

Chilwell Croft Academy

Chilwell Croft, Newtown, Birmingham, B19 2QH

Inspection dates 1–2 July 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

- Too few pupils are making good progress and reaching the higher levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Expectations of what pupils can achieve are not consistently high.
- Some of the work the teachers set is too easy for some pupils and too hard for others.
- The information that the teachers collect about what pupils know and can do is not always used effectively to plan suitable work.
- Reading is not given a high enough profile in the academy.
- Those teachers with subject and phase responsibilities are not yet sufficiently influential in improving the quality of teaching.
- The subjects and themes that the pupils are taught do not always motivate them. As a result, some pupils lose interest and their concentration wanders.

The school has the following strengths

- Children make a good start to school life in the Reception classes.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 has risen sharply this year.
- The extra funds given to the academy have been used successfully to accelerate the progress made by older pupils.
- Pupils say they feel safe at school and that behaviour has improved greatly.
- The trust board has taken decisive action to reverse the decline in the academy's performance.
- The executive headteacher and headteacher have brought about marked improvements in the last six months, particularly in behaviour and attendance.
- They know what further improvements are needed. Their recent successes and their plans for the future show that the academy is well placed to continue to improve.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching in 20 lessons. Six of these were carried out jointly with the executive headteacher or headteacher. The inspectors examined pupils' work, spoke with them in lessons and on the playground, and heard some of them read.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including the academy's plans for improvement, and policies about keeping pupils safe. They also examined a range of data about pupils' progress.
- The inspectors held discussions with teachers, the headteacher, the executive headteacher and three members of the trust board, and a consultant who provides support and advice.
- The views of parents were analysed from a questionnaire administered by the academy. Less than 10 parents registered their views on the Parent View website so they were not made available to inspectors. However, the views of parents who spoke to inspectors during the inspection were considered.

Inspection team

Christopher Parker, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Catherine Beeks	Additional Inspector
Rosemary Barnfield	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Chilwell Croft became an academy sponsored by Aston Manor Academy in September 2012. Together with University College Birmingham they form the Equitas Academy Trust.
- The academy has a greater than average number of pupils for a school of this type.
- The pupils come from a wide range of cultural backgrounds; about half of them speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action (pupils who need extra support with their learning) is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- The academy houses specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs. It currently supports 12 pupils with autistic spectrum disorder/behavioural, social and emotional difficulties.
- Three quarters of the pupils are supported through the pupil premium. This is much higher than the national average. This extra government funding supports those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who leave and join the academy at different times in the year is greater than in most schools.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- There have been many changes of staff over the last year. Six newly qualified teachers took up their posts in September 2013. A new deputy headteacher was appointed in January 2014. At the same time, an interim headteacher took control of the academy. He has subsequently been appointed as permanent headteacher.
- An executive headteacher oversees the work of both Aston Manor Academy and Chilwell Croft Academy. A single trust board took over the governance of both academies in January 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils make good progress and more of them reach the higher levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - establishing consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - making more effective use of the information teachers collect about what pupils know and are able to do so that they can plan work with a suitable level of challenge
 - ensuring pupils are set tasks that interest them and encourage them to concentrate fully.
- Raise standards in, and the profile of, reading, by:
 - ensuring that pupils throughout the academy are encouraged to read widely and often
 - stimulating pupils' interest in reading by giving books and their authors a high profile in classrooms and corridors
 - increasing the involvement of parents.
- Improve the curriculum so that it provides pupils with interesting activities that motivate them and foster positive attitudes to learning.
- Extend the influence of those teachers who are responsible for subjects and phases so that they are fully involved in improving the quality of teaching.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Too few of the most able pupils are making good progress. Although the proportion of pupils reaching the level expected at the end of Year 6 in the recent 2014 national tests has improved considerably, and is broadly average, not enough pupils are reaching higher levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The results of national tests in 2013, at the end of Year 6, were below average because not enough pupils made the progress they should. Very effective steps have been taken over the last six months to bring about improvements. Pupils have been taught in small groups and given extra lessons outside of the school day to make up for earlier underachievement.
- Progress is patchy. Most pupils are making the progress expected of them. However, pupils in Key Stage 1 are making faster progress than those in some classes in Key Stage 2. The data the academy collects about pupils' progress shows that they are making faster progress in writing than in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieved standards, in the national tests in 2013, that were similar to the national average for this group. Younger pupils are supported well to develop their use of English. Consequently, these pupils make progress in line with that of their classmates.
- Some pupils do not read widely or often enough. Although younger pupils use the sounds that letters make to help them read unfamiliar words, not all of the older pupils read fluently. Reading is not given a high enough profile within the academy. There are very few displays to stimulate the pupils' interest in reading.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium have benefited from a range of extra teaching, both in school and at Saturday and holiday schools. In 2013, these pupils left Year 6 six months behind their classmates. This year they have made as much progress as other pupils and attained similar standards to them in reading and writing. In mathematics they are three months behind.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, including those taught in the resource base, make progress at a similar rate to their peers. Most of the pupils who attend the resource base spend time in mainstream classes where they receive an appropriate level of support.
- The children start school with skills that are not as well developed as those expected for their age particularly in speaking, reading, writing and number. Many of the children are at a very early stage of speaking English and their general communication skills have not developed to the expected level.
- Children make good progress in the Reception classes. They become more confident in their use of language and concentrate for increasingly long periods without losing interest in what they are doing. They develop their skills at a good rate because the adults question the children thoughtfully and extend activities into other areas of learning.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teachers' expectations are not consistently high. Teachers do not always set work that is hard

enough to make sure the most able are interested and motivated to make good progress. In some subjects teachers do not insist on the same level of accuracy in spelling, punctuation and presentation as they do in English books.

- Pupils' learning does not always build rapidly enough on what they already know and are able to do. Although the academy has established a system of recording pupils' progress and holding regular meetings to identify pupils who are falling behind, some lessons do not take enough account of what pupils need to learn next.
- Marking has improved considerably over the last six months. Scrutiny of samples of the pupils' work shows that the guidance that they receive on how to improve their work is becoming more sharply focused. Many pupils' learning is benefiting positively from their teacher's comments, but in some classes not all comments are followed up.
- Wall displays in classrooms provide helpful information to aid pupils' learning, particularly in writing and mathematics. Occasionally, the classroom is not well organised or managed by the teacher and this undermines the effectiveness of the teaching. Pupils' work with an artist in residence is attractively displayed on corridors.
- Questioning is often used well to deepen the pupils' understanding. For example, in a Year 2 class, when pupils were learning to use subordinate clauses, the teacher probed pupils' understanding to establish whether they could use them, accurately, in sentences. As a result, pupils benefited from further explanations and made considerable strides forward.
- Pupils supported in the specially resourced base receive one-to-one teaching to improve their speech and language as well as their behavioural and social development. They have a clear rewards and consequences system which helps them to recognise the impact of their behaviour and to get on better with others.
- The steps taken to accelerate progress for pupils in Year 6 this year have proved particularly successful. Small-group teaching, with a sharp focus of building on what pupils need to learn next, has improved their spelling, grammar and punctuation and the way they structure and organise the content of their writing.
- The teaching of the youngest children is good. They settle very quickly into the routines of school life. They do well and grow in confidence because they work and play together in activities, led by adults and ones which they choose themselves, both inside and outside the classroom. There is a good emphasis on early reading, writing and counting.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Attitudes to learning are not consistently positive. Although few in number, some older pupils – often boys – do not work as hard as they could. When learning is not very exciting, their concentration wanders and they 'sit back' allowing others to answer questions and do not complete their work.
- Pupils say that behaviour has improved greatly. They appreciate the many changes made by the headteacher and say that interruptions to learning are now very infrequent. The pupils are polite and generally respond quickly to instructions from adults. The academy's records show that incidents of poor behaviour and exclusion have fallen sharply.
- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Checks to make sure that adults are

able to work with children are carried out thoroughly. Staff have completed up-to-date safeguarding training. The academy has responded quickly to a recent inspection report and plans to consult with parents about teaching about different types of families and relationships.

- In discussion with inspectors, pupils say that they feel safe on the playground. They say that there are now few incidents of bullying and name calling because of the work of the 'beat bullying' mentors and the presence of several adults supervising and leading games on the playground. Pupils know about the different forms that bullying can take.
- Attendance has improved. Last year it was low but the academy has taken action to make sure all pupils attend every day by robustly following up absences. Attendance is currently broadly average. Pupils say they like school. They point to increases in visits to places of interest and more opportunities to attend sports clubs as improvements that have increased their enjoyment.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Teachers who have responsibility for leading subjects and phases are not having enough influence on the quality of teaching. Some say that in the past their roles were not clearly defined. Others have only taken up their roles very recently and have yet to establish where further improvements are needed.
- The executive headteacher and headteacher have made many changes and brought significant improvements over the last six months, particularly in behaviour and attendance. Their 'warts and all' evaluation of the academy shows that they know that there is more to do. Their success to date and plans for the future indicate they are well placed to bring many more improvements.
- The executive headteacher and headteacher's rigorous checking of the quality of teaching is tackling underperformance. Training, some of which is led by staff from Aston Manor, is developing more consistent approaches, for example, to marking. The deputy headteacher is also leading an effective training programme, including support for newly qualified teachers.
- Arrangements to check each teacher's work are now in place. This is central to improving each teacher's effectiveness and the academy's performance. Teachers are set targets that are aligned with the academy's priorities. Pay awards are now dependent on successful teaching which leads to faster progress for pupils.
- The academy has taken some steps to make the subjects and themes the pupils study, more interesting for them. Pupils enjoy more visits to places of interest but their enthusiasm is not always capitalised upon by teachers planning exciting activities. Sometimes the content of lessons is rather uninspiring and some older pupils find it hard to remain engaged.
- The academy promotes the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. As a result, pupils are polite and well mannered. Art and music have been given a high priority throughout the academy, and this broadens pupils' cultural horizons. However, there is little to stimulate pupils to read, widely and often.
- Discussions with parents indicate that many are pleased with the improvements they have seen over the last six months. Some parents commented that they would welcome a greater involvement in their child's learning, particularly in reading. Where parents have concerns or complaints, procedures set out in the academy's policies are followed.
- Pupil premium funding has been used well to increase the number of pupils who are taught

either in small groups or on their own. This, along with Saturday and holiday schools, has proved successful in rapidly accelerating the progress that pupils make, particularly in Year 6. Their progress is frequently checked and analysed so that they receive the support they need.

■ Funding to provide more sport for pupils has been used well to extend the range of opportunities that the academy offers. A range of sports clubs and, very recently, competitive matches, have been introduced. Sports coaches and specialist teachers from Aston Manor are providing training for the academy staff. Pupils' skills are benefiting, as a result.

■ The academy has benefited considerably from the wide range of support it has received from Aston Manor Academy. As well as providing training and support, the data manager has provided the information the executive headteacher and headteacher have needed to keep a keen eye on the progress pupils are making.

■ **The governance of the academy:**

- The trust board has taken decisive action to halt the decline in the academy's performance. It has put into place the same rigorous systems for holding leaders to account that it employs at Aston Manor Academy. As a result, there have been considerable improvements since the trust board took over the governance of the academy.
- Trust members know, in detail, how well the academy is performing. They are working closely with the executive headteacher and headteacher to establish high expectations for all. Together they have successfully raised staff morale and sown the seeds of a positive culture within which teachers can help pupils to thrive. They fully support the executive headteacher and the headteacher in robustly tackling underperformance in teaching.
- The trust board is now fully aware of the academy's financial situation. On conversion to becoming an academy there was an overspend with the local authority which the trust has agreed to resolve over a three year period.
- Members of the recently-formed raising standards committee monitor what the pupil premium funds are spent on. They have asked senior leaders to justify their spending decisions by providing details of the impact on pupils' progress.
- The academy's website is under construction and does not yet contain all the information that it should. Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory 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	138395
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	447447

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	384
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ray Linforth
Headteacher	Nick Lambert
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	0121 464 3402
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