

# Plumberow Primary Academy

Hamilton Gardens, Hockley, SS5 5BX

## Inspection dates

5–6 March 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The headteacher is ambitious for the school and pupils. He is well respected by parents, staff and pupils.
- Parents are positive about the school; a rising number of parents choose to send their children to the school in Key Stage 2.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage gives children a good start to school and they settle quickly. Teachers make careful and accurate assessments of children's progress.
- Pupils are making good progress across the school, especially in mathematics.
- There is a strong family atmosphere and relationships between pupils and staff are excellent.
- As a result, despite its large size, Plumberow still has the community spirit of a small school.
- Pupils' behaviour is consistently good and sometimes outstanding. Pupils are polite, courteous and caring towards each other. They enjoy coming to school and feel safe.
- Teaching is typically good or better. Outstanding teaching in Key Stage 2 leads to a love of learning and helps pupils achieve their best.
- The governing body offers a good range of experience and skill. It supports the school while challenging leaders and working with them to improve teaching and achievement.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching to make sure all groups of pupils, particularly boys achieve their best, especially in writing.
- Marking in pupils' books is not always helpful in showing them how to improve their work in different subjects.
- Leaders do not check carefully that the support provided to help pupils who have special educational needs achieve as well as others is effective in helping them to catch up.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 27 lessons, three of which were seen together with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, subject and other leaders, members of the governing body and groups of pupils.
- The inspectors took account of the 63 responses to the questionnaire for school staff and 109 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of school documentation including the school's own evaluation of its performance, information about pupils' progress, planning and monitoring documentation, behaviour and attendance records and documents relating to safeguarding.
- The inspectors also listened to pupils reading in Year 2.

## Inspection team

Kelly Stock, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Edwin Powell	Additional Inspector
Janet Tomkins	Additional Inspector
Janette Daniels	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is much larger than average-sized primary school.
- Plumberow Primary School converted to an academy school in September 2011. When its predecessor school, of the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good. The school is linked to the Academies Enterprise Trust.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is below average. In this school, the extra government funding helps pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or in local authority care.
- The proportion of pupils who join the school late or leave early is higher than average. A rising number of pupils join the school in Years 3 and 4 due to parents choosing to send their children there.
- The school works closely with a cluster of local schools.

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

- Make sure extra support is consistently effective by checking more regularly the progress that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make so that they achieve as well as their classmates.
- Make more teaching outstanding and improve achievement by:
  - planning activities in lessons that challenge all ability groups, especially boys, so they achieve the very highest levels of attainment
  - making sure marking helps pupils to improve their work in all subjects, particularly in writing.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils join the school with skills broadly typical for their age. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage in all areas of their learning.
- In 2013 the proportion of pupils successfully completing the Year 1 phonics check, which checks their understanding of the links between letters and sounds, was significantly above the national average.
- Pupils enjoy reading and by the end of Key Stage 1 make good progress in reading and writing. The previous gap between boys' and girls' achievement in 2013 is closing rapidly and boys are now catching up. In mathematics they are taught to correct their work by 'fixing it', showing perseverance and the ability to think carefully about their learning.
- Achievement in all subjects in Key Stage 2 is good, as it was in 2013. The most able pupils in Year 6 are on track to exceed nationally expected progress by the end of the year, particularly in mathematics, and here again the previous gap in achievement between boys and girls is closing. However not enough boys make more than expected progress, particularly in writing.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium currently make similar good progress to their classmates in Key Stages 1 and 2, showing significant improvement on last year's results. This is due to better attendance and improvements made to the teaching and the curriculum to engage these pupils' interest.
- In 2013 Key Stage 1 pupils eligible for the pupil premium were three to four terms behind their classmates in English and almost three terms behind in mathematics. This year these gaps are narrowing. In 2013 Year 6 these pupils made similar or better progress than other pupils all subjects.
- Pupils who join the school in Years 3 and 4 are well supported, and do well in line with other groups.
- A small number of pupils who have special educational needs or are supported at school action plus are not making good progress in reading, writing or mathematics. Leaders do not check the support provided carefully to know whether or not it is helping the pupils to catch up with their classmates, so it cannot quickly be adapted to more fully meet their needs.
- The primary sports funding is used well to help all pupils achieve in sport and lead healthy lifestyles.

### The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is typically good and some elements are outstanding, particularly in Key Stage 2.
- In Reception, teachers provide activities which excite and capture the children's interests, resulting in moments of awe and wonder. For example, during the inspection, children pretended to visit the moon and were visited by 'Moshi Monsters' who helped them to collect 'wow words' to improve their writing. There is very good use of the inside and outdoor areas to

excite children in their writing.

- Pupils' achievement in writing is not yet as good as in reading or mathematics. Not all teachers give pupils specific feedback on how to improve their work. Furthermore, too few boys achieve the highest levels.
- There are many elements of outstanding teaching in Key Stage 2. Pupils find the work difficult but achievable so they have to work extra hard; learning is purposeful and no time is lost. Pupils take great pride in their work and are keen to talk about it.
- Teaching assistants provide some good support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. They show particular sensitivity for the pupils in their care. However, the effectiveness of activities is not checked regularly enough to ensure that the pupils make good or better progress.
- Some marking in books, particularly in English, is helpful in Years 3 and 6 and leads to very good progress by all pupils. Pupils are given very clear and regular feedback showing what they are doing well and examples of how to improve their work. Nevertheless, this is not yet routine in all year groups or in all subjects, including writing.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils' behaviour around the school and in class is sometimes outstanding; pupils take care of each other, show sensitivity for pupils with special educational needs and, as one Year 4 child put it, 'everyone bonds'.
- Pupils say bullying is rare but when it does happen it is dealt with quickly.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in school and online.
- Pupils take responsibility well and have a good range of opportunities to contribute to the school from being 'Eco-warriors' cleaning up the grounds, 'High Fivers' looking after the younger pupils during break times, and as members of the school council.
- In Years 4, 5 and 6, pupils' attitudes to learning are impeccable. They enjoy their learning and show determination to succeed.
- Pupils have a range of opportunities to develop their social, moral, spiritual and cultural awareness and their appreciation of the world beyond the school. For example, the school owns an acre of rainforest in Bolivia.
- Behaviour and safety are not yet outstanding because teachers' management of behaviour is not always at the same high level. As a result in some classes pupils' behaviour is not as good as in others, and pupils' attitudes to learning are not yet of an equally high standard across all year groups.
- Despite attendance being reduced by the local secondary school having a five-term year with holidays not in line with Plumberow, rates of attendance are above average.

**The leadership and management are good**

- The headteacher is well respected by staff, parents and pupils. He, his deputy and the other senior leaders work hard to bring about improvements, and are realistic and accurate about what they need to do to improve the school.
- Leadership in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. The school has good links with parents and there are excellent examples of helping children to settle quickly when they first join the school.
- There have been numerous changes to the curriculum to make sure topics engage boys, from rocket building in Reception to 'Who pushed Humpty?' in Year 3. As a result, pupils, especially boys, are more interested in their learning and this is helping them to improve their writing.
- All pupils have good opportunities to write and apply their mathematical skills in different subjects. Exceptional displays of pupils' work throughout the school show the wide range of topics studied.
- Parents are highly supportive and say they would recommend the school to others. A small percentage say they would like their concerns to be dealt with more quickly.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have high expectations of staff and check the quality of teaching regularly and accurately. They are both skilful in giving feedback to teachers about how to improve their teaching. Teachers are only rewarded if they meet their performance targets.
- The school works closely through a number of partnerships with local clusters of schools, and this has helped staff to see best practice in action.
- The pupil premium is spent on a range of activities to help pupils access the whole of school life including trips, music lessons and clubs, in addition to supporting their academic success. Equally, the primary school sports funding is used well to support the wide range of sports clubs and to provide specialist teaching. This makes sure pupils benefit from high quality teaching in sport.
- Some support for pupils with special educational needs is good, for example the use of art therapy seen during the inspection was highly effective. However, leaders do not monitor the impact of support to make sure it is helping pupils to make good progress.
- The regional director of the Academies Enterprise Trust uses the headteacher to support other schools. Since the school has converted to an academy, the local authority provides limited but still helpful support.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors know the school well and have a clear understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement. They are proud of the school and the efforts of all staff, and are ambitious.
  - The wide range of skill and experience means governors are confident to support the school, especially in decisions on how to spend money such as the pupil premium and sports funding.
  - The governors visit the school regularly and have a good understanding of pupils' performance and the quality of teaching, and how it is managed. Targets for the headteacher are suitably challenging and link to the school's improvement plan and priorities.
  - The governing body makes sure that safeguarding meets national 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137381
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	431253

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 converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	649
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Anne Snelson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ian Barton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01702 203741
<b>Fax number</b>	01702 201978
<b>Email address</b>	contactus@plumberowprimaryacademy.org

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