

Farrington Academy

Archer Road, Farrington, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear SR3 3DJ

Inspection dates

9–10 May 2018

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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Teaching across the school is too variable. Teachers do not plan activities that consistently meet the needs and interests of all pupils. This is particularly the case for the most able pupils.
- Pupils' outcomes across the school are also too variable, as is the quality of work in pupils' books. Pupils are not studying in sufficient depth to be able to achieve consistently well, particularly at the higher standard.
- Recent improvements to the school's curriculum include the provision of far more detail, with links between subjects being much more explicit. However, this curriculum has yet to be fully embedded in all year groups.
- Leaders' action planning identifies the right areas for improvement, but the actions within them are not specific to the improvements desired. As a result, it is difficult for leaders to evaluate their plans accurately.
- Middle leaders are new to post and enthusiastic in their role. However, the effects of their actions have yet to bring about the desired improvements to pupils' achievement.
- Pupils' overall attendance, and particularly that of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, is below the national average. Despite the efforts of leaders, improvements in this aspect are slow.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders, including governors, know the school's strength and weaknesses well. They have a clear understanding of the actions they need to take and demonstrate the capacity to return the school to good quickly.
- Children in the early years get off to a good start in their learning. They acquire early literacy and numeracy skills effectively.
- Teaching in upper key stage 2 is strong. Teachers match activities to pupils' needs and interests effectively. Work in pupils' books shows consistent practice and strengthening progress.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils are respectful and courteous to each other and to visitors. They play a full part in school life.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that the actions within improvement plans are more precisely defined to enable them to be evaluated for impact more accurately
 - developing the role of middle leaders within the school further, so they play a strong role in school improvement
 - embedding improvements to curriculum planning, so subjects are studied in sufficient depth to enable more pupils to reach the higher standards.
- Improve teaching and learning so they are consistently good by:
 - ensuring that recently introduced approaches to the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics are fully embedded in all year groups
 - ensuring that pupils, particularly the most able and disadvantaged most able pupils, receive activities that ask more of them in order to iron out the variability in pupils' outcomes.
- Continue leaders' efforts to improve pupils' attendance, particularly for pupils who are disadvantaged or who have SEN and/or disabilities.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Over the past two school years, the headteacher has managed significant staffing turbulence, most notably among her more experienced middle leaders. As a result, she has had to provide extensive training and support to rebuild this important tier of leadership in the school. While the middle leaders are enthusiastic in their role and have a secure understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their subjects, they are very recently in post. This means that their actions have yet to impact fully on raising pupils' achievement across the school.
- Leaders now know the areas for improvement required and have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They know what actions they intend to take and in what form. However, this level of understanding is not captured in their formal plans. For example, leaders identify improving pupils' outcomes in reading, but the actions listed relate to the process of reviewing pupils' progress rather than the fundamental changes to the teaching of reading that leaders desire. This makes it difficult to evaluate fully the impact of these plans upon improving the quality of teaching in the school.
- Leaders have introduced new approaches to curriculum planning for all subjects, including English and mathematics. This is in response to the disappointing outcomes in reading and writing in 2017. Although the school's curriculum remains topic based, teachers' plans are now far more prescriptive in identifying the specific texts pupils will study and the writing styles they will teach and how they will link these to other subjects. This is leading to a far more coherent approach to curriculum implementation and is ensuring the appropriate coverage and depth of study to meet the requirements of the national curriculum successfully. Leaders acknowledge this needs to be further embedded in all year groups and in all subjects securely.
- Leaders have a detailed programme of monitoring in place to check the work of teachers. Leaders are honest in their feedback and give a flavour of strengths and weaknesses observed. Feedback is constructive and helpful in improving teachers' generic skills. However, it has not focused sufficiently upon quickly embedding the new approaches to teaching. As a result, leaders have an overgenerous view of the quality of teaching and its impact on improving pupils' outcomes.
- The headteacher is passionate about the pupils in her care. She is determined to ensure that all pupils receive the very best educational experience possible. She has relentless energy to do all she can to achieve this. Together with the deputy headteacher, she provides purposeful leadership for the school and has the capacity to quickly return the school to good.
- The special educational needs leader has a strong understanding of the needs of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. She uses the support and advice from external agencies to ensure that the curriculum is well matched to the needs of this group of pupils. This is strengthening the improving progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Additional primary physical education (PE) and sport premium funding is used

effectively. Staff across the school receive support and training from experienced sports coaches to increase their confidence to teach PE. Pupils access a range of after-school activities which supplement the opportunities they receive in core PE lessons. A PE apprentice supports lunchtime clubs and encourages positive play effectively.

- Performance management processes are in place for all staff. All staff receive challenging targets for the rapid improvement in pupils' achievement. Quality training programmes support the process. Those teachers new to the profession feel extremely well supported by leaders in developing their knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Additional funding received for both disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is spent effectively. Leaders know the barriers faced by pupils and adjust and adapt their curriculum accordingly. For both groups, regular attendance at school is a concern for leaders. They have apportioned some of their funding towards an attendance officer to support them in their efforts. However, leaders, including governors, acknowledge that there is still much to do to improve absence rates and this is an ongoing priority for improvement.

Governance of the school

- Governors have a secure understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. This is because of the honest and detailed reporting from the headteacher and from governors' own monitoring visits to the school. The 'headteacher challenge committee' meets regularly to review pupils' progress and to benchmark the quality of teaching and learning in the school.
- The overarching trust board ensures financial propriety. Minutes reflect the level of challenge given to school leaders with respect to spending, particularly of the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Governors are appointed for the skills they bring, which ensures that they are well placed to continue to further support the school moving forward.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders, including governors, have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Detailed checks are completed on anyone wishing to work at the school. Regular training ensures that all staff and governors are aware of their responsibilities in making sure that pupils are kept safe.
- Strong pastoral care ensures that any concerns are reported swiftly, so that vulnerable pupils receive the additional support and advice they need. Strong partnerships with a range of external agencies support leaders' work effectively.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and parents and carers at the school endorse this view. A scrutiny of records showed that any incidents of inappropriate behaviour are reviewed carefully and appropriate actions taken straight away when required. Leaders are considering an electronic system to make the analysis of their records easier.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching is too variable across the school. It is most effective in upper key stage 2, where the work planned for pupils is well matched to their needs and offers pupils challenging activities that make them think hard about their learning. However, this is not consistent across the rest of the school. As a result, leaders have been unable to gain consistently strong progress for pupils, particularly the most able and the most able disadvantaged pupils, in all year groups and all subjects.
- Leaders have introduced a new approach to guided reading across the school. Following analysis of last year's end of key stage 2 test papers, leaders have introduced a more structured approach to these sessions. Teachers place greater emphasis upon ensuring that pupils access a range of stories, both traditional and contemporary, which focus on broadening pupils' vocabulary and securing more advanced reading skills successfully. While this is pleasing, when pupils are not working directly with their teacher, the activities often lack the challenge needed to ensure that pupils make consistently strong progress.
- Leaders have invested heavily in supplementing the reading books for the library and are promoting reading for pleasure across the school successfully. The 'Transformers' boys' reading group was established this school year. Its purpose was to encourage more boys to 'get into books' and read for enjoyment, as girls' achievement in reading was higher than that of boys. The group is highly active and has organised a boys' section in the library, to make choosing a book easier. It supervises additional library sessions at playtimes and runs competitions to promote wider reading. The members of the group are very proud of their work to date and there is evidence that more boys are now accessing the library more frequently.
- The teaching of phonics is effective. Pupils are working at age-appropriate levels and support for disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities is effective. Those pupils heard reading by inspectors were secure in their phonics skills and were able to apply them to read and spell unfamiliar words successfully.
- Leaders have introduced a new approach to the teaching of writing across the school. This begins with pupils reviewing a quality text and then unpicking the important grammatical features that define the style of writing. Pupils are then required to practise those aspects of English grammar and apply them to their own independent piece of writing. In some year groups, this approach is leading to strong improvements in pupils' writing. However, from a detailed review of pupils' books, this is not yet consistent in all year groups. In some cases, pupils make basic errors in punctuation and spelling, which go unchecked by teachers. Leaders acknowledge there is still more to do to achieve the high expectations they require.
- Improvements to the teaching of mathematics, put in place in the previous school year, led to improvements in pupils' outcomes in 2017. Pupils now have access to practical equipment to enable them to better understand mathematical concepts. This is proving particularly helpful for lower-ability pupils to consolidate their learning. Leaders made the decision to group pupils by their ability in Year 5 and Year 6 and this appears to be steadily increasing the proportions of pupils who reach the expected and higher standards. Leaders know there is still more to do to ensure that pupils develop strong reasoning skills and have increasing opportunities to grapple with more demanding

problems than is currently the case.

- The quality of teaching of subjects across the wider curriculum is also variable. Subjects are taught within the context of a topic, for which pupils can determine the aspects of study. Teachers are careful to ensure that pupils' entitlement to the national curriculum is met. However, from work seen in pupils' books, there is limited evidence of pupils studying at the higher standards. For example, in science, there is very limited evidence of pupils undertaking investigations and deepening their understanding of scientific enquiry. This is in keeping with pupils' views shared with inspectors.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and demonstrate a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy. 'Health and Safety Street' is a main school display, which provides pupils with a range of important information to help them stay safe and be healthy.
- Pupils have a good understanding of bullying and all its forms. There have been very few instances of bullying reported to leaders in recent years. A review of leaders' records show that these instances are dealt with in a timely and sensitive manner.
- There is a strong personal and social curriculum which underpins all aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development successfully. Leaders invest heavily in ensuring that pupils' physical and emotional health is given high priority.
- Leaders have appointed an attendance officer to support them in their push for improved attendance. Some improvements were noted in the school's overall attendance for 2017, but improvements remain fragile. A bout of chicken pox at the school means that current figures have declined slightly. Leaders are concerned at the higher rates of absence among disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. There are well-established procedures in place to manage pupils' absence and encourage good attendance. Leaders are continually looking for new ways in which they can improve their attendance figures further. This is a continuing priority for improvement.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Playtimes are lively, friendly occasions where pupils run off energy and play excitedly with each other. The younger pupils have lots of equipment to play with and enjoy working with the school's PE apprentices who encourage their participation in games. This is in contrast to the older pupils, who have much less available to them. For both key stages, a range of healthy snacks are available for pupils to eat during this time.
- There is a strong behaviour code in the school. It is based on a simple set of colour-coded expectations for all pupils. All pupils start each lesson with green for good. Any inappropriate behaviour that requires a red card is dealt with directly by the headteacher. This gives the headteacher a secure understanding of any issues that

may emerge. As a result, there is a calm, purposeful atmosphere in the school and pupils' learning is rarely interrupted by inappropriate behaviour.

- Around the school, pupils' movement between lessons and to and from playtime is calm and orderly. This is because all staff share the same high expectations for pupils to behave well and to be respectful.
- Pupils are well mannered. They are polite and welcoming to each other and to visitors.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' overall outcomes in 2016 were below the national averages for reading, writing and mathematics at the expected and higher standards in both key stages 1 and 2. Improvements were evident in pupils' outcomes at the end of key stage 1 in 2017, which were broadly in line with national averages for these subjects.
- While improvements were evident in pupils' outcomes in mathematics and English spelling, grammar and punctuation at key stage 2, this was not the case for reading and writing. Outcomes in reading declined further on 2016 results, which placed pupils' progress well below the national average. In writing, pupils' progress was below average.
- Although leaders have halted the decline in standards, there remains some variability in pupils' outcomes for those currently in the school. The review of work in pupils' books shows strong progress in some year groups, but this is not yet consistent across the school.
- Outcomes for the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, remain a priority for improvement. In some subjects and some year groups, no pupils are currently working at the higher standard successfully. This is because pupils are not challenged to think hard about their learning and to grapple with more demanding activities consistently. Occasionally, this is because there is an overemphasis on English and mathematics at the expense of developing the deeper knowledge, skills and understanding of other subjects. Leaders recognise that there is more work to do to ensure a more consistent profile of achievement for the most able pupils.
- There is a higher proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged than is the case nationally. Leaders track pupils' progress carefully and identify the differences in learning between disadvantaged pupils and their peers meticulously. There is compelling evidence that, as a result of targeted and focused interventions and support, differences are reducing. While this is encouraging, overall disadvantaged pupils' progress remains as variable as that of their peers. Leaders know they have not yet secured the consistency they desire. In some cases, this is due to lower rates of attendance than leaders expect. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make steady progress from their varying starting points. Leaders use a range of assessment information to capture pupils' progress, no matter how small the steps may be. Support plans are detailed and leaders review them regularly. Targets within the plans reflect pupils' needs accurately and this is clearly identifiable in pupils' books, showing the strong match of provision to need. Despite this, leaders' actions are not leading to rapid progress for this group of pupils because of their higher rates of absence.

Early years provision

Good

- The leader of the early years is only very recently appointed but is highly skilled and knowledgeable. She has wasted no time in raising expectations of what children can achieve and in securing children's rapid progress, particularly in the Reception class. This has immediately halted the slight decline that was beginning to emerge in the number of children achieving a good level of development by the end of Reception.
- She swiftly improved Reception provision to ensure that children's work was appropriately challenging to match their abilities. There are increasingly more adult-led activities, which are securing children's early literacy and numeracy skills. Staff within Reception now focus upon developing children's confidence to work independently of an adult and be ready for learning in Year 1. Although there is still more to do, more children are now achieving a good level of development than was the case in previous years.
- The vast majority of children enter Nursery with skills lower than those typical for their age and stage of development. All children can access 30 hours' free provision regardless of their needs. By the time they start Reception class, some children have accessed up to five terms of nursery education. This means children get off to a good start in all areas of their learning and development.
- Outdoor environments provide a wide range of opportunities for children to access large play equipment and to engage in imaginative and creative play. Adults encourage children to talk and to explore successfully. Adults' questioning probes children's thinking carefully and tackles any misunderstanding effectively. As a result, children enjoy their play and quickly acquire skills in both the prime and specific areas of learning.
- The curriculum inside and outdoors provides a wide range of interesting experiences and challenging activities. This means that children sustain their interest for extended periods of time.
- Children behave well throughout the early years. They adhere to a very simple behaviour code for using kind hands, kind words and kind feet. Children engage in appropriate play because it is well modelled by adults from the start. All welfare arrangements are securely in place.
- Activities are well matched to children's needs and interests. This is because teachers have a good understanding of the learning needs of children and use accurate assessment information to plan effectively. As a result, children make good progress from their generally low starting points.
- The teaching of early phonics is effective and children are encouraged to apply their phonics throughout continuous provision. There are lots of opportunities for pupils to write and record their thoughts during activities outside the discrete lesson.

School details

Unique reference number	139103
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	10047600

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	421
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Rev Jeremy Chadd
Headteacher	Claire McDermott
Telephone number	01915 535994
Website	www.farringdonacademy.co.uk/
Email address	farringdon@inspiremultiacademytrust.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	May 2014

Information about this school

- The school has increased in size since the last inspection and is now larger than the average-sized primary school. It is part of the Inspire Academy Trust.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school serves an area of high deprivation and the proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards for primary schools.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team visited teaching sessions across a range of subjects from Nursery to Year 6. The vast majority of these visits were conducted together with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, governors, representatives of the local authority and the independent school improvement consultant. Inspectors looked at work in pupils' books and spoke to pupils formally and informally about their learning and heard them read.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents provided by the school, including pupils' assessment information, leaders' self-evaluation report and development plans. The school's records relating to safeguarding and child protection were also checked.
- There were 10 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, along with a similar a number of free-text comments. The inspectors took account of these along with the 170 responses to the school's own parental consultation exercise and the 33 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Diane Buckle, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Dom Brown	Ofsted Inspector
Donna Callaghan	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. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email 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.

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, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: 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.

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/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at 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
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2018