

# Mersey Primary Academy

Derwent Street, Hull, HU8 8TX

**Inspection dates** 23–24 June 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy	
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
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.

- The head of academy and Executive Principal provide an ambitious and clear vision which they carry out diligently. They are very well supported by middle leaders and a highly effective advisory board and Trust. As a result, standards have risen rapidly.
- The vast majority of pupils now make good and accelerated progress, and achieve well.
- The overall quality of teaching is good. Teachers' subject knowledge is good. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to learning. Oral feedback is used well to help pupils improve their work.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning. This makes a good contribution to achievement. They are well behaved and kept safe.
- Provision in the early years is good. Children make good progress and enjoy their learning.
- All staff are given regular detailed information about the quality of their teaching. Support to achieve sharply focused targets has a considerable impact on improvement.
- The advisory body makes a very strong contribution to leadership. The questions its members ask about pupils' progress are exceptionally penetrating. They hold leaders stringently to account for the work of the school.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, the less able pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Marking does not always make a good contribution to pupils' achievement in spelling.
- Achievement in writing is not as high as in reading and mathematics.
- Expectations of pupils' presentation of their work, especially handwriting, are not high enough.
- The quality of children's learning in the early years outdoor area is not as strong as that undertaken indoors.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed several lessons, some of which were joint observations with the head of academy or Executive Principal.
- The inspectors looked at pupils’ books and individual learning and behaviour plans.
- Meetings were held with key staff, the Chair of the Advisory Board, the senior education officer of the trust, and discussions were held with support staff.
- The inspectors took into account 14 questionnaires from staff and 14 responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View).
- The inspectors looked at a range of documents, including plans for improvement, records of the school’s checks on pupils’ and teachers’ performance, safeguarding and attendance documents, minutes of meetings of the advisory board and federated governing body, and school policies.

## Inspection team

Pauline Hilling-Smith, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Susan Twaits

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Mersey Primary School converted to become an academy in October 2013. When its predecessor school, with the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be inadequate.
- The executive headteacher was appointed in January 2013 and confirmed as Executive Principal on conversion to academy status.
- A head of academy was appointed from within the leadership at the same time.
- The majority of the staff have been appointed since the last inspection.
- The academy is part of the School Partnership Trust Academies (SPTA).
- The governing body is federated with a neighbouring trust academy.
- The academy has an executive advisory board whose members sit on the federated governing body.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most children attend the Nursery on a part-time basis, although a few attend full time. Children attend fulltime in the Reception class.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those eligible for the pupil premium, is above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children that are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the overall quality of teaching to outstanding in order to raise achievement, especially for the less able pupils and in writing, by always ensuring that:
  - tasks for the less able pupils are not too difficult for them
  - teachers always have high expectations of pupils' spelling and written presentation
  - marking always contributes to improving pupils' achievement.
- Improve the early years by developing the outdoor provision so children learn as well outdoors as they do indoors.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are outstanding

- The Executive Principal and head of academy have rapidly developed a highly effective school. This means that achievement has risen rapidly. These leaders also make a significant contribution to raising the achievement of many more pupils within the trust.
- Senior leaders are very well supported by middle leaders who leave no stone unturned in their monitoring of the effectiveness of teaching and of the school. The trust knows how well the school is performing and how well the pupils are achieving, because the senior education adviser is involved in the detailed monitoring of all areas of the school's work. This has a positive impact. Plans for improvement are very effective because actions are put in place swiftly and based on a detailed knowledge and understanding of strengths and areas to develop.
- Safeguarding arrangements are effective and very robust because leaders ensure that record keeping is detailed and closely evaluated. All policies and procedures meet requirements.
- The leaders use data meticulously to analyse the progress made by individuals towards their targets. The assessment of the levels achieved by the pupils is accurate. The progress of each pupil is frequently reviewed to ensure that everything is being done to enable pupils to accelerate their achievement.
- Monitoring and development of the quality of teaching are highly effective. This is because the head of academy and Executive Principal are experts in leading the monitoring and effectiveness of teaching, and in providing support to enable teachers to be successful in achieving the sharply focused targets set for improvement.
- The curriculum meets the needs of the pupils well. It places an emphasis on enrichment through many clubs and visitors, and develops enterprise skills as well as putting a focus on achievement in English and mathematics. As a result, pupils are engaged and enjoy their time at school. They are very well prepared for the future.
- The school is highly inclusive and no one is left behind when school visits and residentials, for example to Edale or London, take place. Arrangements to foster good relations and tackle discrimination are at the heart of the school's successful work with the local community.
- Everyone takes great pride in the presentation of the school environment, including the highly polished wooden floor, and in the atmosphere based on the 'Five Rs' of relationships, resilience, resourcefulness, responsibility and reflection. This forms the basis for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Many opportunities are grasped to promote an understanding of life in modern Britain. The recent general election has provided the focus for the understanding of the process of democracy and pupils have studied the rights and responsibilities associated with the British legal system.
- Partnership with parents is exceptional. The vast majority of parents who responded on Parent View would recommend the school to another parent. Newsletters to parents are very attractive and provide full and excellent information.
- The partnership with the local authority is good and mutual support is provided.
- The primary school sport funding is used well to widen the range of sports available and increase participation in competitive sports events, to the benefit of pupils' health and well-being.
- The pupil premium funding is used to good effect to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils through the provision of additional interventions to promote speech and language.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The executive advisory body and federated governing body make an extremely positive contribution to the school's success. Members ensure that they come to school regularly to question, listen to staff and parents or to be involved with pupils. They monitor the work of the school meticulously and report back to the federated governing body and trust in detail.
  - Members of the board have up-to-date knowledge of pupils' achievements and the quality of teaching. They provide challenge and support to the school to move it forward at a fast pace. The federated governing body ensures that financial resources are well managed, including the school's use of additional government funding to support pupils, such as the pupil premium, and members are aware of their impact.
  - Members are involved with the trust in setting targets for the headteacher and Executive Principal. They are also fully aware about how teachers' pay awards are linked to school improvement and the progress that pupils make. They ensure that all safeguarding procedures are fully met and, as a result, pupils are safe at school.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are welcoming and polite, and the atmosphere in school is warm and friendly. Pupils readily show their work to visitors. Pupils wear the school uniform proudly and cheer for their school. However, they also want other schools to do well when they compete in sporting events, in Sheffield, for example.
- The systems to ensure good behaviour are underpinned by the 'Five Rs', which are clearly displayed and described for pupils so that they understand fully what they should do. Pupils are keen to stay in the 'green' behaviour category. As a result, pupils have positive attitudes to learning.
- Break times are split and carefully managed to provide good social experiences. However, occasionally pupils are inclined to be boisterous and rush about when everyone is outside together.
- Pupils are aware of different types of bullying, including cyber bullying. Records show that incidents of inappropriate behaviour are rare. Pupils are tolerant of others' views and beliefs, and staff and everyone associated with the school work effectively to promote this. Pupils, rightly, say that any incidents are dealt with quickly and effectively and good relations are restored.

**Safety**

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils are well aware of 'stranger danger', including on the internet. They understand how to keep themselves and others safe when they are out of school. They understand the role played by adults in ensuring their safety at all times.
- Safeguarding practice is well understood by all staff. Any concerns are promptly notified to the appropriate agencies. Staff have a very good understanding of the individual needs of each pupil. The emotional well-being officer is effective in supporting pupils and families.
- Leaders are vigilant in ensuring that full checks on the safety of premises are regularly undertaken and any issues are promptly acted upon.
- Attendance is broadly average and improving. The academy now has rigorous procedures to monitor and improve attendance and these are paying dividends. Pupils are punctual.

**The quality of teaching** is good

- Teaching is good overall; sometimes it is outstanding. Currently, the quality of teaching is improving rapidly as a result of the detailed monitoring and coaching for staff. Consequently, teachers regularly reflect on the impact of their teaching on achievement.
- Teaching has enabled most pupils to make accelerated progress over the last two years and particularly over the last year. Oral feedback to pupils as they learn is particularly effective and has a good impact on achievement.
- A strength in teaching is teachers' questioning, particularly in mathematics. As a result, pupils develop their understanding well.
- Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and this results in a positive climate for learning. Pupils enjoy their learning because they are interested in what is planned for them to do.
- The teaching of reading is good because questions that teachers pose in guided reading are challenging and promote understanding, and the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is effective. Younger pupils can decode and read words well. The work of the teaching assistants is targeted well to support individuals and small groups of pupils to ensure that they make good progress and do not fall behind.
- Teachers spend a considerable amount of time ensuring that they mark pupils' work in detail. The pointers for improvement they give to pupils in mathematics contribute very well to pupils' achievement in the subject.
- Pupils have many opportunities to write at length and the content and complexity of pupils' writing indicate good progress. However, teachers' expectations of pupils' presentation and the accuracy of their spelling are not high enough overall and, occasionally, teachers do not spot that pupils 'correct' their spellings incorrectly.
- Occasionally, the less able pupils are not challenged appropriately because work is too hard. On these

occasions, pupils do not complete their work, limiting their progress.

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- The majority of pupils make good progress and now leave the school with standards above average. Over the last two years, most pupils have made accelerated progress from their starting points in all subjects.
- School data for 2015 for the end of Key Stage 1 show above expected standards for age in phonics and overall in other subjects. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels has risen sharply. This reflects the fact that pupils have made accelerated progress over the last two years.
- In mathematics, school data and work in pupils' books show that pupils' attainment has risen sharply since the school became an academy. This means that current standards in this subject by the end of Year 6 are almost one year beyond pupils' chronological age.
- Pupils make good progress in reading because the teaching of reading is challenging and well organised, and all staff are well trained in teaching in phonics. The library books are much enjoyed by pupils and contribute to their love of reading.
- The progress of the most-able pupils has accelerated sharply in all subjects. Occasionally, however, pupils with lower ability do not make the progress of which they are capable because they are given work which is too difficult for them.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make the same good progress as their peers because their needs are assessed well and carefully met.
- Current school data for the end of Year 6 show that the gap in attainment between disadvantaged pupils in the academy and with other pupils nationally is closing. This gap has closed by almost one year in mathematics, by a term in reading, and by almost a term in writing. This means that disadvantaged pupils are less than one term behind their peers in the academy as well as other pupils nationally in mathematics and about two terms behind in reading. However, although the gap between disadvantaged pupils' attainment and that of others nationally has closed in writing by almost two terms, it has widened within the academy by about a term. Disadvantaged pupils' progress is at least in line with that of non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.
- The vast majority of parents who responded on Parent View and to the recent school survey agree that pupils now make good progress.

### The early years provision

is good

- Children start in the Nursery class with a wide variety of starting points. Overall, however, children start with knowledge and skills below those that would be found typically. They catch up quickly overall but their skills are still below those typical for their age in personal and social development, and communication and language when they enter the Reception Year. By the end of Reception, for the last three years, a growing proportion of children have achieved a good level of development.
- Teaching is good in the early years. Children make good progress and are well prepared for Key Stage 1. The outdoor area is not as well developed in promoting children's learning as indoors which means that, sometimes, opportunities are lost for children to practise skills, play and learn more productively.
- Children show that they feel safe and they behave well, although they are inclined to rush about outside. However, they are well supervised. The safety and welfare of the children are always given a high priority. As a result, parents are confident to leave their children in the care of the staff.
- Leadership of the early years is good and results in teamwork which ensures that children's individual learning needs and interests are met very well.
- Partnership with parents is strong. Communication and contact with parents are extensive and of high quality. As a result, this partnership makes a very effective contribution to children's achievement and well-being.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	139921
<b>Local authority</b>	City of Kingston upon Hull
<b>Inspection number</b>	450172

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	207
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Judith Hill
<b>Principal</b>	Melanie Hewitt (Head of Academy), David Waterson (Executive Principal)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected as an academy
<b>Telephone number</b>	01482 327417
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