

Gusford Community Primary School

Sheldrake Drive, Ipswich, IP2 9LQ

Inspection dates 19–20 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement.

- Leaders have not established consistently good teaching, and hence learning, across the academy.
- Disadvantaged pupils are not making sufficient progress. The gaps in their learning compared to others are not closing fast enough.
- The most-able pupils are not always challenged and extended as much as they could be. Lower attainers, often boys find work difficult at times.
- Progress in writing is slower than it should be. Pupils' handwriting and spelling are particularly weak, especially for pupils in Key Stage 2.
- The school has a huge amount of data and information from self-evaluation but these are not used as effectively as they might be by leaders.
- Overuse of worksheets in some classes limits the development of pupils' writing through subjects across the curriculum.
- Many pupils have not yet developed the skills to manage their own behaviour. Some become distracted if they find the work uninteresting.
- Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage requires improvement. Not all children make consistently good progress. In particular, lower attainers tend to develop their skills and knowledge more slowly than others.
- Adults are not used consistently well in lessons to support pupils, and children in early years. They sometimes provide too much help or not enough.
- Staff have not all had up-to-date training in preventing extremism.

The school has the following strengths

- Academy leaders are checking the quality of teaching and learning, including the quality of marking and assessment, regularly and robustly.
- The leadership team has established a clear sense of direction. Hence, all staff and governors, know the top priorities for the academy.
- The academy sponsor provides good support that has helped to secure key improvements.
- Governors have a good grasp of the academy's strengths and weaknesses. They are actively engaged in overseeing its work.
- Pupils are polite and helpful. They move around the academy in a calm and orderly manner. Pupils feel safe and are kept safe, in the academy.
- The academy promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively.
- The literacy programme being used in the academy is having a positive impact on improving pupils' reading skills.
- Pupils, including children in the early years are making good progress in learning the sounds that letters make.

Information about this inspection

- This was a no-notice inspection.
- The inspection team carried out 21 lesson observations, three of which were conducted jointly with the headteacher. The inspectors also made a number of shorter visits to lessons in order to gain evidence of the quality of support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, governors, subject leaders, other staff and a representative from the Active Learning Trust, the academy sponsor.
- They spoke informally to pupils in lessons and around the academy as well as holding more formal discussions with representative groups of pupils from Key Stages 1 and 2.
- A member of the inspection team also listened to a sample of Year 1 and 2 pupils reading and talked to them about their reading habits as well as the books they were reading.
- In planning and carrying out the inspection, the inspection team took account of the 93 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View).
- The inspection team took account of 73 Ofsted questionnaire returns completed by staff.
- Members of the team observed the work of the academy. They looked at: the academy's self-evaluation summary, the improvement plan, a range of policies and procedures, documents relating to the work of the governing body and the arrangements for ensuring that students are safeguarded. Documentation reviewed included data relating to pupils' attainment and progress, records of behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Gulshanbir Kayembe, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Sharon Wilson	Additional Inspector
Terence Flitman	Additional Inspector
Simon Harbrow	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Gusford Primary School became an academy on the 1st August 2013.
- The academy is much larger than most primary schools.
- Most of the pupils are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their first language. A small number are from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. Some of these pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the academy receives the pupil premium is above the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding for looked after children and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- In 2014, the academy did not meet the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of pupils by the end of Key Stage 2.
- About a third of the children in the academy's full-time Reception classes have attended its Nursery part time. The remaining children come from a variety of other pre-schools and nurseries locally.
- Since its conversion, the academy has increased the size of the leadership team to include two assistant headteachers. Three of the four phase (key stage) leaders are new to role.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good by making sure that:
 - adults are always deployed well to support pupils in lessons, including children in the early years
 - the most-able pupils are always stretched and extended as much as possible
 - overuse of worksheets does not limit pupils' writing in subjects across the curriculum
 - work given to lower-attaining pupils, including children in early years, is set at the right level for them and that they complete enough of it.
- Enable all pupils to make good progress, especially in writing, by:
 - improving the spelling and handwriting of pupils in Key Stage 2
 - making sure that different groups of pupils make equally good progress
 - improving the provision for lower attainers in early years so that they make greater progress
 - helping pupils who find it difficult to maintain full attention, or who give up too easily to develop their ability to focus better and to be more persistent in completing work.
- Develop the leadership of the academy by:
 - ensuring all staff receive up-to-date training in aspects of safeguarding relating to preventing extremism
 - using and presenting the findings from monitoring and self-evaluation activities more effectively
 - developing the skills of subject and other leaders in analysing data in more depth

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The leadership and management require improvement because academy leaders, while securing some improvements, have not yet established consistently good teaching and learning across the academy.
- Gaps in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and others, both in the academy and nationally, have not closed or narrowed sufficiently. Leaders' evaluation of the impact of pupil premium funding on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils is not sharp enough.
- The achievement of different groups, such as boys and girls is inconsistent. There is more to do to secure equality of opportunity in the outcomes of pupils. However, the academy makes sure that any discriminatory behaviour is not tolerated and is dealt with effectively.
- The academy has considerable data and information from a wide range of monitoring activities. These are not used as well as they could be to help leaders ensure they have a sharp enough focus on the areas for improvement. Consequently, the school improvement plan is too detailed. It also lacks clear steps for success that are focused on the difference that key actions should make to pupils.
- The headteacher, supported by the leadership team has established a positive atmosphere in the academy. This is contributing to some improvements in teaching and behaviour. Staff work co-operatively together and have a clear understanding of the overarching priorities for development: for example, everyone, including governors, know that improving writing, especially boys' writing is a high priority.
- Middle leaders, such as phase and subject leaders, are being supported well to develop their roles. They are effective in using data to identify pupils who are not performing well and organising additional support to help them to catch-up. They are less skilled in analysing data to identify patterns in the achievement of different groups of pupils across the academy. Nonetheless, the current development and use of middle leaders, along with additions to the senior leadership team, have increased the academy's capacity for further improvement.
- The academy's newly developed curriculum is being implemented reasonably well and is helping pupils to develop skills and understanding across a wide range of subjects. The programme for teaching literacy skills is particularly successful in helping pupils to improve their reading. The programme has been adapted this year to promote better writing but this has not had full impact yet.
- The academy provides pupils with a good range of clubs, trips and visits. Pupils' social skills are developed well through these. Pupils also have good opportunities to learn about other cultures and to reflect on important ideas about the world as well as their own work. They are being well-prepared for a life in modern Britain.
- The academy is making good use of the primary physical education and sport premium. This has encouraged greater take-up of sporting activities after school as well as enabling pupils to experience a wide range of sports. External coaches have helped staff to develop their own coaching skills and provide pupils with expert training.
- The academy sponsor provides good support to the academy. This has had a positive impact and helped to accelerate the speed of improvement. Teachers' access to good quality support and professional development is helping them to improve their skills. Good links with local schools help staff to learn from others.
- The academy's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are effective. Procedures are clear and staff understand what they should do if they have a child protection concern. Not all staff have received up-to-date training in aspects of safeguarding relating to preventing extremism.
- The leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage has established good links with parents and carers. The academy's family engagement team has had a good impact on establishing relationships and helping

parents and carers to support their children's education.

■ The governance of the school:

- The academy sponsor undertook a review of governance arrangements when the school became an academy. It has strengthened governance through development and training and by placing a number of its trustees on the local governing body. Consequently, governors are developing their roles well. They have a good understanding of the academy's data and performance, and know what the quality of teaching is like. Governors know that the pupil premium is not having enough impact on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. They have already indicated that they would like an external review of their role in improving this. The governing body is becoming skilled at challenging school leaders to improve further and understands how teachers' performance is managed. It has clear processes for tackling underperformance and rewarding good performance.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. This is because many pupils are not yet able to manage their own behaviour without staff support or input. Some pupils, especially lower attainers give up too easily and lack the resilience to tackle more difficult problems or challenging work.
- In lessons, pupils lose focus if they are required to listen for too long. This includes in the early years. However, most of the time pupils respond quickly to requests from staff to behave well or to be more attentive. Staff follow the behaviour policy effectively.
- Records and behaviour logs indicate that pupils are becoming better at behaving well. Most pupils typically behave well so that disruption to lessons as a result of bad behaviour is rare. Most pupils are keen to learn and have positive views about school. They play happily with one another during break and lunchtimes and generally get on well with one another. Relationships with adults are good.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement. This is because some technical aspects of safeguarding are not as rigorously checked as they could be. Staff have yet to have training on some aspects of safeguarding such as the national 'prevent' strategy to tackle threats such as extremism.
- The academy looks after pupils with care and ensures that they are safe in school. Parents and carers agree that their children are kept safe. Staff are well-briefed about the procedures that they must follow to protect children from abuse. All staff have indicated that they have read key documents that they are required to read by law. New staff are thoroughly checked to ensure they are suitable to work with children.
- Bullying and prejudice-based incidents, such as racist incidents are rare. The academy deals with these effectively and pupils are confident that they can talk to staff about any concerns and that staff will deal with these.
- Pupils are taught about how to keep themselves safe on the internet as well as how to deal with issues such as bullying and name-calling.
- Attendance is checked rigorously The family engagement team follow up any absence quickly. Attendance has improved and is close to national averages. The academy is using a wide range of approaches to encourage and support parents and carers to bring their children to the academy every day. It is now doing more work with pupils to encourage them to attend more regularly.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching is not yet consistently good across the academy, including in the early years. Consequently, pupils' learning experiences are variable and their progress uneven.
- Evidence from pupils' books and lessons indicates that the most-able pupils are not always challenged enough and that work is, at times too easy for them. Books also show that lower attainers find some of the work they are given too hard and do not always complete enough of it.
- Overuse of worksheets do not encourage pupils to think deeply or widely enough about their work. Nor do they develop pupils' ability to explain ideas in their own words, especially when writing in different subjects.
- While many additional staff or adults help pupils effectively, this is not always the case. At times, support staff provide too much help so that pupils become over reliant on them to help them complete their work. At other times, support staff or additional adults stand back too much and do not provide help quickly enough.
- Some improvements in the quality of teaching are having a positive impact on pupils' learning and achievement, especially in Year 6. All teachers are very clear at the start of lessons about what they want pupils to do and what they want them to achieve. This is very evident in pupils' books as well as lessons. Teachers also break-down the outcomes from learning into short, easily understood goals. Even in Reception classes, children are shown what it is that teachers expect them to achieve in relation to the work they are doing. This helps to guide pupils as they work and, when teachers check written work they are more easily able to identify what pupils have learned.
- Tasks are clearly set out and a good range of work is covered in English and mathematics. Pupils often have good opportunities to practise problem-solving in mathematics and to explain their thinking. Teachers are good at showing pupils what a good piece of work looks like.
- The use of phonics (the sounds that letters make) is taught well in the early years and Key Stage 1. This is helping to accelerate the development of pupils' reading skills. It is also strengthening pupils' ability to spell correctly from an early age.
- When marking pupils' work, teachers follow the academy's marking policy consistently and usually provide helpful feedback. In Year 6 particularly, the quality of feedback to pupils is strong and has a very positive impact on improving their work.

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- At the start of Reception, children's skills and knowledge are below what is typical for their age. This is especially the case in relation to their speech and language skills.
- In 2014, results of National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 were below national averages. The proportion of pupils passing the phonics check was also low compared to pupils nationally.
- The overall progress pupils made between Key Stage 1 and 2 compared unfavourably with the progress made by pupils nationally. This was the case in mathematics, reading and writing. Most groups of pupils did not make enough progress. Boys performed notably less well than girls because they had more ground to make up and did not develop their skills in reading and writing to a good enough level.
- The gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and others in the academy and nationally were too wide in reading, writing and mathematics. In writing, disadvantaged pupils achieved results which indicate that they were about two years behind other pupils nationally and over a year behind others in the academy. They were over a year behind in reading compared to other pupils nationally and about a year behind others in the academy. In mathematics, the gap with others nationally and in school was about a year- and-a-half behind. The gap in attainment between disadvantaged pupils currently in the

academy and others is narrowing in some year groups, such as the current Year 6, but gaps remain, especially in Key Stage 1.

- Evidence from pupils' books show that writing remains an area of weakness and that progress is slower compared to reading and mathematics. Spelling and handwriting are particularly weak in Key Stage 2. Pupils also find it hard to explain their ideas or thinking when writing. For example, during scientific investigation work because they are not getting enough practice in doing so.
- There are some variations in the progress of different groups. Lower attaining pupils, especially boys, make less consistent progress than middle or higher attainers, and girls. The academy is tackling these variations through additional support targeted at individual pupils.
- In Key Stage 1 and the Early Years Foundation Stage the work in phonics is helping to develop more secure spelling. The literacy programme is also helping pupils to extend the range of vocabulary they use and to become more ambitious about what they want to write.
- The progress pupils are making in reading and mathematics is improving particularly in Year 6 this academic year. Consequently, they are catching up with pupils nationally. Data analysis and written work show that pupils in Year 6 are on track to attain much better outcomes than last year. Most of them are making at least expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The most-able pupils are making largely steady progress, and often better progress than other groups. This is partly because they are more attentive in lessons and focus well on their work. In 2014, the most-able pupils did well in mathematics and a notably larger proportion than nationally gained Level 6 in the national tests. A small number of current Year 6 pupils are on track to do the same. However, there is still some variability in the progress of the most able and times when they could be extended further. In Reception, the most-able children often make good progress, especially in reading and writing.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are currently making better progress than indicated in the most recent national test results. When they are well supported, their progress is good.
- Despite variations in progress across the school and differences between different groups, the overall picture is one of continuing improvement. Leaders are making continuous adjustments to teaching programmes and plans in order to enable all pupils to achieve better.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- Teaching and achievement in the early years require improvement. These are being improved and a range of useful initiatives have been put in place to secure further improvement. However, leadership has not yet established consistently good teaching to secure good progress for all groups of children.
- In 2014, by the end of Reception the proportion of children at a good level of development was below the national average. Children did less well particularly in understanding the world, and shape, space and measures. Their performance in reading was closer to the national average. The gap between boys and girls was narrower than found nationally.
- Teaching, though improving is not consistently good across the early years. Adults are not always well deployed and so, at times they provide too much help or are not quick enough to intervene to steer children's learning. They miss opportunities to pose questions that to help to develop children's thinking. Some children find it hard to concentrate when teachers are introducing work because these introductions take too long. They are keen to get into practical activities and learn by doing things themselves.
- Teachers explain the purpose of the work well and in simple terms. They use a lot of visual resources to show children what they want them to do and how. The range and amount of work that children are given to do is wide and their 'learning journeys', writing journals and mathematics' books show that most

are getting through a good deal of work which is helping them to improve their skills, especially the most able. Lower attainers do not always get enough done.

- Children's work is well assessed and checked. Clear next steps are identified for children to help them improve their work. The teaching of phonics and the literacy strategy are helping many children to prepare well for Year 1 though writing for lower attaining children is a weaker area.
- Children are well looked after and kept safe in the early years. They behave well and are developing their social skills and relationships with others effectively. Children talk animatedly in pairs when asked to discuss an aspect of their work.
- Leaders in early years have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development. Data is beginning to be used more effectively and to be analysed with greater rigor.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	139803
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	449874

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	604
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marilyn Toft
Headteacher	Colin Tapscott
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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