

Morpeth Road Primary Academy

Bates Avenue, Blyth, Northumberland, NE24 5TQ

Inspection dates 24–25 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
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 headteacher, senior and middle leaders have guided the academy very skilfully through its first years and provided excellent leadership.
- Pupils' behaviour is impeccable at all times, including when representing the academy on any of the many visits. Safety is of a very high standard.
- Teaching is good. Teachers plan interesting lessons and make very good use of the outdoors environment for learning.
- Provision in the early years is good and children make good progress. They benefit from a wide variety of interesting activities both inside and outside.
- Pupils achieve well from their often very low starting points and some make very rapid progress. They reach standards at the end of Year 6 that are broadly average and which are rising year on year.
- Governors have the same determination as the leaders to make the academy as good as it can possibly be. They are extremely effective in setting the strategic direction for the academy to improve even further.
- The curriculum has been carefully planned to make sure that pupils become well-rounded citizens as well as allowing them to achieve well in English and mathematics.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not master their basic mathematical knowledge securely at an early age.
- Teachers do not suggest improvements to pupils' work when marking it and so pupils do not always learn from their mistakes.
- The work planned for pupils is not always hard enough for them.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with staff, groups of pupils and had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority. They also met the Chair of the Governing Body and other governors and had a separate meeting with representatives from the board of directors of the academy trust. Inspectors met with the early years leader, the special educational needs coordinator and middle leaders. They also talked to parents at different times during the inspection.
- Inspectors looked at a range of evidence including: the academy’s improvement plan; the academy’s procedures for gaining an accurate view of its own performance; data relating to pupil progress; the work in pupils’ books and folders; and documents relating to safeguarding and child protection.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning and listened to pupils in Years 2 and 6 read. They conducted two lessons jointly with the headteacher and a deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors took account of 13 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and 46 questionnaires completed by the staff.
- Inspectors considered documents relating to performance management and minutes of governing body meetings.

Inspection team

Peter Evea, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Frances Gowland	Additional Inspector
John Pattinson	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Morpeth Road Primary Academy converted to become an academy on 1 June 2013. It is a member of the Blyth Quays Multi-Academy Trust. The academy has its own headteacher and governing body and the academy trust has a board of directors.
- When its predecessor school, Morpeth Road Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall. Morpeth Road Primary Academy has not previously been inspected as an academy.
- This is larger than the average-sized primary academy.
- Almost all pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is well above average. The pupil premium is additional government funding the academy receives to support those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or those looked after by the local authority.
- Children attend the Reception class on a full-time basis and the Nursery class on a part-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 by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and so raise standards further, especially in Key Stage 1, in mathematics and for the most able by:
 - providing work for pupils that is always hard enough for them
 - ensuring that pupils master their times tables securely at an early age
 - providing pupils with suggestions for how to improve their work and giving them time to make these improvements.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher and senior leaders have the same uncompromising drive to make the academy the best it can possibly be and have very high aspirations for pupils. Together with the governing body and leaders at other levels, they have brought about improvements to the quality of teaching, pupils' achievement and especially the behaviour and safety of pupils.
- Leaders check on the quality of teaching regularly so that there is a continuous focus on improvement. They provide excellent opportunities for professional development so that teachers can improve their performance. Teachers are given clear targets which are linked to pupil progress and the nationally expected standards for teachers. Pay awards are made only when teachers meet their targets.
- The multi-academy trust provides excellent mutual support to all its members and the academy has particularly benefited from its shared approach to improving attendance.
- Pupils have extensive opportunities to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding through a varied and creative curriculum. Leaders ensure that pupils have many opportunities to learn outside the classroom and especially when engaged in outdoor activities. For example, when surfing, pupils develop their understanding of safety on beaches and the science associated with rip currents. They have a good knowledge of the cultures in other countries through the international links that the academy has made and through the visits pupils make, for example to Italy and France, as well as the countries studied as part of the curriculum.
- Pupils develop a clear understanding of British values through everything they do, both through the curriculum and through the impressive range of extra-curricular activities and clubs. The League of Nations, which is the name given to the academy council, is an elected body and this helps pupils to learn about democracy.
- The pupil premium funding is used extremely well to provide extra support and resources to individuals and small groups, both in and out of class. Leaders are particularly effective in using the funds to remove any barriers and to make sure pupils are ready for learning.
- The primary school physical education and sport funding has been used extremely effectively to extend the range of sports available and to develop links with local clubs. The specialist physical education teachers ensure that the teaching of physical education is of a high quality. The academy's development of cycling as a whole-academy activity for pupils, staff and parents is truly impressive.
- Leaders ensure that the academy is always a safe and caring environment where safeguarding practices go beyond the statutory requirements. The academy works very effectively to foster good relations and to tackle discrimination in any form. Leaders make sure that staff know what to look for in relation to extremist views or behaviour and the dangers associated with radicalisation. Despite its large size, pupils say that the academy is like a big family where everyone is valued equally.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are highly effective. They are very knowledgeable about achievement and the quality of teaching. They visit the academy regularly and ask very challenging questions about the wealth of academy data and useful information provided by the headteacher and other leaders. They share the headteacher's drive and sense of purpose and want only the very best for the pupils they serve. They bring a wide range of skills which they use to great effect. Where there are any gaps, they seek training to fill them.
 - Governors use information well to reward good teaching. Successful action has been taken in the past to tackle underperformance so that teaching has improved.
 - Governors are meticulous in ensuring that their statutory duties are met, particularly in relation to safeguarding.
 - Governors ensure that resources, such as the pupil premium and sport funding, are used very effectively to narrow any gaps in attainment and to improve pupils' physical health and well-being.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils are exceptionally well behaved at all times. They are unfailingly polite, well mannered and courteous towards adults and especially visitors. Staff nurture very positive relationships which lead to high levels of mutual respect. As a result, any disruption to learning is very rare.

- Pupils have extremely positive attitudes to their learning. Social skills are taught well so that pupils can learn well in a range of situations, both in and out of the classroom and when on their own, in small groups or as a class.
- Pupils are proud of the work of their League of Nations which is the name given to their academy council. Older pupils act as house and sports captains. Others are play mentors, who ensure that everyone has someone to play with if they want to. They all take their duties extremely seriously and carry them out conscientiously.
- The vast majority of parents who expressed their views are happy with behaviour and comment on how much it has improved recently.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Systems and procedures for ensuring safety go beyond the normal expectations. The site is extremely secure. Strenuous efforts are made to ensure that pupils are always safe when out of the academy on visits, taking part in the many and varied cycling activities or when engaged on outdoor activities, such as canoeing. The very detailed risk assessments carried out for the visit to Italy, for example, ensured the safety of all concerned.
- Pupils say that bullying in any of its different forms is extremely rare. They know what to look for and who to turn to for help if any occurred. The academy employs a full-time counsellor so that all pupils have someone to talk to if they have any worries or concerns.
- Pupils develop an excellent understanding of how to stay safe in a variety of situations, for example when cycling, when near tidal water and when using the internet.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is good. It is stronger in Key Stage 2 where it is often outstanding. It has improved in early years and in Key Stage 1 recently. Teachers are enthusiastic and this often inspires pupils to learn. When asked what their teachers were like, one pupil put it simply, 'Amazing!'
- Teachers plan activities that capture the interest of the pupils. Their infectious enthusiasm and strong subject knowledge inspire pupils to want to learn as much as they can. There are frequent opportunities to learn outside; pupils really appreciate these and say how they help them to learn. Whenever pupils are engaged in outdoor activities or enrichment days, teachers make sure that pupils use their English, mathematical and other skills. For example, when on a cycling trip, pupils have to use their geographical skills to navigate and their mathematical skills to calculate average speeds and cumulative distances travelled.
- The improvements in teaching have resulted in higher achievement in reading and writing, and to a lesser extent in mathematics.
- Classrooms are extremely well organised and teachers have high expectations of behaviour. This orderly approach helps pupils to settle quickly and to make good progress.
- Teaching assistants make a good contribution to learning. This is because teachers use the skills of their assistants well and make sure that all adults are involved in helping pupils to achieve.
- Teachers assess pupils' work accurately and plan to meet the needs of most of the different groups in their class. However, teachers do not always plan work that is hard enough to stretch the most able and in the recent past this was particularly the case in Key Stage 1.
- Teachers mark all pupils' work carefully and set targets for future learning. However, they do not provide suggestions for how work might be improved and pupils do not always make corrections. Senior leaders recognise this weakness and have plans to help teachers to adjust their marking.
- Pupils enjoy doing homework because the new homework matrix gives them the freedom to choose from a variety of tasks and activities. Parents are encouraged to support their children and appreciate being involved in their learning.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' achievement has improved since the academy opened. Pupils in all year groups typically make good progress, but progress is faster in Key Stage 2. Standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are improving over time.

- Children join the academy in the Nursery Year with skills and knowledge that are below those typical for children of their age. They now make good progress, so that by the end of the Reception Year an increasingly high proportion is ready for learning in Year 1. This has not always been the case in the recent past. Good progress now continues, especially in Key Stage 2, so that standards, particularly in reading and writing but also in mathematics, are broadly average and rising.
- Pupils read regularly in the academy and are actively encouraged to read at home. Older pupils talk about their favourite books and authors, and understand the importance of becoming a competent reader.
- Pupils make good progress in the quality and content of their writing. They build on their early skills as they move through the academy. They write at increasing length and with greater accuracy, varying their styles to suit different purposes.
- Progress in mathematics is slower than it is in English. Although pupils develop a good understanding of the methods used to solve problems, their mastery of their times tables is not secure. As a result, they are slower to solve problems and sometimes make unnecessary mistakes.
- The most-able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently to allow them to make as much progress as possible. When they are given work that stretches them, they rise to the challenge and enjoy having to think hard.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make progress similar to that of their classmates. This is because their needs are identified accurately and they are helped effectively by skilled and dedicated adults.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium now make good progress and this is more rapid than for other pupils nationally. Gaps in attainment are narrowing and the overall improvement shows that the academy is using its resources well to provide additional support in order to ensure equality of opportunity.
- Disadvantaged pupils are approximately half a term behind others in the academy in mathematics and three terms behind in writing. There is no gap between them and other pupils in the academy in reading. Compared to other pupils nationally, the school's disadvantaged pupils are two terms behind in mathematics, one term behind in reading and three terms behind in writing.

The early years provision

is good

- Children join the Nursery with the skills and knowledge that are below those that are typical for their age. They now make good progress through the early years. The number of children who reach a good level of development and are subsequently ready for learning in Year 1 is now rising year-on-year.
- Leadership is very effective and the early years leader has brought about improvements to the quality of teaching and children's achievement. She has a very accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and has clear plans for its further development. She has created a team who are united in their drive to help children to learn and to keep them safe and secure at all times, especially when learning in the extensive outdoor area.
- Children's behaviour is of a high order. Younger children benefit from learning in the same environment as older children. As a result, they quickly understand the routines that make the early years a happy and orderly place to learn. Parents are encouraged to be a part of their child's learning and appreciate the variety of opportunities to come into the early years area.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers and other adults plan interesting and exciting experiences that capture children's interest and make them want to learn. During the inspection, children were happily involved in creating a living willow area and looked forward to monitoring its growth throughout their time in the academy.

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	139756
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	449964

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	400
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Joyce Foggett
Headteacher	Mike Bell
Date of previous school inspection	23 March 2010
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