and sport funding has been used to broaden the range of sporting activities provided for pupils, both in school hours and after school.

Funding is also used to fund coaches who work alongside staff in lessons to support their professional development.

- Leaders make good use of external support. For example, the local authority has been effective in supporting the school's improvement by providing regular support and challenge to school leaders. Staff also benefit from working with colleagues, from within the trust, in training sessions and when undertaking moderation of pupils' work.

Governance of the school

- Governance is a strength. The skills and expertise that governors and trustees bring to the school have been a key element of its success. Governors have developed a good level of understanding about how the school works and how successful it is in meeting the trust's distinctive vision.
- The governing body has a very clear plan for how it wishes the school to develop during the expansion of pupil numbers. Records of governors' meetings show that they regularly challenge school leaders and provide effective support for school improvement.
- Governors and trustees keep a careful overview of the school's appraisal system and manage the appraisal of the headteacher's work very well. Governors also ensure that pupil premium and physical education and sport funding is well spent to benefit pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school provides a nurturing environment in which every pupil is valued and well cared for. Staff know pupils well and are alert to any changes in pupils that may indicate a concern. Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They know that there is always a trusted adult who they can speak to if they are worried about something.
- The policies and practices which the school has developed to keep pupils safe are rigorous. For example, records of the checks that are made on adults who work at the school are detailed and thorough.
- Staff have received appropriate training for their roles and are fully aware of the current child-protection requirements. They understand the school's systems and how to raise any concerns that they might have about a pupil's welfare.
- Governors routinely check the school's safeguarding records and procedures to ensure that the school fulfils all statutory safeguarding requirements. They are well supported by the wider federation to ensure that the records are fit for purpose.
- The school's leaders work closely with parents and other agencies, where necessary, to ensure that pupils and their families receive the support that they need. Safeguarding records are detailed and referrals are followed up promptly and are well documented.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The effective development of pupils' speaking and listening skills is at the heart of the school's success. During lessons, teachers are highly effective at using questioning to establish what pupils know and where there are gaps in their learning. Teachers encourage pupils to respond fully when answering questions, providing both time and support where necessary. This strategy is particularly helpful to the many pupils who are in the early stages of learning English and helps to ensure that they make strong progress in developing their language skills.
- The teaching of reading is another of the school's strengths. Pupils rapidly develop their early reading skills and there are regular assessments of the progress that pupils are making, in order to ensure that nobody falls behind. Older pupils who met with one of the inspectors during this inspection read widely and often. They demonstrated a good knowledge of children's authors and different book types.
- The teaching of mathematics is effective and ensures that pupils make at least good progress. Teaching is well planned and pupils work hard to develop a good understanding of number and other aspects of mathematics. Teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to use their knowledge and skills to investigate and solve problems.
- Pupils' progress in writing, though typically strong, is sometimes limited by their understanding of grammar, punctuation and spelling. In some of the books that inspectors saw during this inspection, basic errors in spelling and grammar continued over a series of lessons, resulting in slower progress for these pupils. Presentation and handwriting are also weak in some classes.
- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. They provide good support, both in class and when working with individuals or small groups of pupils on intervention programmes.
- The good quality of teaching helps all pupils to make strong progress; this includes disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities. Leaders have established specialised intervention programmes tailored to meet the needs of specific groups. For example, those in the early stages of learning English receive well-focused support alongside their classmates. These interventions improve pupils' confidence and fluency when working independently.
- The school provides regular workshops for parents to explain how key subjects are taught and to encourage parental involvement in their children's learning. Parents are highly appreciative of these opportunities. They also say that they are kept well informed about the progress that their children make at school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Leaders have successfully created an extremely positive ethos at Unity Primary School.

Parents and pupils value highly the warm welcome they always receive and staff are proud to work at the school. Pupils quickly learn to respect each other and look after their school environment. Throughout the school, there are close friendships and pupils regularly demonstrate high levels of care and consideration for others.

- There is a highly effective focus on pupils' well-being and emotional health. Staff are quick to spot signs of any concern and take immediate action to provide support. Pupils who spoke with inspectors said that they are extremely well looked after and feel completely safe in school. Pupils know that they can speak to any member of staff if they have any concerns.
- The school is committed to working with families, and staff regularly provide courses for parents to help them support children's learning. All of the parents who responded to Parent View, and those spoken to during this inspection, were highly supportive of the school. They said that their children are well looked after, safe and taught well. One parent wrote, 'My child has made huge progress and we couldn't be happier with the school.'
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of the different forms of bullying. They told one of the inspectors that, on the few occasions bullying occurs, staff deal with it quickly. Pupils know that name-calling, use of inappropriate language or any form of discrimination are not acceptable.
- School leaders, staff and governors ensure that high-quality support is provided for all pupils, irrespective of their backgrounds or needs. For example, pupils who find it difficult to cope in class, or to build positive relationships with other pupils, receive precisely targeted support which is highly effective in supporting their emotional development and helping them to overcome their barriers to their learning. As a result, pupils who are in danger of exclusion are instead supported to become successful learners.
- Pupils spoken to during this inspection demonstrated an excellent understanding about how to stay safe, when playing in the local community, and when using the internet. They said that they get regular reminders about the importance of not sharing personal information while online.
- Pupils enjoy their lessons and have positive attitudes to learning. However, some pupils do not take enough pride in their work. In some of the books seen during this inspection, handwriting showed little sign of improvement over time and presentation was poor.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The strong relationships that are nurtured in school help to ensure that pupils conduct themselves well in lessons and around school. Pupils are polite and have good manners. They play happily together and ensure that no one is left out.
- The relationships pupils have with adults, and with each other, are warm and trusting. As a result, pupils enjoy coming to school, as can be seen in their much-improved attendance this year. The school has worked successfully with parents to improve the

attendance of pupils who are regularly absent from school. However, overall attendance remains below the national average.

- The school works well with a small number of pupils who sometimes exhibit challenging behaviour. School leaders have developed effective pastoral systems and staff provide teaching programmes aimed at helping these pupils to learn how to manage their emotions more effectively.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Although overall attainment at the end of key stage 1 was below the national average in 2017, current pupils are making strong progress in English and mathematics. These improvements are a reflection of the effective leadership of teaching and learning by the headteacher and senior leaders.
- The proportion of children who achieved a good level of development in the early years was just below the national average in 2017. However, the school's assessments show that this year children are making stronger progress.
- School leaders have taken effective action to improve the teaching of phonics. A more structured approach has been adopted, and this has had a positive impact on the development of children's early reading skills. By the time that they start in Year 1, pupils are now well prepared to build on their phonics knowledge and develop into successful readers.
- Effective teaching has led to improvements to standards in reading across the school. Regular, detailed assessments are made of pupils' progress, and good support is provided for pupils who struggle in key stage 1. As a result, by the time they reach Year 3, the majority of pupils are able to read age-appropriate texts fluently.
- Outcomes in mathematics are improving. The work seen in books shows that most pupils are making strong progress and a greater proportion of pupils are working at age-related expectations.
- Pupils generally make good progress in writing. However, progress is not as strong in some classes, as pupils do not develop their knowledge and understanding of grammar, punctuation and spelling quickly enough. Untidy handwriting and poor presentation also limit the progress that some pupils make.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities achieve well. Leaders track pupils' progress closely and ensure that high-quality support is provided and pupils' needs are met. The effective use of pupil premium funding also helps to ensure that disadvantaged pupils progress well.
- Many pupils start at the school at different times during the school year and often at the early stages of learning English. Staff make careful and accurate assessments of these pupils and leaders ensure that good systems are in place to support their transition into school. Effective teaching and good support from teaching assistants help these pupils to settle in well and make good progress. The quality of work seen in pupils' books, and the school's own records of pupils' progress, showed an improving picture across all areas. However, senior leaders are aware that, in some classes, pupils could be challenged even further in subjects across the wider curriculum.

Early years provision

Good

- Many pupils start in the Nursery and Reception classes with skills and abilities which are below those typically found. There are good arrangements in place to help children settle in to school life, and careful assessments help to ensure that teaching is well planned and helps children to move on in their learning at a good pace.
- The environment is rich in language, and regular opportunities are provided for children to test out their speaking and listening skills. Children talked confidently to inspectors, and each other, about what they were learning. One child explained to an inspector that, 'the patella is your kneecap'. Another child, who had just finished a 'wake up and shake up' exercise, was heard to say to her friend, 'My heart is beating faster.'
- Phonics is taught effectively in the Nursery and Reception classes. An inspector saw Nursery children enthusiastically sounding out letters while accurately incorporating the associated movement to music. A good selection of books is also available to encourage children to develop a love of reading.
- Children's behaviour is good. Children feel safe as a result of secure relationships with teaching staff and each other. Routines are well established and children thrive in a safe and secure environment. Home-school links are well established. Parents are welcomed into school each morning and are expected to engage fully with their child's education. This strong relationship is contributing well to the academic progress and social development that children make.
- The number of children in the early years unit is growing steadily. Since September 2017, the unit has incorporated provision for two- and three-year-olds. The staff who work with these children provide regular opportunities for them to plan, talk and explore. Staff also use story time well to develop children's communication skills.
- The early years is well led and managed. Leaders make regular checks on the quality of teaching and learning. They have a clear grasp of where there are strengths and where further work is required. For example, leaders recognise that improvements need to be made to the assessments that are made on two- and three-year-olds and have planned training for staff so that the expertise in the Reception and Nursery class can be shared.
- The early years leader places great value on developing effective partnerships with parents. Staff take every opportunity to share information about individual children's progress and achievements. Parents spoken to were full of praise for the staff in the early years. They appreciate the strong links between home and school and the warm welcome that they receive at school every morning.
- Arrangements for safeguarding in the early years classes are effective. Children are taught how to keep themselves safe from a very early age. There are no breaches of statutory welfare requirements.

School details

Unique reference number	141966
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	10046604

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	2 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	249
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Garry Shewan
Headteacher	Jude Lee
Telephone number	0161 871 2614
Website	www.unitycommunityprimary.com
Email address	admin@unitycommunityprimary.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school opened in September 2015 and moved to its current setting in March 2017. Nursery provision was extended to include two-year-olds from September 2017.
- Children in the early years are taught in three classes. Children below statutory school age are taught in two part-time classes. These children are taught in single age groups, one with two- and three-year-olds and the other with three- and four-year-olds. The full-time Reception class teaches children who are four and five years of age.
- At the time of this inspection, there were only Year 3 and Year 4 pupils in key stage 2.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- A much-higher proportion of pupils leave or join the school at other than the usual times.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is around the national average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan or a

statement of special educational needs is below the national average.

- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above the national average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching, learning and assessment in all classes. Some of these observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors also scrutinised a wide range of pupils' written work.
- Inspectors observed pupils' conduct at break and lunchtime.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation including school improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings, attendance and behaviour data, safeguarding documents and the school's review of its own performance.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher, a newly qualified teacher and the safeguarding leads. Meetings were also held with members of the governing body, including the chair, and members of the trust.
- One inspector met with a group of older pupils to discuss behaviour. Inspectors also spoke with many other pupils informally.
- An inspector listened to pupils read in Year 2, Year 3 and Year 4. He also spoke with pupils in Year 4 about reading and behaviour.
- An inspector spoke with parents in the playground before school. Inspectors also took account of the 19 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 20 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Paul Tomkow, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Tim Vaughan

Her Majesty's Inspector

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