

Platt Bridge Community School

Rivington Avenue, Platt Bridge, Wigan, Lancashire, WN2 5NG

Inspection dates 25–26 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Platt Bridge is an outstandingly successful school. Pupils do extraordinarily well here.
- Achievement is exceptional. Pupils enter the school with skills which are generally very low, but the vast majority leave with attainment that is at least equal to and, for many, above national expectations.
- The proportion of pupils making much better than expected progress is well above the national average, including disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have a relentless 'can-do' attitude. They believe their pupils deserve the very best and can achieve at the highest levels. The quality of teaching is exceptional.
- Lessons grab pupils' total attention and sharply focus on developing each individual pupil's learning. Pupils enjoy rich experiences from a varied and stimulating curriculum.
- Adults give pupils a belief in themselves and act as excellent role models. As a result, pupils' behaviour is exemplary in and outside lessons. They are kind and caring towards each other and very proud of themselves and their school.
- Attendance levels have improved over the last few years and are broadly average. The school has strong links with parents of younger children but involvement of parents in their child's learning sometimes falls away as they move up the school.
- The headteacher and her senior leadership team are totally committed to raising standards and giving their pupils the best opportunities possible to be the best they can be. As a team, they provide inspirational leadership to their staff and extend this support to other schools too.
- Members of the governing body are knowledgeable and very involved in the life of the school. They are totally committed to ensuring the school offers the children of Platt Bridge an outstanding start in life.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 21 lessons, three of which were paired observations with members of the senior leadership team.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, the senior leadership team, middle leaders and with groups of pupils both formally and informally around the school and in the playground. The lead inspector had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- Various documents were examined, including those relating to pupils' progress, safeguarding, behaviour and performance management.
- Inspectors took into account the 12 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and letters received from parents. They also looked at the school's own parent, pupil and staff questionnaires. Informal discussions were held with parents at a nursery sports day and at the start and end of the school day.
- Questionnaires from 50 members of staff were analysed.

Inspection team

Hilary Ward, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jeremy Barnes

Additional Inspector

Faheem Chishti

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Platt Bridge is a full-service, extended school. The headteacher is also head of Platt Bridge Children's Centre, located in the same building. The school and children's centre are open 50 weeks in the year to deliver services to children and families.
- Platt Bridge is much larger than the average-sized primary school and is due to take increased numbers in September 2013 when it becomes a two-form entry school. There are currently some mixed-age classes.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is over twice the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding provided to support pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, those children who are looked after by the local authority or children of service families.
- The school provides a service to the local authority for pupils who are being assessed for disabilities and special educational needs. Following assessment, some of these pupils stay at the school with additional resourcing.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus and with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- In February 2013, the school became an academy under the name of Community First Academy Trust, trading as Platt Bridge Community School. The governing body are directors and the headteacher is chief executive officer of the trust. The school has not previously been inspected as an academy.
- Platt Bridge is part of the local authority's school improvement consortia model, which includes 24 schools. The headteacher and her team offer support to other schools requiring improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue the work to raise levels of attendance by further strengthening and sustaining partnerships with parents to involve them in their child's learning throughout their time in school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- When children start in the nursery, they usually have skills and knowledge well below those expected for their age. The excellent learning environment, both inside and outdoors, provides a wealth of learning opportunities which help children to begin to develop their personal and social skills so that they are ready to learn.
- In Reception, staff build exceptionally well on these early learning skills to give children an understanding of simple number concepts, an introduction to phonics (the sounds letters make) and early writing practice. The delightful relationships between staff and children ensure children find it fun to learn so that they want to go and investigate for themselves and practise their new skills in different activities.
- By the time they reach the end of Year 2, pupils have made at least good progress from their individual starting points and are achieving at, or just below, national expectations for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening check is just below the expected level, which represents outstanding progress from their starting points. Pupils show real enjoyment in their reading.
- They extend their knowledge and understanding of the world through stimulating topics, such as the rain forest. Not only do they research and write about it but they experience it too. In a physical education lesson, for example, pupils navigated around the rain forest; over beams, across mats and under nets.
- The firm foundations laid in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 enable pupils' achievement to take off at Key Stage 2 so they make accelerated progress. Increasing numbers of pupils, year on year, are gaining exceptionally high levels in statutory tests in English and mathematics. The gains some pupils make, particularly in their reading and writing skills, from the end of Key Stage 1 are exceptional. For example, some pupils move through four levels in Key Stage 2, when two levels reflect expected progress.
- During the past year, the school has given the improvement of writing the highest priority. Some wonderful examples were seen of high-quality writing skills, for instance, writing as one of the astronauts landing on the moon, a topic which particularly appealed to boys. Standards in writing have risen rapidly as a result.
- Pupils who are known to be eligible for pupil premium funding, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs catch up and achieve just as well as others. They make outstanding progress from their starting points because the school provides highly effective teaching and support. The quality of relationships built, for example, through nurture groups, helps pupils develop resilience and the self-confidence to succeed.
- By the time they leave Platt Bridge, all groups of pupils have achieved equally well because the school has monitored every child's progress rigorously, to ensure gaps are closed and every child is doing as well as possible.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Pupils make outstanding progress because teaching is outstanding. Teachers are highly effective at planning lessons which build on each individual child's prior learning and give them equal opportunities to enjoy success.
- Whole-class teaching is kept to a minimum and teachers and teaching assistants focus, as teams, on building pupils' skills and knowledge in ability groups. For example, in a Year 2 lesson on measuring liquids, lower-ability pupils worked with a teaching assistant, adding potions to a witches' brew, middle-ability pupils used and understood a range of liquid measures, while the teacher accelerated the learning of higher-ability pupils, solving measurement word problems.
- The pace of lessons is fast with the highest expectations of what pupils of all abilities can achieve. Teachers clearly identify what they want each group of pupils to learn so that they can

easily check progress and precisely plan pupils' next steps.

- Teachers ensure pupils develop secure skills in reading, writing and mathematics. They take every opportunity to develop these skills in all subjects, for instance, by insisting on 'super sentences' in topic work.
- Adults are highly skilled and knowledgeable about how to question pupils and help them to develop their ideas and become independent learners. This is as true for lower-ability pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs as it is for those of higher ability. Pupils are encouraged to use the excellent technology resources to research and find things out for themselves.
- Marking follows a code which pupils and teachers use consistently and which link to suggestions for improvement which sit as reminders on tables in each classroom. Marking is highly effective in helping pupils to understand how to improve their work further.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is focused on developing communication and early skills in literacy and numeracy through playing games. For instance, in Reception, children played at a teddy bears' picnic with the teacher, counting out sweets and using number sentences to do simple addition. They enjoyed the session so much that they went off to find other number games and not a single sweet was eaten! The high-quality teaching prepares children extremely well for their move into Key Stage 1.
- Pupils believe they are taught well, the school 'gives us an amazing education'. In the responses seen and the school's own survey, parents agree with this view.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils are given such joy in learning that they want to do well and have highly positive attitudes to their work. They appreciate the confidence teachers have in them and rise to the challenge. As a result, concentration and attention in lessons is outstanding from an early age.
- Children are given firm boundaries from the time they start school and quickly learn to follow social rules. They are given opportunities to think about themselves and each other during personal and social education lessons and develop a strong moral code. They stand patiently behind their chairs and wait for everyone to be in their place before sitting down for their lunch. They are very polite and respectful of each other. They work exceptionally well in pairs and teams and listen to each other's ideas and opinions.
- Nurture groups and the work of the pastoral and ethos managers, in particular, support some pupils, whose circumstances make them vulnerable, to raise their self-esteem and help them to learn effectively.
- Bullying is very rare. Pupils have a very good understanding of the importance of positive relationships because of the excellent role models staff provide.
- Pupils feel they have a voice in decision making and enjoy taking on responsibilities. For instance, they asked for, organised and managed a small budget to put safety notices around the school.
- Parents, pupils and staff are unanimous that the school keeps everyone safe. Parents are appreciative of the support the school provides to them when needed and will even return to the school for advice and support after their children have left and moved on to high school.
- Attendance has improved over time from a low base and is now broadly average due to the efforts the school has made. However, a few parents become less involved in their child's education as they move up the school and, for these pupils, attendance sometimes falls away.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher, her senior leadership team and governing body, provide inspirational leadership for the school. As a result of their relentless drive for improvement, the school has gone from strength to strength and pupils' achievement has improved over the years and is

highly impressive.

- The very rigorous checks made on teaching and learning has resulted in continuous improvements in teaching standards. Teachers make equally great demands on themselves and have written their own standards, which are more aspirational than national standards for teachers, in order to ensure the highest expectations for each of them, no matter what their role.
- The performance of newly qualified teachers is stunning because of the coaching and mentoring they receive from senior staff and because they quickly become immersed in the ambition for every pupil to succeed.
- The senior leadership team and governing body share a vision for the community they serve. They lead partnership work with other schools and with the local authority to support improvement. The move to academy status has given them the freedom to work in the community.
- The curriculum is focused on ensuring pupils develop the basic skills they will need in their future lives but also provides pupils with rich experiences they may not otherwise enjoy. Recently, pupils have visited Blackpool, London and The Royal Exchange Theatre in Manchester where they enjoyed a production of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'. Such visits are supported by pupil premium funding to ensure disadvantaged pupils can participate in cultural experiences, which are enjoyable in themselves but also result in some excellent writing.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have worked with the headteacher and her team to provide outstanding leadership and ensure the school is a beacon of best practice in the community. They challenge the headteacher to monitor progress with a relentless drive for improvement. They know how pupil premium funding is spent and the impact it is having on the attainment of eligible pupils. They check on the quality of teaching and learning through reviews of performance management and check this is linked to increases in salary. They ensure safeguarding and health and safety are managed to the highest levels. With the headteacher, they have led the school through its transition to becoming an academy in order to serve and support the local community and improve the life-chances of the pupils who attend the school.

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	139300
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	420107

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

Type of school	Academy Converter
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	386
Appropriate authority	The governing body who are also directors of the trust
Chair	Jack Pugh
Headteacher	Sue Darbyshire
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01942 487999
Fax number	01942 777080
Email address	enquiries@admin.plattbridge.wigan.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2013

