

Mount Pellon Primary Academy

Battinson Road, Halifax, West Yorkshire, HX1 4RG

Inspection dates 17–18 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Requires improvement 3
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils	Requires improvement	3
Early years provision	Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement.

- The attainment of almost all groups of pupils in reading, writing and mathematics was well below average at the end of both Key Stage 1 and 2 in 2014, and their progress in reading and writing was below average.
- Teaching requires improvement because over time teachers have not ensured that pupils acquired knowledge quickly and developed their understanding in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Not enough opportunities have been provided for pupils to practise and refine their writing skills, and improve their spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- Over time, phonics (letters and the sounds they make) have not been taught consistently well and pupils have had too few opportunities to practise and refine their phonics skills and knowledge.
- Leadership arrangements for the early years provision are new and have yet to be fully effective. Teaching is not yet consistently good, and outdoor learning and playing areas are not fully utilised to support children’s development.

The school has the following strengths

- The Principal, academy leaders and governors work exceptionally well together. They are well organised, and relentless in their determination to continually improve the quality of teaching and raise standards of achievement.
- Governors hold senior leaders rigorously to account. They regularly monitor the quality of teaching and pupils’ learning.
- Staff, including teachers and teaching assistants, know exactly what the academy’s improvement priorities are. They are fully supportive of senior leaders in addressing them.
- Pupils behave well at all times. They are excited about their learning, the visitors that they meet and their visits to places of interest. Pupils attend school regularly, feel safe and are very respectful towards adults and each other.
- The quality of teaching is rapidly improving. Teachers know pupils well; they plan activities which stimulate pupils and fire their imagination.
- Training is highly effective. It is helping to improve the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of middle leaders, including those responsible for English and mathematics.
- Careful planning, well-thought-out policies and regular meetings to assess how well pupils are performing are helping to ensure that most pupils now make rapid progress across all year groups in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The overwhelming majority of parents say their children are happy and safe at the academy. They feel informed and know how well their children are performing.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of lessons in all year groups, as well as the teaching for small groups of pupils and sessions aimed at helping pupils to learn to read. Some lessons were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and held discussions with pupils from across the academy. Pupils' work in books was scrutinised during lessons and separately with senior leaders.
- Inspectors considered 40 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and the academy's own surveys of parents' and pupils' views. Additional evidence was gathered on parents' views from a number of sources, including through discussions. Responses to a questionnaire completed by 43 members of staff were considered.
- A meeting took place with the Director of Primary Academies for Northern Education Trust and the academy's achievement partner. Meetings were also held with: two governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body; academy leaders; and staff responsible for English, mathematics, special educational needs, the curriculum, data analysis and the early years.
- A range of the academy's documents was examined. These included: the academy's review of its own performance; development plans; data on pupils' progress; various records of the academy's checks on the quality of teaching; records of pupils' attendance; behaviour records; and safeguarding documentation.

Inspection team

Lenford White, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Mary Lanovy-Taylor	Additional Inspector
Faheem Chishti	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Mount Pellon Primary Academy converted to become an academy on 1 April 2013. When its predecessor school, Mount Pellon Infant and Junior School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be inadequate overall.
- The academy is more than twice the size of the average primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those supported by the pupil premium funding, is almost twice the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- Almost all pupils are from minority ethnic groups and are mainly of Pakistani heritage or of Eastern European origin. The overwhelming majority speaks English as an additional language.
- Children in the early years provision attend Nursery classes on a part-time basis and Reception classes on a full-time basis.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The academy's senior leadership team is recently established. The Principal took up her post in April 2014, and the Vice-Principal took up her post in September 2014. Both had been acting in these positions for some time prior to their substantive appointments.
- The governing body has been reconstituted and almost all governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, took up their posts when the school converted to an academy.
- A breakfast club operates from the site; this is managed by the academy's governing body.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better, and in so doing raise pupils' achievement across the school in all subjects, by:
 - ensuring that pupils know exactly what they need to do to improve their learning, and that they can acquire knowledge quickly and develop their understanding in reading, writing and mathematics
 - making sure phonics are taught consistently well and that pupils have as many opportunities as possible to practise and refine their phonics skills and knowledge
 - ensuring that pupils can practise and apply their writing skills, and especially improve their spelling, grammar and punctuation, in all subjects.
- Improve the quality of the leadership and management of the early years provision by:
 - ensuring that the quality of teaching is consistently good
 - fully utilising outdoor learning and playing areas to support children's development
 - increasing the proportion of children with the skills necessary for the next stage of their learning.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The Principal, supported by a very able Vice-Principal, senior leadership team, teachers and governors, is determined that all pupils should have access to a good education. Together with colleagues, she has systematically tackled a host of weaknesses. These included inadequate teaching, poor staff morale, low expectations of pupils and poor behaviour. Leaders have put tracking and monitoring systems in place where none existed previously.
- It was not possible for senior leaders to fully reverse the trend that led to pupils' poor achievement at the end of Year 6 in 2014 because of significant gaps in pupils' prior learning. The successful work of senior leaders is now paying dividends. Most teaching is now good and pupils' achievement has improved.
- Middle leaders, including those responsible for English and mathematics, the curriculum, computing and assessing pupils' achievement, work exceptionally well together as a team. They have clearly defined areas of responsibility, including supporting newly qualified teachers and mentoring any teachers who are not reaching their targets.
- Almost all the academy's systems, including those for monitoring the performance of teachers, have been developed over the last two years with the support of staff. All teachers and teaching assistants have clear targets, linked to raising standards for pupils and improving teachers' practice. Senior leaders regularly check on the quality of teaching and utilize various pieces of information, including that provided from pupils' progress meetings, to assess how well teachers are performing.
- The pupil premium funding is managed effectively by senior leaders. This helps to ensure that eligible pupils' good progress in reading, writing and mathematics in 2014 has been maintained and that their attainment is rapidly improving.
- Subject leaders and curriculum coordinators ensure that pupils benefit from a curriculum that they find both interesting and engaging. Year 6 pupils enjoy their residential learning and the team work and outdoor activities that this affords them. Year 1 enjoy dance activities and learning alongside professional artists, and Years 4 and 5 regularly play brass and woodwind instruments.
- The academy's work to promote pupils' reading and mathematics skills across the curriculum is good, as is its new curriculum. However, too few opportunities are provided for pupils to practise and refine their writing skills, and improve their spelling, grammar and punctuation, across all subjects.
- The academy's work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils work together cooperatively in a climate of mutual respect. They learn about major world faiths, and celebrate various religious and cultural festivals. The academy's work to broaden pupils' experiences through visits to zoos, museums, space centres, art galleries, theatres and local places of interest, makes an excellent contribution to developing their cultural understanding.
- Pupils have a good understanding of British values. Teachers are highly skilled at encouraging pupils to explore their own cultures and traditions while appreciating how these form an essential part of the culturally diverse nature of British society.
- Senior leaders and governors ensure that the primary school physical education and sport funding is spent well. This makes a good contribution towards the development of pupils' health and well-being through encouraging greater participation in sporting activities such as gymnastics, dodge-ball and table tennis. A sports coach and sports leaders also help to develop the skills of staff in teaching various sporting activities.
- The academy's work to promote equality of opportunity, foster good relations and challenge discrimination is good. This is helping to ensure that standards attained by all groups of pupils are continually improving and that any gaps between the performances of different groups of pupils are no wider than those found nationally.
- The academy's sponsor, Northern Education Trust, is effective in its role of both supporting the leadership of the academy and holding it to account. The academy works effectively and regularly with its achievement partner, whose work is commissioned through the Trust. Most recently, he has supported the academy with improving the quality of teachers' marking and reviewing the performance of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium.
- The academy takes care to ensure that it has effective arrangements for safeguarding its pupils and children in the early years. All staff are fully conversant with safeguarding procedures and know exactly what to do if they have any concerns about pupils' safety or well-being. This helps to ensure that all statutory requirements for safeguarding are met.

■ The governance of the school:

- All governors have a portfolio which identifies their specific areas of responsibility in the academy. They are skilled, experienced, well trained and know the academy well. They know that the academy has come a long way on its road to recovery and that teaching and pupils' achievement are well on their way to becoming good overall.
- Governors are effective in their roles because they hold the Principal and senior leaders to account and provide support and advice in equal measure.
- Governors know that a legacy of poor teaching led to pupils' below average performance at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2014. They have an in-depth knowledge of how well each teacher is performing because they regularly scrutinise data from pupils' progress meetings as well as national performance data. They reward teachers for their effective work, but do not accept the Principal's recommendations for salary progression or promotion until they are satisfied that teachers' performance is at least good.
- Governors check that the additional resources, booster sessions and help with costs for educational visits available to pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium are helping to raise their levels of attainment across the academy.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 and children in the early years from various social, cultural and religious backgrounds and with many different languages learn, work and play together well in this very harmonious academy.
- Pupils enjoy coming to the academy. Attendance is in line with the national average. Pupils' attendance at the breakfast club, the 'walking bus', and the work of the academy mentor with parents and the community are all helping to ensure that attendance is continually improving.
- Pupils say that they love learning because it is interesting and exciting, and say that they are especially fond of their residential learning opportunities and educational visits.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well in class. They listen carefully to their teachers and each other, and are very eager to answer questions and share their ideas. Pupils say that the best thing about the academy is the teachers, 'because they always help us to learn' and 'they make learning interesting'.
- Pupils behave sensibly when moving around the academy, during lunchtimes and when at play. Many enjoy taking on responsibilities as play leaders and library monitors. Older pupils enjoy looking after the younger children and making decisions as members of the academy council.
- Pupils are of the opinion that behaviour is almost always good. They say that it is not good all of the time because sometimes people have disagreements. However, they indicate that anyone 'falling out' soon makes up because everyone wants to get on well together.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils trust their teachers, lunchtime supervisors and all staff, and indicate that they would have no hesitation in approaching an adult if they had any concerns. Staff are fully conversant and well trained to understand and identify the potential dangers of, for example, pupils being exposed to extremist views and ideas.
- Pupils say that bullying rarely, if ever, happens. Older pupils say that people are now more respectful towards each other than in the past. They are fully aware of the academy's expected standard of behaviour and of the serious consequences of breaking the rules.
- The vast majority of parents and staff are of the opinion that bullying is rare. The academy's behaviour logs and inspection evidence confirm this and indicate that behaviour is typically good.
- Pupils are aware of most forms of discrimination-based bullying, such as racism. They know that this is wrong and that it is not tolerated at the academy.
- Pupils are aware of the potential dangers of using the internet and know never to give personal information out on social networking sites, to 'block' people they do not know, and always to talk to an adult if they are not sure if a website is safe to access.
- Pupils have a good understanding of dangers and risks, which they learn about through assemblies. They have a good understanding of how to keep healthy, and know of the dangers of drugs and alcohol.
- Visitors from fire, police, social, health and medical services help pupils to stay safe. Their 'Bike-ability' training helps them to stay safe while using roads and walkways.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because overtime it has not been good enough to ensure that all pupils make good progress and achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics across Key Stages 1 and 2. However, the quality of teaching is rapidly improving. All teachers are supported exceptionally well and are expected to improve their practice continually through participating in targeted training and continuous professional development programmes.
- Where phonics teaching is effective, pupils' skills in linking letters and sounds are good. However, phonics are not taught consistently well. Some pupils, especially in Key Stage 1, find books difficult to access because their skills in linking letters and the sounds they make are not yet developed sufficiently well.
- Teachers' marking, particularly in upper Key Stage 2, is of good quality. Marking in English books generally improves the quality of pupils' writing. Pupils often respond to teachers' comments and improve their work as a result.
- Not all pupils are clear about how to improve their learning. Too few of those who spoke to inspectors could say precisely enough what they need to do to get better in some English or mathematics work.
- Teachers develop and maintain pupils' interest in class effectively and develop pupils' love of learning well. This was exemplified in English where pupils showed creativity and curiosity while drafting ideas for a story about a mythical creature they had created called the 'Pinder Ogre'. Pupils crafted their stories well and were eager to share their ideas.
- Pupils sometimes become over reliant on teachers and lack the initiative to extend their curiosity further by finding things out for themselves.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to plan activities for pupils with different abilities. This was exemplified in mathematics where pupils worked in small groups on activities which varied in difficulty. The most-able pupils delighted in their challenge to find the area of an 'H' shape, while those of middle ability discussed exactly which measurements they should use to work out the perimeter of their 'L' shape. The teacher provided support and additional activities where they were needed, while a well-trained teaching assistant made sure that those with special educational needs were enjoying their learning fully and thoroughly.

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- In 2014 at the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in reading, writing, mathematics, grammar, punctuation and spelling was well below average, while their progress was broadly average. Overall standards attained by pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 were below average. The proportion of pupils who were identified as secure in their phonic skills by the national phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 was also below average.
- During the last academic year, pupils' progress had already started to improve, particularly in Years 1 and 2 and in reading. However, Year 6 pupils were so far behind that they were not able to make up fully for their lost learning by the time they left the academy at the end of Key Stage 2.
- The academy has set realistic but challenging targets for pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 this year. Data show that pupils are making accelerated progress across most year groups, including in the early years. Highly effective tracking systems ensure that any inconsistencies in pupils' progress are picked up quickly and dealt with promptly.
- While pupils enjoy reading books from an increasingly wide range of authors, the less-able pupils do not always have enough strategies to support them in identifying and reading new words. This is because the teaching of the links between sounds and letters is not yet consistently good.
- Pupils' progress in writing is not as good as in other subjects. Senior leaders are aware of this and have made it an improvement priority. Pupils are encouraged to write about their many visits and their 'golden' writing books contain excellent pieces of extended writing. Overall, pupils do not practise their writing skills, and thus develop their grammar, punctuation and spelling, sufficiently in subjects other than English.
- Pupils are making accelerated progress in mathematics. They fully appreciate the relevance of mathematics in everyday life and are quick to say that measuring and being able to calculate area are important for 'carpeting a room, cutting wood and making furniture'.
- The high quality support from skilled teachers and multi-lingual support staff for pupils with English as an additional language, including those who come to the academy mid-term with little or no English, is good. This helps to ensure that pupils' lack of English does not become a barrier to their learning. All pupils' achievement, including those from minority ethnic groups, is closely monitored to ensure that they make

the same good progress as their peers.

- Disabled pupils and those with special educational are looked after exceptionally well. Their progress is much improved this year across all year groups and their attainment is good. This is because the academy ensures that pupils do not miss out on learning. Good systems are in place to ensure that, on the rare occasions that pupils spend time being supported outside the classroom, they soon catch up on their learning by working with a buddy or specially trained adult on their return.
- The attainment of disadvantaged pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2014 was lower than that of their peers in the academy by about a term in reading, writing and mathematics, and about a year behind their peers nationally in all subjects. Currently, there is very little difference between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in the academy. In 2014, the progress of disadvantaged pupils was much lower than that of all pupils nationally. However, they are currently making the same good progress as their peers in the academy because their performance is closely tracked, and they are supported very well.
- The academy's work with the most-able pupils is developing well, and helping them to make good progress and attain well. A small number of pupils are on track to attain the highest possible Level 6 in mathematics, and an increasing number of activities are on offer for the most-able pupils. For example, a small group of pupils recently participated in a business and enterprise event at the local high school where they were able to put their problem-solving and decision-making skills to the test.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- Permanent arrangements for the leadership and management of the early years provision are now in place after a long period of uncertainty. However, the leadership and management of the early years provision requires improvement because the quality of teaching is not consistently good, and outdoor learning and playing areas are not utilised fully to support children's development.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work effectively together to ensure that all children, including disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and the most able, benefit from improved teaching quality and improved facilities. However, there are variations in the quality of teaching which result in children's progress and the quality of teaching requiring improvement.
- Most children enter the Nursery class with English as an additional language. Their skills and experiences are below those typical for their age, particularly in speaking and listening. However, the majority make good progress through Nursery and enter the Reception Year with much improved skills in all areas of learning.
- Children's progress through the Reception Year is improving, although a well below average proportion entered Year 1 in 2014 with the skills and abilities necessary for the next stage of their development. Inspection evidence, including the academy's own data, shows that a much higher proportion of children are on track to attain the necessary skills to ensure that they are ready for their learning in Year 1.
- Children enjoy using their outdoor learning and playing areas. However, they have yet to be utilised fully to make a full contribution to children's development and progress, and equipment and facilities do not capture children's interests completely.
- Staff work well together, and are skilled and well trained to work with children who speak English as an additional language. They make sure children are safe and engaged in their learning. This was exemplified in the Nursery, where children enjoyed hunting for shiny treasure in the sand and making meals in the kitchen. In the Reception class, children regularly enjoy their construction activities, counting, writing, playing musical instruments and making cakes for each other.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes benefit from very large and well-resourced rooms in which they work exceptionally well together. Children like to share resources and enjoy finding out about the world around them. They are eager to talk about what they are learning with adults, although some in the Nursery class find this difficult because their communication skills are still developing.
- Children's behaviour is good. They follow instructions well and move around their classrooms and outdoor learning and playing areas sensibly. Children settle into routines quickly and soon become familiar with getting prepared to play outside and engaging in 'messy' activities.
- Records are kept of children's involvement in learning activities and their progress is monitored regularly and accurately. These records are shared with parents, who are happy to be involved in their children's learning and are of the opinion that their children are safe and looked after well.

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	139270
Local authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	449908

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	567
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robert Flack
Headteacher	Cathy Hayton
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy
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