

Kingsmoor Academy

Ployters Road, Harlow, CM18 7PS

Inspection dates

4–5 June 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Although the new principal has made many changes to improve teaching and learning, they have not yet had a substantial impact on pupils' achievement.
- Progress in mathematics and writing is not as good as in reading.
- Teaching in the Reception class does not challenge the children enough. This means they make slow progress in developing their early literacy and mathematics skills.
- There is some silly behaviour in those lessons which fail to hold pupils' attention.
- Teaching is improving, but there is not enough good teaching to promote consistently good learning and some is still inadequate.
- Not all subject leaders have the necessary skills, or time, to secure the rapid improvements necessary to raise standards.
- Not all teachers are making effective use of information about what pupils of different abilities can do, especially more-able pupils, to set work at an appropriate level of difficulty. This means that work in some classes is either too easy or too hard.

The school has the following strengths

- The teaching of reading is strong across the school and progress in reading is good. Pupils are developing a love of reading.
- The majority of pupils now conduct themselves well and are keen to learn.
- Pupils are cared for well. They are proud of their school and feel safe.
- Staff respect pupils and make sure they develop good moral and social awareness.
- Strong leadership from the principal, supported by the governors, and the vice principal's work on improving the quality of teaching are helping teachers to improve their practice.
- Good support means that pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs, those who speak English as an additional language and those supported by the pupil premium make good progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons, 10 of which were seen together with the principal and vice principal. Inspectors observed pupils moving around the school, in the dining room and at break and lunchtimes and in two assemblies. They listened to pupils read and examined work in pupils' books.
- Discussions were held with pupils, senior and subject leaders, three members of the governing body, two representatives of the trust sponsoring the academy and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked closely at a range of documentation, including the school's data about the progress of pupils, leaders' evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses, improvement plans, safeguarding policies and records relating to the management of teachers' performance.
- Inspectors took account of the 16 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View) and spoke to a small number of parents.
- Inspectors took account of the 31 questionnaires completed by staff working at the school.

Inspection team

Nichola Perry, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Piers Ranger

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Kingsmoor Academy is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school became an academy in December 2012, sponsored by the Academy Transformation Trust.
- The majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is higher than average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported by school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is slightly higher than average.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium (additional funding given to schools for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or in the care of the local authority) is slightly higher than average.
- It is not appropriate to judge whether the school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Among other improvements since becoming an academy, the indoor and outdoor spaces in the Early Years Foundation Stage have been completely refurbished.
- The school has experienced significant staffing changes, including four interim principals, during what has been a difficult period. The current permanent principal took up post in January 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and raise achievement, particularly in mathematics and writing, by making sure that:
 - activities planned for children in the Reception class provide far greater challenge so that the more-able children develop their early writing and mathematical skills more rapidly
 - work set in lessons is sufficiently demanding to ensure that more-able pupils across the school make good progress
 - pupils produce much more work, especially in writing, in the time available for learning
 - pupils are given more opportunities to write at length so as to practise their developing literacy skills
 - pupils maintain their concentration in lessons and incidents of silly behaviour are managed effectively.
- Strengthen leadership and management by ensuring that all subject leaders have the skills and time necessary to rigorously check and improve teaching and learning in their subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Pupils do not yet make consistently good progress through the school because the quality of teaching remains variable and is not yet good enough. School data indicate that attainment by the end of the year for the current Year 6 pupils is on track to be below average in mathematics and writing and average in reading. School data show that progress is improving in all three subjects across the school, as teaching continues to improve.
- Work seen in pupils' books, discussions with pupils and observations of teaching confirm that pupils' rates of progress are not yet sufficiently rapid. Too frequently, expectations about the amount of work pupils produce in the time allowed, specifically in writing and mathematics, are too low and this is not addressed in teachers' marking. Books indicate that pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics and writing are below those in reading in Year 6, although these pupils are making more rapid progress because good teaching is enabling them to fill gaps in their learning.
- A wide range of intensive support programmes have been provided by leaders to help raise standards. These are starting to have a positive effect on improving pupils' progress, particularly for those who have significant gaps in their earlier learning. The strong emphasis now placed on teaching basic skills – for example, in literacy – is already helping pupils to improve their writing skills. However, books and folders examined show that pupils of all abilities, especially more-able pupils, are not being provided with sufficient opportunities to write at length in order to practise and sharpen their skills.
- The teaching of reading is good. A strong emphasis across the school on the strategies used successfully to teach phonics (the sounds letters make) has enabled pupils to improve their reading skills significantly and to develop a love of reading. Pupils from an early age use their skills with increasing confidence to read both simple and more complex words. Teaching assistants are well trained and use questions effectively to encourage better understanding of the text. School data indicate that pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are likely to reach average standards in reading in the 2014 assessments.
- Children join the Reception class with levels of skills, knowledge and experience below those typical for their age, although there is a range of ability. Their progress requires improvement because not enough attention is paid to the rate at which children of different ability, particularly the most able, develop their early writing and mathematical skills. Good personal and social education means that they make more rapid progress in these areas of learning.
- The school has worked effectively to improve provision for disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. Rigorous monitoring of pupils' progress, early identification of needs, effective training for staff and the holding of teachers to account for their progress are all promoting better progress. Additional small-group or one-to-one tuition, plus well-focused support from additional adults in class, is now ensuring that these pupils are making good progress and achieving similarly to their classmates.
- The school uses the pupil premium funding effectively to provide a wide range of additional support for eligible pupils. School data show that this group of pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, and are on track to reach similar standards to their classmates by the end of Year 6.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- The rate at which pupils learn has been held back by the quality of teaching, which has not been good enough to ensure pupils reach the standards of which they are capable.
- Not all teachers are using information about what pupils of different abilities know and can do when planning lessons. Consequently, tasks are often too easy or too hard for pupils. Some teaching observed took no account of pupils' different abilities. In one such session, more-able pupils answered questions within seconds but marked time, learning nothing and losing interest, while the rest of the class were helped to understand how to solve the problem.
- In some classes observed, the activities lacked challenge so that pupils became fidgety and disengaged from learning. Time was then spent on regular reminders to pupils about the expectations of positive attitudes to learning. More-able pupils in these lessons are not being given enough opportunities to think hard and solve problems, and the amount of work they produce is insufficient so that pupils are not practising their skills.
- The quality of marking, whilst still variable, is improving. Increasingly, teachers' comments are helping pupils to improve their work so that, for example, repetition of errors is reducing. Marking in pupils' mathematics books is less effective in this respect and occasionally misses crucial mistakes. Pupils' books across the school show that they are not producing enough work in the time available, particularly in writing.
- Work to improve the quality of teaching continues through regular and rigorous checking of teachers' performance, with wide-ranging training and coaching to help weaker teachers improve their practice.
- Where learning is effective, teachers plan and set work carefully to ensure that all ability groups have the right level of challenge. This, along with effective use of support staff, provides all pupils with a good level of support and structure for their learning. In a Year 6 lesson, the teacher used pupils' ideas and suggestions to show them clearly how to produce good writing and how it could be made even better. This greatly helped pupils, particularly those who needed visual learning support to achieve well.

The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Most pupils conduct themselves well in lessons and around the school. Where teaching is stimulating, and even in some cases when it is not, pupils are tolerant, well motivated and keen to learn. However, in a few lessons where pupils are not sufficiently stimulated or interested, they struggle to maintain their concentration and revert to silly behaviour. A minority do not comply with the very clear expectations laid down and applied by all staff. As a consequence, although the number is reducing, exclusions are still relatively high.
- Senior leaders have introduced an effective behaviour policy which rewards good behaviour as well as establishing clear boundaries regarding what is acceptable. This is already having a big impact so that, overall, the school is calm and, increasingly, pupils are able to learn without disruption. Leaders have ensured consistency in the use of the policy by staff, including those new to the school. The policy is clearly understood by all pupils, and those spoken to during the inspection like the fact that it is 'fair' because good behaviour is recognised.
- The school provides well for pupils with a wide range of behavioural and learning needs. Leaders and teachers work closely with parents and this is valued highly by those concerned. The school

makes full use of many external agencies to ensure the best possible advice and support for pupils and their parents. This approach is already having a very positive effect on helping pupils, some of whom have very significant emotional difficulties, to think about their feelings and make correct choices regarding their behaviour.

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. It is a safe environment and much attention is paid to ensuring that pupils are kept safe and well cared for in all aspects of their learning. Pupils have a good understanding of risk, supported by the school's good focus on personal safety. Pupils say they feel safe, and the majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire agree. Parents spoken to during the inspection feel that their children are safe and are pleased with what the school provides for them.
- Pupils say that bullying still occurs but judge that there are fewer incidents than in the past because staff do their best to manage reported incidents. Pupils are aware that bullying may take different forms, such as internet bullying or because of gender or faith differences. A number of parents who completed the online questionnaire feel that behaviour and bullying are not effectively dealt with. Inspectors examined school documentation and procedures and found that all incidents are fully and properly recorded and managed.
- Staff show high levels of respect towards pupils and value their ideas and contributions in lessons so that pupils are developing good moral and social skills. Most pupils enjoy coming to school and are very proud of their new school uniforms. The school uses a number of effective strategies to encourage all pupils to attend school regularly. However, attendance is still below the national average, although the number of pupils who are persistently absent has reduced.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leadership and management are not yet good because the many positive changes, implemented by the recently appointed principal, have not yet had a marked impact on the quality of teaching or achievement.
- The principal's excellent leadership skills have already done much to strengthen leadership and management. Her approach instils a sense of calm throughout the school and a feeling, as one pupil said, that, 'This one means business.' She has successfully steered the school through a particularly turbulent time, with high levels of staff absence, illness and resignation, while maintaining the momentum on improvement. A clear sense of community is developing and staff morale is gradually increasing as they recognise their increasing success, particularly in terms of improving behaviour – although a few did express their concern about behaviour and bullying in the staff questionnaire.
- The principal knows the school well. Checks on what is happening and how well things are working are comprehensive. Judgements about how well the school is performing are honest and accurate. The principal works effectively with the vice principal, who has done much work on mentoring and coaching staff so that they are improving their practice. Provision for vulnerable pupils, those who are disabled or have special educational needs and those who enter the school speaking little or no English, is led well. Additional funding is used well to support learning for these pupils, reflecting the effectiveness of the school's approach in tackling barriers to learning and ensuring equality.
- Staff performance has been thoroughly and fully reviewed, and this has been closely linked to rigorous discussions around how well pupils are doing. Decisions about whether staff are to be paid more are now firmly linked to pupils' progress. Opportunities for staff training are plentiful and varied. Leaders at all levels now have a much clearer understanding of their responsibilities

and their role in tackling underperformance. Not all of them have developed the necessary skills to secure rapid improvement in the quality of teaching in their subject or area of responsibility, however. The leadership of mathematics and the Early Years Foundation Stage is not yet fully effective.

- Leaders give a suitably high priority to improving the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. Other subjects are taught through themes which are increasingly well linked to the teaching of basic skills. These include widening pupils' experience of history, geography and science, which contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness.
- Pupils have good opportunities to extend their learning through after-school activities, which are partly paid for by the primary school sport funding. This is used well to promote pupils' health and well-being in a number of ways, including enabling them to enjoy physical activity during planned time indoors and outdoors; for example, through 'forest school' sessions.
- The school has received appropriate support from the academy trust, based on a well-founded programme of improvement, so that the school now has good capacity to improve further.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is extremely supportive. The governors are quick to recognise and value the rapid progress the school has made, particularly since the permanent principal arrived. Governors are strongly committed to the school and its pupils and want them to do well. They meet regularly and ensure that resources are spent well, including the pupil premium and primary school sport funding. Governors manage the performance of the principal effectively. They now have a clear perception of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and its overall effectiveness. They are increasingly thorough in challenging the school's performance because they are now better informed. Governors now have more understanding about the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement, and are aware of the need to ensure that pay and promotion are rigorously aligned to teachers' effectiveness. They have undertaken a wide range of training so that they are aware of their responsibilities. They have been involved in decisions relating to use of the pupil premium and are starting to understand its impact on pupils' learning and progress. Governors also ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet current requirements.

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	138996
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	440148

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	202
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sarah Stapleton
Principal	Isobel Barron
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01279 306136
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