

Acre Hall Primary School

Irlam Road, Flixton, Urmston, Manchester M41 6NA

Inspection dates

4–5 December 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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher, governors and trustees have ensured that the school provides pupils with a good standard of education.
- School leaders receive effective support from the Dunham Trust. Leaders have created clear and precise development plans. The evaluation of the school's effectiveness is accurate.
- Good teaching, learning and assessment enable pupils in all year groups to make good progress in English and mathematics.
- Sometimes, the most able pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their writing in depth across the curriculum. Occasionally, the younger pupils in key stage 2 do not apply their knowledge of phonics in their spelling.
- School attendance has improved significantly. However, the number of pupils who are persistently absent remains above the national average.
- Parents and carers are very supportive of the school, they say that their children are well cared for and safe.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are well-mannered and articulate. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe.
- School leaders have implemented a new curriculum. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop subject-specific skills in science and history.
- Pupils have a secure understanding of equality and diversity. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is well developed. Pupils are prepared effectively for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils are competent mathematicians. They apply a wide range of mathematical skills to different situations.
- Children in the early years make good progress. They enjoy many opportunities to develop their communication and language skills.
- Pupils attending the resourced provision and those across the school with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make good progress in a wide range of subjects.
- Governors have ensured that the pupil premium has been spent effectively so that disadvantaged pupils make good progress in a wide range of subjects.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and thereby outcomes, by:
 - ensuring that the most able pupils are presented with challenging writing across the curriculum
 - ensuring that the younger pupils in key stage 2 apply their phonics knowledge to their spelling
 - ensure that pupils have more opportunities to develop their subject-specific skills in science and history
 - building on the effective action taken to improve attendance and continue to cut rates of persistent absence further.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher, staff and governors have ensured that the school provides a good standard of education to pupils. The school is a vibrant and exciting learning environment. Pupils benefit from good teaching, learning and assessment in all year groups. They make good progress in English and mathematics.
- The Dunham multi-academy trust provides effective support to the headteacher. Senior members of the board of trustees and the local governing body know the school well. The headteacher and senior leaders from the trust regularly review the quality of pupils' work alongside information gained from pupils' assessments.
- The evaluation of the school's effectiveness is accurate and honest. Leaders have created a detailed school development plan that clearly sets out relevant improvement priorities. Leaders establish close links between the priorities identified in the school development plan and the self-evaluation. They know what needs to be done to improve the school further.
- Attendance has improved this year when compared to the same time last year. Leaders have identified a need to focus their attention on attendance. As a result, they have put several effective measures in place. For example, a school well-being adviser has been employed to work with hard-to-reach and vulnerable families. Despite improvements to school attendance, the rate of pupils who are persistently absent remains higher than the national average.
- Parents speak highly of the school. Those that spoke to the inspectors and shared their views through the Ofsted survey were positive about the leadership and management of the school. The vast majority of parents said that they would recommend this school.
- Subject leaders for English work together to monitor the quality of pupils' work across the different key stages. Subject leaders who are less experienced are supported well by more experienced staff. Leaders have a clear understanding of the quality of writing across the school. They have put plans in place to improve the taught writing process. Currently, the most able pupils do not have opportunities to extend their writing across a range of curriculum areas and the younger pupils in key stage 2 do not consistently build on their prior phonics knowledge and apply it well to their spelling.
- The leadership team for mathematics has ensured that pupils continue to make good progress. There is a consistent approach to the teaching of mathematics across the school. Leaders regularly hold discussions with teachers. They encourage teachers to share good practice at staff meetings. Leaders make frequent checks on the quality of pupils' work to ensure that mathematics continues to be a strength of the school.
- Leaders have recently implemented a new Acre Hall curriculum. From their checking exercises, leaders identified that pupils were not developing skills specific to subjects well enough. As a result, they adapted their planning to focus on making stronger links between subjects.
- The curriculum provides pupils with many opportunities to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. Aspirations among the pupils are high. The

curriculum is further enriched through many trips and extra-curricular experiences. Pupils challenge themselves and develop physically and emotionally, they confidently discuss diversity and equality. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

- The role of subject leaders is well developed across the school. Several subject leaders have recently attained national qualifications in leadership. All subject leaders benefit from regular professional development training. For example, the leader for Spanish has worked hard to raise the profile of modern foreign languages across the school. Five teachers recently visited Spain to develop their subject knowledge. Teachers said that this was effective training that has increased their confidence and enabled them to deliver better Spanish lessons.
- The leaders of the science, technology, mathematics and engineering (STEM) team have made effective links with a local high school and the British Space Agency. This has been effective in improving the range of science taught, although the attention on skills is only just emerging.
- Leadership of SEND is good. Pupils in the resourced provision and pupils with SEND across the school make good progress. Leaders work alongside several partner agencies and ensure that pupils receive the support they need.
- Additional funding through the pupil premium and the physical education (PE) and sport premium funding is used effectively. Disadvantaged pupils make good progress across the curriculum. Pupils benefit from expert teaching in PE, and participation in a number of sporting events within the trust and the local area helps pupils develop sporting skills and confidence. Teachers receive regular professional development from working alongside the specialist coaches.

Governance of the school

- The local governing body is overseen by the board of trustees. Together, they have ensured that relationships with the school are strong. Governors provide effective support and challenge to the headteacher. Governors and trustees have a thorough understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development.
- Governors ensure that additional funding is spent effectively to support pupils and staff. They have worked with school leaders to improve attendance through the employment of a school well-being adviser. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities well.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have created a strong culture of safeguarding at Acre Hall. All members of staff have received up-to-date safeguarding basic awareness training. All members of staff have also received training in 'Prevent' duty, to help them spot potential signs of radicalisation. The headteacher is trained in safer recruitment. Members of staff are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities.
- All checks on the suitability of adults to work in the school are thorough. The school site ensures that pupils are safe. School leaders work with a number of partner agencies, including children's social care, to ensure that pupils and their families

receive effective support. School leaders keep meticulous records of safeguarding concerns.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Strong teaching, learning and assessment are securing good progress for all groups of pupils across the curriculum.
- Teachers use assessment information well to plan exciting activities that match the wide and varied needs of pupils in the school, including disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. Sometimes, the most able pupils are not presented with challenging writing opportunities across the curriculum.
- Support staff are used effectively throughout the school. Teaching assistants provide suitable support to pupils and ensure that they make good progress. Teaching assistants work alongside teachers seamlessly to deliver small-group sessions in English and mathematics.
- Teachers challenge pupils successfully in mathematics and encourage them to work things out for themselves. Teachers ensure that work is suitably matched to the ability of pupils. Teachers encourage pupils to reflect carefully on their learning. As a result, pupils make good progress.
- The teaching of phonics is good. Pupils enjoy the interactive nature of the activities and engage well with the teachers. Colourful resources and displays around the classroom enable children in the early years and key stage 1 to develop and apply their phonics skills successfully. Pupils apply their phonics skills effectively to their reading. However, these systems are not consistently carried into key stage 2. Often, younger pupils in key stage 2 make errors in their spelling and do not apply their phonics knowledge well enough to their written work.
- Teachers promote reading well across the school. Pupils in each year group have access to high-quality reading materials. Pupils who read to the inspectors had books that were matched well to their ability and provided appropriate challenge. Pupils said that they enjoyed reading.
- The teaching of writing is good across the school. A consistent approach to teaching the skills of writing has led to all groups of pupils making good progress. Handwriting routines develop at an early age and become progressively consistent higher up the school. Pupils' presentation of their work is of a high standard; they take pride in their written work.
- Teachers' subject knowledge of writing is strong. They provide pupils with meaningful opportunities to write. For example, pupils in the resourced provision carefully edit their work about planting trees in the school grounds. The pupils will go on to submit their writing to Blue Peter once they have completed a final edit. Pupils enjoy writing for real purposes. However, sometimes, teachers do not provide the most able pupils with enough opportunities to develop their writing across a wide range of curriculum areas.
- Teachers benefit from the opportunity to work closely in key stage teams. They look at samples of work together to check the quality and consistency of standards across the school. As well as this, teachers make checks on samples of work with other schools in the trust and with other schools in the Trafford area. Teachers say that this helps them

have a good understanding of standards of writing in their school and it helps them to check the accuracy of their own assessments.

- Teaching of music is effective and secures good outcomes for pupils. Pupils sing enthusiastically in two-part harmonies. As part of the plan to improve subject-specific skills, pupils benefit from specialist teaching in PE, computing and Spanish. Teachers work alongside these specialist teachers to develop their own skills in these subject areas.
- In history and science, effective teaching, learning and assessment are ensuring that pupils' understanding and knowledge are secure. However, as part of the new curriculum plan, pupils are beginning to benefit from more opportunities to develop subject-specific skills.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Most pupils are confident and articulate. They are keen to discuss their work, have positive attitudes and show a determination to do well.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe while on the internet. For example, they spoke about how they can flag up concerns to adults if they come across inappropriate material.
- Pupils are aware of the impact on others of bullying, poor behaviour and name-calling.
- Aspirations among the pupils are high. Leaders use initiatives, such as the careers fair for Year 6 pupils, successfully. Through a wide range of assemblies and work covered in the curriculum, pupils have a good understanding of equality and diversity. They know that all family types are different. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- School leaders provide many enrichment opportunities through the curriculum to promote pupils' physical, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, they can represent the school in netball, football, cricket, rounders and swimming. Those who do not wish to compete enjoy the diverse range of extra-curricular activities on offer. For example, film club, dance or dodgeball. Older pupils enjoy the opportunity to participate in massed choir events, and residential visits focusing on outdoor adventurous activities.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils work well and play happily together. There is a harmonious atmosphere at the school which is reinforced by positive relationships between the pupils and the staff. During lessons, pupils concentrate on their learning. Established routines in each class ensure that pupils remain focused to do their best.
- Pupils are respectful of one another and value the views and opinions of each other.

Pupils said that behaviour in the school is good and incidents of poor behaviour are very rare. They said that teachers are fair.

- Pupils' attendance has been poor historically. However, the attendance of pupils in school this year has significantly improved when compared with the same period last year. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has fallen, but it still remains higher than the national average.
- Pupils are sensitive to the needs of others. They are aware of the significant number of children in the school with SEND. Pupils demonstrate high levels of support and inclusivity towards one another.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Due to the significant number of pupils with SEND in the resourced provision and those pupils with SEND in the school, published data needs to be treated with caution. This data does not reflect the complexity of the needs of pupils and the progress that pupils with SEND make. Pupils with SEND make good progress in English and mathematics as a result of carefully planned teaching, learning and assessment.
- Provisional data for 2018 shows that pupils' progress at the end of key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics was good. Pupils did much better in reading and mathematics than they did in writing.
- In 2018, pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics was lower than that of other pupils nationally. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the phonics screening check in Year 1 was in line with the national average. Children in the early years and pupils in key stage 1 apply their phonics skills well to their written work and to their reading. Work that inspectors looked at in key stage 1 pupils' English and mathematics books indicates that pupils make good progress.
- The school's own assessment information and work in pupils' books indicate that all groups of pupils make good progress across the curriculum. However, the progress of the most able writers is restricted when they do not have enough opportunities to work at higher standards and extend their writing skills across the curriculum. Sometimes, the younger pupils in key stage 2 do not spell correctly because they do not apply their phonics skills when spelling unfamiliar words.
- Pupils' knowledge of science is developing well. Sometimes, their ability to apply their scientific skills to show deeper levels of understanding is limited by the curriculum. Leaders provide many enrichment activities to deepen pupils' thinking and relate their scientific experience to real-life concepts. For example, during a recent topic about space, pupils engaged in a skype call with Major Tim Peeke. School leaders worked with the British Space Agency to bring rocks from the moon to school for pupils to see first-hand.
- In history and geography, pupils develop a deep understanding of the world they live in. Interesting topics, such as 'Can I make it rain?' and 'Extreme earth', tap into their innate curiosity. Work seen in pupils' books is well presented. Pupils are sometimes limited in their opportunities to develop historical enquiry skills in enough detail.
- Leaders use additional funds well to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make good

progress, similar to that of their peers. In 2018, provisional data shows that these pupils made good progress in writing and stronger progress in reading and mathematics. Evidence seen in pupils' books shows that disadvantaged pupils make good progress across the curriculum.

- Across the school, pupils have developed a love of reading. Vibrant classroom environments, displays and book corners encourage pupils to read across a range of curriculum areas. Pupils make good progress and have a good understanding of a wide range of popular authors. These reading skills, combined with good progress across a range of subjects, ensure that pupils are prepared for the next stages of their education.

Early years provision

Good

- Effective leadership in the early years has ensured that children in the Nursery and Reception classes make good progress.
- Detailed policies and risk assessments ensure that children are safe. All safeguarding measures are met in the early years.
- Leaders complete detailed assessments of the children on entry to the Reception. A significant number of children enter the Reception class with skills below those that are typical for their age. Despite this, children make good progress during their time in the early years.
- Leaders have identified that children's skills in communication and speaking are low when they enter school. They have addressed this well by ensuring that the early years classroom and outdoor learning environment provide children with opportunities to engage in exciting activities that encourage them to talk about their activities. For example, while threading beads, children chat with each other about their choice of colours and shapes.
- Teaching is effective and captures children's imagination. They enjoy listening to stories and engaging in role play. Children listen closely to the story of the big bad wolf. This leads to building different houses, and they enjoy blowing the houses down as part of their role play.
- Opportunities to develop writing are evident across the early years. Leaders have placed a significant emphasis on the development of fine motor skills. Children enjoy painting, drawing, and making marks as they start to write across the different areas of learning.
- In mathematics, children apply their skills to sorting pine cones using tweezers. While developing their fine motor skills, they place the cones into a set of balance scales and discuss mathematical terms, such as 'heavier' and 'lighter'.
- Children apply their phonics skills well to a wide range of activities. Leaders have immersed the children in language through colourful displays and prompts around the room. Children enjoy finding things out for themselves. Children in the early years have developed good reading habits. They talk with increasing confidence about the books they have read.
- Relationships between adults and children in the early years are strong. Adults skilfully

interact with the children and encourage good speaking and listening habits. Adults provide support to engage the children and keep them motivated in their learning.

- The behaviour of the children in the early years is good. Children demonstrate respect towards one another. For example, in the outdoor area, children wait patiently to be the next in line to ride a tricycle.
- Leaders have ensured that they have strong links with parents. Parents are kept informed about the progress of their children via electronic learning journals. As well as this, leaders have started weekly stay and play sessions for parents to attend. Prior to starting in the Nursery, staff visit each child in their home.
- Due to the good provision in the early years, children are well prepared to move on to key stage 1.

School details

Unique reference number	138977
Local authority	Trafford
Inspection number	10053329

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	305
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	David Vanstone
Headteacher	Ashlea White
Telephone number	0161 748 4356
Website	www.acrehall.trafford.sch.uk
Email address	admin@acrehall.trafford.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	20–21 January 2015

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Dunham multi-academy trust.
- The headteacher is supported in her role by members of the board of trustees.
- The school has a local governing body that reports to the multi-academy trust board of trustees.
- The school has a 30-place resourced provision of three classes that caters for pupils with social, communication and language difficulties and pupils identified as having autism spectrum disorder.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is higher than the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching, learning and assessment in each year group, including joint observation with the headteacher.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in mathematics and science, and writing samples from across the wider curriculum.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read in the classes that they visited and heard them read formally.
- Inspectors held formal and informal meetings with pupils during the inspection.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, at lunchtimes and when moving around the school.
- Inspectors considered the 17 comments received via the free-text facility and the 27 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. They scrutinised the 18 responses to the staff survey and the 108 responses to the pupil survey.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders and subject leaders.
- The lead inspector met with members of the local governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The lead inspector met with the chief operations officer and chair of the board of trustees.

Inspection team

John Donald, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Eithne Proffitt

Ofsted Inspector

Joan Williamson

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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