

# Queen Eleanor Primary Academy

Queen Eleanor Road, Northampton, NN4 8NN

**Inspection dates** 3–4 June 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy	
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
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. It is not good because

- Standards in Year 6 in 2014 were too low in reading, writing and mathematics. Too few pupils reached the higher levels.
- Leaders' monitoring of teaching and learning has not yet eliminated inconsistencies in teaching. As a result, not enough pupils make good progress.
- The most-able pupils are not always given hard enough work to challenge their thinking.
- Teachers' marking does not always provide pupils with clear enough information about how well they have done and what needs to improve.
- Teachers sometimes accept untidy work from pupils.
- Pupils do not get enough opportunities to use and improve their writing skills in subjects other than English.
- Teaching assistants are not always clear about how they can help pupils to improve their learning.
- Provision for the early years requires improvement. The assessment of children's learning is not sharp enough to enable staff to plan children's next steps precisely. Hence, children make uneven progress.
- Subject leaders are not sufficiently involved in checking and improving teaching and learning in their subjects.

### The school has the following strengths

- The school is improving this year. The interim headteacher and staff have successfully enhanced the climate for learning and pupils' behaviour. Hence they are securing better teaching.
- Standards are rising in Year 6, where more pupils, including the most-able, are now making good progress.
- Pupils behave well, and their positive attitudes have contributed to the improvements seen this year.
- Relationships among pupils, and with the adults, are positive, and this is helping to improve pupils' learning.
- Pupils feel safe in school because this is a high priority for leaders. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe in different situations.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language are supported well, so that they soon gain confidence in using the language.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 17 lessons, three of which were observed jointly with either the interim headteacher or the interim assistant headteacher. Inspectors heard pupils read and looked at the work in their books.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, staff with leadership roles, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors and a representative of the academy trust. Inspectors also spoke with an external consultant engaged by the academy trust to support the school.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents, including a summary of the school’s self-evaluation and improvement plan, policies aimed at keeping pupils safe, and information about governance and the management of teachers’ performance.
- It was not possible to analyse the Parent View website because there were too few responses. However, inspectors also spoke with a number of parents during the inspection, and examined the school’s own survey of parents’ views.
- Inspectors took account of the 15 questionnaires returned by staff.
- The Reception and Key Stage 1 classes were away from school on the second day of the inspection on a planned visit.

## Inspection team

Keith Williams, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Gillian Peck	Additional Inspector
Colin Daghish	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is an average sized primary school.
- Queen Eleanor Primary Academy became an academy in September 2013. It is part of the Creative Education Academies Trust (CET). It has its own governing body. Financial management is overseen by the trust.
- The school works closely with other primary schools in the trust, and with Abbeyfield School, also part of CET, to which most pupils transfer for their secondary education.
- Over half of the pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well above average and pupils are from a wide range of heritages. The largest group, at just under a third of pupils, is that of pupils of other White backgrounds. The proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language is well above the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is above the national average. In this school, this relates to those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked-after in local authority care.
- In 2014, the school did not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The interim headteacher and two interim assistant headteachers took up post in September 2014. All three were previously members of the school's staff.
- Children in the Reception class attend full time.
- The school operates a before-school club, which formed part of this inspection.

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

- Improve teaching and learning by:
  - increasing the level of challenge for the most-able pupils
  - providing pupils with clearer feedback on what they have done well and how they can improve their work
  - sharing more effectively with teaching assistants how they will help extend pupils' learning in lessons
  - having consistently high expectations of the neatness of pupils' work.
- Improve leadership and management and ensure pupils make faster progress by:
  - eliminating inconsistencies in teaching and learning by keeping an even closer check on the work in lessons and pupils' books and using the information gathered to tackle weaknesses more quickly
  - involving subject leaders more widely in improving teaching and learning in their subjects
  - tracking the progress of children in Reception more closely and using the information more carefully to plan their next steps
  - providing pupils with more opportunities to write at length and for different purposes in subjects other than English.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management requires improvement

- Although senior leaders have secured some important improvements in teaching and learning this year, and more pupils are now achieving well, there are still inconsistencies. As a result, pupils' progress across the school is uneven and not enough achieve well. New systems to check on pupils' work and the quality of teaching are contributing to the improving picture but have not yet ensured that pupils make consistently good progress.
- Leaders for English and mathematics have reviewed and improved the planning of those subjects, although some of the initiatives they have introduced have not yet borne fruit. Leaders for other subjects are not sufficiently involved in checking and improving teaching and learning and developing the curriculum for their subjects.
- Leadership of the early years requires improvement. Although the provision has been reviewed, and key aspects for improvement have been identified and are being tackled, the assessment of children's learning is not always sharp enough to provide a detailed picture of children's progress.
- The interim headteacher and assistant headteachers have contributed strongly to identifying what needs to improve and have established a climate where good teaching and learning can take place. Pupils' behaviour has improved and, because teaching is improving, they are now making better progress, but this is not yet consistently the case. For example, across the school, too few pupils reach the higher levels.
- The key success in leaders' work to improve teaching and learning has been in Year 6. As a result of better teaching and pupils' very positive attitudes, pupils are on track to reach higher standards this year and more are making good progress from their different starting points.
- Pupil premium funding has been used appropriately to provide academic, emotional and financial support for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders are acutely aware of the need to ensure that these pupils have the same opportunities as others to play a full part in school life and achieve as well as they can. Last year, disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 generally achieved better than other pupils in the school. This year, along with other pupils, their progress is accelerating and the gap between their performance and that of other pupils nationally is closing. Discrimination in any form is not tolerated.
- The trust provides appropriate support through an education adviser who visits the school regularly, monitors teaching and learning and works with leaders to plan for and secure improvement. This work has been focused largely on Year 6, and has contributed strongly to the improvement there, but it has not yet helped to eliminate the inconsistencies seen elsewhere. The trust provides good support for the school's work in collaboration with its other primary schools and the secondary school to which most pupils transfer.
- The curriculum, although it has not yet led to consistently good progress, is appropriately broad. Design and technology is a strength, and the school provides support and guidance on developing provision in this subject for other schools in the trust. Planning for English and mathematics is improving and is contributing to pupils' better progress this year, particularly in Year 6. There are suitable plans to ensure that pupils learn the key basic skills, but too few opportunities for them to write at length and for different purposes in subjects other than English.
- The programmes for some subjects in the new National Curriculum are at an early stage of development. Nevertheless, there is a clear emphasis on promoting pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and British Values. This prepares them well for life in modern Britain.
- The primary sports premium funding has been used well to employ a sports coach who works closely with teachers to improve their knowledge, skills and confidence. This has helped to increase the range of

opportunities for pupils in and out of lessons. As a result, more pupils now take part in sporting competition, their skills level has increased and the school competes successfully with other schools.

- The school's work to keep pupils safe is a strength. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are robust and meet statutory requirements. All staff training is up to date and procedures are rigorously followed.
- The school's breakfast club is well run and managed. It provides pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, with a calm, safe and supportive start to the day and enables those who attend to be ready to learn in lessons. Pupils enjoy the range of activities offered and appreciate the time spent socially with friends.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are increasingly well placed to hold leaders to account for the school's performance. They have introduced effective methods of checking on the school's work for themselves, including regular visits to classrooms and links to subjects and other important aspects of the school's work. Governors meet regularly with the staff responsible for those areas to check on progress and developments. They have received appropriate training, for example, in analysing the data collected from the school's performance in the national tests, which enhances their understanding. As a result, along with school leaders, they evaluate the school's effectiveness accurately. Governors receive appropriate information about the performance of teachers and make sure that teachers' appraisal is carried out fairly and effectively. They ensure that teachers only receive pay awards when they have successfully met their targets. Governors and the trust make sure that pupils' safety is given a high priority. The trust maintains a good oversight of spending, including the additional funds the school receives for disadvantaged pupils and sport.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Their improved behaviour and positive attitudes have contributed strongly to the improvements seen this year. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is usually good. They are punctual, invariably ready to learn at the start of lessons and sustain good concentration. There have been no exclusions.
- Pupils' positive relationships, with each other and with staff, help to create an atmosphere in which they are able to learn. They enjoy working in pairs and groups, share ideas and equipment sensibly and listen carefully to the points of view of others. The few pupils who find it difficult to behave well are usually effectively managed by teachers and teaching assistants.
- Pupils say they enjoy school and cite a wide range of subjects and out-of-school activities that they say make learning fun. A few pupils lose interest in lessons when they do not find the work challenging enough. Attendance is broadly average.
- Pupils' conduct around the school is good. They are polite, courteous and proud of the school and its uniform. Break times are lively, energetic and enjoyable. Pupils are respectful to the staff who supervise them, whether at break-time or lunchtime. Pupils from different backgrounds get on well together at break times and in lessons. They respect each other's beliefs and enjoy learning about other cultures. Pupils are very supportive of those who are at an early stage of learning English.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils, including those who attend the breakfast club, say they feel safe in school and those parents who spoke with inspectors agreed. Staff training in aspects of safety is up-to-date. Pupils know how to stay safe in different situations, for example, when using the internet. They know the potential dangers when they are out of school.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare and they are confident that, when it does happen, it is dealt with swiftly and effectively by staff. Pupils, particularly the older ones, have a good understanding of different forms of bullying. They appreciate the steps taken by the school to increase their understanding and

awareness, for example through regular poster competitions.

- The school keeps careful records of incidents of bullying and other incidents, for example, when behaviour falls below the standard expected. Pupils have a good understanding of the system of rewards and punishments. Good steps are taken to ensure that reoffending does not reoccur.

### **The quality of teaching** requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because, although it has improved this year, there are still inconsistencies, for example, in marking and the way that the most-able pupils are challenged. As a result, pupils' progress is not consistently good across the school.
- Although teachers sometimes plan work at different levels of difficulty for pupils of different abilities, this is not routinely the case. In some instances, pupils of different abilities are expected to do the same work, which means that, for some pupils, it is too hard and it is too easy for others. While the least able pupils are often given extra adult support to enable them to learn, in some cases, the most-able pupils cover work that they already understand. This slows their progress.
- Teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously. The school's marking policy expects teachers to provide clear pointers for pupils about how well they have learned and what they need to improve, but their comments are sometimes too vague, which limits teachers' effectiveness in improving pupils' learning.
- Teaching assistants provide effective support for disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and pupils speaking English as an additional language. While they supervise other groups of pupils conscientiously, in some lessons, they do not intervene enough to help pupils learn faster. Teaching assistants are most effective where the teacher provides a good role model of how to question, prompt and challenge pupils' thinking.
- Improvements to the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics, particularly in the way that lessons are planned and taught, are helping pupils to make faster progress. Teachers have a secure understanding of how to teach phonics (the sounds that letters make). As a result, current pupils in Year 1 are reaching higher standards this year. Phonics is also well taught in Reception and this supports the early development of literacy. Good use of revised plans for teaching in mathematics is providing a more consistent approach across the school.
- Teachers have high expectations of how pupils should behave, concentrate and work together. In some classes, teachers accept untidy work too readily, or do not have enough impact when they ask pupils to present their work neatly.
- A strength of the teaching is the supportive climate for learning and the positive relationships the staff enjoy with pupils. This has helped to improve teaching and learning this year, but there is still more to do. Nevertheless, lessons invariably run smoothly and most pupils find learning enjoyable. As a result, there are more pupils making good progress than was previously the case.
- Teaching is best in Year 6. Here, the work is set at the right level of difficulty and there is a consistent level of challenge for the most-able pupils. As a result, standards are rising and pupils are making good progress.
- The sports coach makes a good contribution to the provision for physical education and sport. Consequently, teachers' knowledge and confidence, and pupils' skill levels and participation, are increasing.

### **The achievement of pupils** requires improvement

- Although there are some considerable improvements this year, pupils' progress across the school is patchy. While more pupils are learning well and making good progress, this is not yet consistent enough.

In particular, the progress of the most-able pupils varies from year-to-year. Pupils' progress is hindered by inconsistencies in teaching.

- The results of the national assessments for pupils in Year 6 in 2014 were too low in reading, writing and mathematics. In addition, too few pupils reached the higher levels. This year, the progress of Year 6 pupils has accelerated because of better teaching. These pupils are on track to reach standards that are closer to the national average and, from their starting points, they are achieving well. A larger proportion of Year 6 pupils are on track to reach the higher levels than was the case last year.
- In 2014, disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 attained higher levels than other pupils in the school. They were over a term ahead of other pupils in reading and mathematics and two terms ahead in writing. However, when compared with other pupils nationally, disadvantaged pupils were two terms behind in writing, over four terms behind in reading and almost four terms behind in mathematics. This year, because standards are rising, these gaps are closing. Disadvantaged pupils are making good progress in Year 6 this year. Elsewhere, they are also making faster progress but, as with other pupils, this is uneven.
- When children join Reception, they usually arrive with skills that are typical for their age in many areas, but lower in language and mathematical skills and their personal, social and emotional development. They enjoy learning. Last year, the Reception class was more able and the proportion of children reaching a good level of development was similar to that found nationally. This year, fewer children are on track to reach that level. Most pupils make the progress expected of them in Key Stage 1 and, last year, standards were broadly average.
- Across the school, the progress made by the most-able pupils is uneven. These pupils are making good progress in Year 6. Elsewhere, they make good progress where the work is consistently hard enough for them and expectations are high, but this is not always the case. Their progress slows where the work is too easy.
- Pupils' reading, writing and mathematical skills are improving because of a more systematic approach to teaching and planning. Pupils, particularly older ones, read widely and often. They write for a variety of purposes in English lessons, but there are not enough opportunities for them to do so in other subjects, nor to use and practise the skills of writing at length.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are fully included and generally receive the support they need to achieve as well as their classmates. Teachers keep a close check on their learning and any pupil at risk of falling behind is given suitable extra help. Pupils with significant needs, for example those who are deaf, are given specialist help. Some of these pupils make rapid progress.
- Pupils learning English as an additional language are supported well. They are given appropriate one-to-one support and the work is tailored well for them in classrooms. Consequently, pupils usually make good progress in learning English and are able to play a full part in lessons. There is no significant difference in the progress made by pupils based on their ethnic origins.

### **The early years provision**

### **requires improvement**

- Leaders ensure that children in the Reception class are safe, secure and able to enjoy learning. Steps have been taken to improve the provision, although there is still more to do because progress is not yet consistently good for all children given their starting points. Consequently, leadership and teaching in the early years require improvement.
- Systems to assess children's learning and record their progress are in transition. While the new systems are designed to enable staff to keep a much closer check on how well children are doing and plan their next steps, they are not yet well established. As a result, it is not always clear how well children have learned and what they should do next. Over time, this also makes it difficult for staff to get an accurate view of the children's progress.
- The planning is firmly based on finding out and using children's own preferences and interests. This works

well because it adds to children's enjoyment. However, its impact is limited when the assessments made by staff are not sharp enough about what, precisely, has been learned.

- The planning provides children with regular access to each area of learning, and good use is made of the outdoor area, particularly to promote their physical and social development. Children behave well and are keen and interested in learning. Consequently, although their learning is uneven, they are adequately prepared for Year 1.
- Staff promote children's personal development well and children understand the routines of the class and what is expected of them. The setting is very inclusive, so that children of all backgrounds are able to play a full part in the life of the school. Children who start school with English as an additional language are supported well, hence they make good progress.

## 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>	139650
<b>Local authority</b>	Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	450060

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 sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	262
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Maria Wykes
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sue Cox (interim head)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previous inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01604 761200
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