

Rudheath Primary Academy

Gadbrook Road, Northwich, Cheshire, CW9 7JL

Inspection dates

4–5 February 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Rudheath Primary Academy School is good and rapidly improving because of the strong leadership of the headteacher and the support provided by the Focus Academy Trust.
- Leaders at all levels provide clear direction on how to continually improve the quality of teaching. Teachers have many opportunities to reflect on their own practice and work with other schools within the Trust and locally.
- Teachers have planned an exciting curriculum which is well matched to the needs of the pupils.
- Behaviour is good. Strong relationships between all members of the school community provide the foundations for the improvements in behaviour and standards seen recently.
- Pupils feel safe and secure. They are very well cared for at all times of the day.
- Attendance has much improved and is now in line with the national average.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers use clear explanations and good questioning.
- Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to discuss their learning. This enables pupils to articulate their understanding, broaden their vocabulary and feel more confident when responding to the teacher or starting a new piece of work.
- Teaching assistants provide very good support both in class and when working with groups out of the classroom.
- The achievement of current learners is good. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils are now well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- The most able pupils achieve particularly well. Their attainment is higher than similar pupils nationally.
- Early years staff have very high expectations of the youngest children and so they make good progress. The strong links with parents and pre-school settings help the children to settle quickly here in their new school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Advice and guidance to pupils through teachers' marking does not always make it clear what they need to do to improve their writing.
- There are times in mathematics when pupils spend too long on activities which they already understand before they are moved on to more difficult work.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 25 lessons or parts of lessons taught by 10 teachers. One observation was undertaken jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspectors listened to pupils read and scrutinised pupils' work.
- Discussions were held with representatives of the governing body, a representative of the academy trust, senior leaders, middle leaders, other staff, pupils and parents.
- The inspectors looked at the school's documentation including: safeguarding policies, the school development plan, records used by the school to measure how well it is doing, minutes of governing body meetings, records of behaviour and also displays in classrooms and around the school.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of information on how the school checks the progress of the different pupil groups.
- The inspectors took into account the 56 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).
- The inspectors analysed 29 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Desmond Stubbs, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Peter Martin	Additional Inspector
Susan Hickey	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Rudheath Primary Academy converted to become an academy school on 1 April 2013. When its predecessor school, Rudheath Primary School was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to require improvement.
- This is an average-sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those for whom English is spoken as an additional language is very small.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is similar to other schools nationally.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below the national average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority).
- Reception-aged children are in school full time.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- The school has experienced significant staffing changes in recent years. The headteacher has been in post since September 2014. Two other teachers also joined the school at this time.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in English and raise standards further by:
 - providing pupils with advice and guidance which makes it clear how they must improve their writing.
- Improve the quality of teaching in mathematics and raise standards further by:
 - ensuring that pupils do not spend too long on activities which they already understand before being moved on to more difficult work.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- In a very short time the new headteacher, very ably supported by leaders at all levels, has created a culture where the expectation is that pupils will learn in an interesting and challenging way and achieve well.
- Senior leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The highly detailed school development plan clearly lays out the actions for improvement, the impact these actions are having and how standards are expected to improve in the long term.
- The practice for checking the quality of teaching is excellent. Leaders at all levels use a wide range of evidence and this information has been used effectively to support teachers who have needed to improve. Best practice is always identified and then shared with other colleagues.
- All leaders analyse the achievement of pupils and are clear which pupil groups can do better. This information is shared with the governing body that also rigorously check the differences in achievement between pupils entitled to the pupil premium and other pupils. This ensures the funding is used appropriately and the school provides equality of opportunity for all pupils.
- The performance of all staff is managed very effectively. Teachers are set targets which are well matched to where they are in their career. It is made very clear what pupils are expected to achieve and how the teacher's practice must improve. Staff speak very positively about how they are supported, the quality of the feedback they receive about their teaching and the opportunities they have to work with colleagues from other schools. Teachers are encouraged to take responsibility for their own training and the school is also preparing them well for promotion.
- Pupils describe the curriculum as 'challenging' and 'exciting'. Teachers are enthusiastic about how it engages pupils in their learning. The 'learning challenge' books show a wide range of activities to deepen pupils' understanding of the world and apply their basic skills across the curriculum. For example Year 6 pupils took on the role of intelligence officers in the Second World War and used their mathematical skills to work out who might win The Battle of Britain.
- The school has established four key themes to promote British values. These are planned into the curriculum and give pupils a good grounding in this area. Pupils are also well prepared for life in modern Britain through experiences such as their link with a school in Kenya. Pupils who talked to the inspector spoke eloquently about the positive differences between the cultures. Evidence in pupils' books also showed many examples of pupils given opportunities to think deeply about world religions. The social, moral, spiritual and cultural education in school is very strong and the school's work in fostering good relationships and tackling discrimination is effective.
- The primary school sport and physical education funding has primarily been used to develop the teaching skills of all staff. They have worked alongside coaches and attended training. This has led to teachers gaining in confidence and now providing more sporting opportunities for pupils of all ages in clubs both at lunchtime and after school.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding and child protection meet statutory requirements.
- The academy trust has provided highly effective training and support to leaders at all levels, individual teachers including those new to the profession. It provides opportunities for the school to work with the other schools in the trust. All teachers talked very enthusiastically about the support provided by the trust.
- Parents are very positive about the school. They have appreciated the recent changes and one parent explained, 'the new headteacher has made a real difference to the school'. The school keeps parents well informed, the school website is most informative and different social media are well used. Parents have also expressed very positive views on these sites. The school provides workshops to help parents understand how their children learn in school and helpful information booklets.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are very well informed about all aspects of school life. The headteacher provides them with detailed reports. They also make regular visits into lessons and accompany classes on educational visits, for example, the Chair of Governors works with the most able mathematicians in Year 6 every week. Following these visits, governors write reports and make suggestions of things which need to be discussed at future meetings.
 - The governors have a comprehensive list of non-negotiables outlining how they will conduct their business. This includes the expectation that all governors will prepare questions in advance of meetings. As a result of this the minutes of meetings show many examples of where the headteacher is being challenged and held to account.
 - Governors have a strong understanding of how well pupils are achieving and where achievement needs

to improve. Similarly they know what is being done to improve teaching and that progression up the pay scale is not automatic. The governing body are highly effective.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The headteacher is on the playground every morning to greet the pupils and set the expectation that behaviour will be excellent and the day will get off to a positive start. Pupils move around school in an orderly manner and are polite and open doors for adults. Behaviour was good on the playground and in the dining hall during the inspection.
- In class the inspectors observed good and often exemplary behaviour. Pupils agree that generally behaviour is good although there are a small number of pupils who can disrupt learning. The systems that the school has in place for encouraging excellent behaviour are very successful and pupils talked very positively about the reward system. Behaviour of all pupils is checked regularly and rigorously. Parents and pupils are pleased that there is now more emphasis on rewarding good behaviour.
- Pupils show respect for each other especially during the many opportunities they have to work with a partner or in a small group. This was very evident when the inspector overheard an older pupil say, 'would you like me to start as I feel more confident than you'.
- Pupils show an obvious pride in their school. They wear their achievement and responsibility badges with pride. Their attitudes to learning are good and they are very positive about their lessons. Presentation is generally good and pupils show a pride in their work although this is not always the case for some of the younger pupils.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Parents agree that their children feel safe at school and this is confirmed by the pupils who say they are well cared for. Pupils are well looked after at all times of the day and staff are well trained in how to keep pupils safe.
- Older pupils act as playground buddies for the youngest children and this is one of many examples where pupils take responsibility for the safety of others. Pupils say that there are now only a small number of incidents of bullying but insist that these are dealt with well and that is also the opinion of the inspectors.
- The curriculum is well planned to ensure that pupils understand how to manage risk. Pupils understand how to stay safe in a wide range of situations including when using the internet.
- Strong procedures are in place for ensuring that pupils will be safe in relation to any visitors to school.
- Attendance is improving and is now in line with the national average. The school uses different strategies and rewards to encourage high attendance which are definitely having a good impact. For example, a bike permanently on display in the school hall which could be won by somebody with excellent attendance is a very successful incentive for pupils to attend school regularly.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is now consistently good throughout the school with particularly strong practice in Years 5 and 6.
- The evidence in pupils' work books since September 2014 and evidence seen in lessons is that teachers are very skilled at preparing activities which are challenging for pupils of all different abilities.
- Teachers plan exciting lessons which generate a lot of interest for pupils and this enthusiasm for the learning challenges is extended at home. For instance, pupils were asked to create a 'world' where a dinosaur would be able to survive. These models were of a very high quality and pupils were rightly proud of their efforts.
- Pupils have frequent opportunities to discuss their learning with others and so they are able to share their ideas and then confidently respond to the teacher's questions. This strategy was seen to be particularly successful when pupils discussed their ideas in a group before beginning to write.
- Teachers use highly effective questioning in all subjects. This is particularly strong in guided reading lessons where all adults when reading with a small group skilfully encourage pupils to think deeply about the books they are reading.
- The teaching of writing is very strong across the school and pupils achieve well in this area. Teachers use high quality texts as an inspiration to encourage writing and pupils really enjoy this approach.

Furthermore, when undertaking a longer writing task pupils are provided with support which helps them understand precisely what must be included to make the writing of the highest quality. This approach is very effective. Even so, teachers do not always give clear enough advice in their feedback to pupils on how to improve their writing still further.

- In mathematics pupils regularly practise the speed with which they are able to recall number facts correctly. This is clearly having a good impact. Pupils also explain their mathematical thinking to each other and this allows teachers to listen and gauge pupils' level of understanding. Pupils' exercise books, however, show that there are times when pupils will spend too long on an activity before being moved onto something more difficult to fully challenge them.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- The achievement of pupils is good. Current learners are now working at a much higher level than previously and making more rapid progress. This is due to the improvements in the quality of teaching, the higher expectations that teachers now have of pupils and the very purposeful climate that pupils are now working in.
- Pupils' attainment in the Year 1 screening check to assess understanding and use of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is similar to other schools nationally.
- At the end of Key Stage 1 attainment has previously been low. The school's data now shows much higher attainment closer to the national average and very strong progress. This was also seen in pupils' exercise books and in lessons.
- In July 2014 standards at the end of Key Stage 2 were similar to those nationally in reading and writing. In mathematics attainment was below the national average, progress however was much better and only a small number of pupils did not make the progress expected of them. The school's predicted targets for the present Year 6 are high. The attainment of pupils seen by inspectors indicates that these pupils are on target to achieve above the national average in all subjects by the time they leave at the end of this school year. The achievement of current learners is now good in all subjects across the school. Very high proportions of pupils are working at the expected level for their age. Progress is also consistently good.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good. The newly appointed special needs co-ordinator has made a significant impact in a short time introducing programmes of support that have raised attainment particularly in speaking and listening. She has supported the teaching assistants and the guidance they now provide to pupils is very strong.
- In July 2014, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium was a year behind non-disadvantaged pupils nationally in reading and mathematics and similar in writing. The proportions of these pupils making the progress expected of them was below other pupils nationally in reading and mathematics and above in writing.
- In July 2014, disadvantaged pupils were two terms behind other non-disadvantaged pupils in the school in reading and mathematics and similar in writing. The data of current disadvantaged pupils and their predictions for the end of the year provide clear evidence supported by what the inspectors have also seen that the gap is closing between these pupils and other pupils nationally.
- The attainment of the most able pupils is above similar pupils nationally in all subjects. They also make more rapid progress. These pupils do achieve well but pupils told the inspector that there are times in mathematics when they have to listen to explanations which they already understand and so achieve less during that lesson than they could.

The early years provision

is good

- Many children enter the Reception class with skills and knowledge below what is typical for their age, particularly in reading and writing. The adults in the class have very high expectations of the children and set very challenging targets especially for the autumn term. Most children make rapid progress from their starting points and are ready for the challenges of Year 1 as a result of good teaching.
- There is strong transition in place between the preschool settings and the academy school and this ensures the adults know the children well before they start school. The early years leader checks the ongoing progress of all children in a robust manner. She quickly identified that some pupils were not progressing as rapidly in reading during the autumn term and put procedures in place to accelerate their progress.

- Children behave well, show respect for each other and work well together. This was very evident in the way children spoke to each other in the role play corner. Children were seen taking turns and being considerate towards each other. Children display a positive attitude to learning and can work on their own for sustained periods of time. Children are well cared for and their behaviour and safety is good.
- All activities in class during the inspection were linked to 'Little Red Riding Hood'. Children are provided with a wide range of writing opportunities to develop their language and use adventurous vocabulary, for example when writing a get well letter to 'grandma'.
- During the inspection, most children were seen to be confident in their use of numbers up to 20. They were able to compare the size of numbers in different situations and were very well supported by all the adults. Themes such as the 'building site' were being used well to engage the boys.

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	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. 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.

School details

Unique reference number	139379
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	449860

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	265
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bob Richmond
Headteacher	Andrew Ross
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy
Telephone number	01606 288266
Fax number	n/a
Email address	rudheath@focus-trust.co.uk

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