

# Brookvale Primary School

Mallard Drive, Erdington, Birmingham B23 7YB

## Inspection dates

28–29 January 2016

## Overall effectiveness

**Requires improvement**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an academy that requires improvement

- Not enough pupils make expected or more than expected progress in mathematics by the end of Year 6. Leaders have been slow to focus their attention on improving pupils' outcomes in numeracy.
- Systems for tracking the current progress of pupils are underdeveloped and do not demonstrate clearly enough how well pupils are doing.
- Leaders do not target pupil premium funding specifically enough; governors do not hold leaders sufficiently to account for how it is spent or for outcomes for disadvantaged pupils who are not making as much progress as their peers in Key Stage 2.
- Leadership of special educational needs is at an early stage of development; the academy does not yet meet all its statutory duties.
- Teaching of numeracy is not always sufficiently challenging for different groups of pupils; it does not give pupils enough opportunity to reason or solve problems.
- Teachers' feedback to pupils does not always challenge or extend pupils' thinking skills.
- Literacy and numeracy are not sufficiently promoted across enough other curriculum subjects and topic work. Consequently pupils' writing and numeracy are not at the same standard as they are in literacy and numeracy lessons.

### The academy has the following strengths

- Pupils get off to a rapid start in early years and make good progress by the end of Reception as a result of good teaching and provision.
- Phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) is taught well throughout the academy, particularly in early years and Key Stage 1, so that by the end of Year 1 pupils' standards in phonics are higher than the national average.
- Pupils behave well in and around the academy. The extent to which they feel safe is high.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well to ensure that they have a good understanding of universal values including British values.
- Parents and staff are fully supportive of the leadership of the academy.

## Full report

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

- Accelerate the progress that pupils, including the most able, make in mathematics by making sure that:
  - senior leaders focus on strengthening the leadership of numeracy
  - tracking systems enable leaders to monitor more effectively how well pupils are doing so that they can hold teachers more closely to account for their progress
  - teaching of mathematics is sufficiently challenging for different groups of pupils
  - there are more opportunities for pupils to reason and problem solve
  - feedback to pupils informs them how they could improve or extend their learning further
  - pupils have the chance to apply the numeracy skills they have learnt in a wider range of lessons to the same standard as in numeracy lessons.
- Improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils by making sure that:
  - leaders have specific targeted plans for the spending of the pupil premium
  - plans and reports have measurable outcomes that can be evaluated by the governing body
  - reports on the pupil premium funding indicate the impact of specific activities on disadvantaged pupils
  - progress of disadvantaged pupils is tracked more rigorously so that leaders can evaluate the impact of strategies employed for specific pupils.
- Improve leadership of special educational needs by making sure that:
  - leaders are well qualified and trained to carry out their duties
  - reports and policies comply with all statutory requirements
  - progress of pupils is tracked more rigorously so that leaders and governors can evaluate the impact of plans and support in place for identified pupils.

An external review of governance and an external review of the academy's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership of numeracy has not had sufficient impact in arresting the two-year decline in pupils making expected, and more than expected, progress in mathematics by the end of Year 6. There has been, until recently, not enough focus on numeracy because literacy, especially in early years and Key Stage 1, has taken centre stage.
- Arrangements for tracking the progress of pupils currently in the academy are underdeveloped. They do not give a clear enough picture of how well pupils are doing for leaders and governors to evaluate what current progress is like. Leaders cannot hold teachers sufficiently to account for the progress their pupils are making.
- There is not enough strategic direction for the pupil premium funding; the widening gaps in the progress made by disadvantaged pupils from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 are not being tackled with sufficient rigour. Plans and reports are not precise enough about the impact and intended impact of funding and there are no measurable targets for closing the gap for disadvantaged pupils.
- Leadership of special educational needs is new and underdeveloped. Leaders are not yet sufficiently trained and qualified for the role. Information on the academy's website is not easily accessible.
- Leaders have established an ethos in the academy based on universal values, including British values, which is preparing pupils well for life in a diverse modern Britain. Consequently provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. It is reflected well in pupils' books and displays around the academy.
- Leaders are accurate in identifying strengths and weaknesses in teaching. A commitment to training and performance management for teachers has led to examples of rapid improvements where previous weak teaching had been identified. Leaders have also been quick to tackle previously identified weaknesses in leadership. Recent appointments have ensured that the academy has sufficient capacity to improve further.
- The academy has a well-deserved reputation for the effective way it teaches phonics. It has sustained its culture as a 'reading school'. This contributes significantly to the high outcomes pupils achieve by the end of Year 2.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils have the opportunity to experience a wide range of subjects, backed up well by extra-curricular activities. These include a thriving breakfast club and a range of sporting activities supported by the sports premium funding which is well targeted. Sports activities, open to all, help to challenge gender stereotypes and promote equality of opportunity.
- The large majority of parents surveyed said that the academy was well led and managed but a small minority responding to the survey on Parent View and freetext had some concerns.
- The academy receives its support and challenge from within the trust rather than externally.
- **The governance of the academy**
  - Governors have an overall view of strengths and weaknesses in the academy but have not held leaders sufficiently to account for the decline in pupil outcomes in mathematics. Although they have asked challenging questions this has not yet led to the rapid action required by senior leaders in numeracy.
  - Governors have not analysed pupil outcomes in enough detail and have too readily accepted leaders' accounts for variations in pupil performance.
  - Governors do not sufficiently hold leaders to account for the pupil premium funding and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.
  - Governors have taken effective action to address previously identified weaknesses in leadership.
  - Governors are well trained and experienced in literacy and phonics and rightly recognise this as a strength of the academy.
  - Governors make sure the academy fulfils its statutory responsibilities for safeguarding.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All staff are vigilant and well trained to identify any concerns. Referrals and risks assessments are carried out thoroughly. The strong safeguarding culture is recognised by parents, pupils and staff alike.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Tasks set for pupils are not always challenging enough, especially for groups of pupils in numeracy at Key Stage 2. Extension tasks are too often another similar activity set at the same level of challenge, albeit with larger numbers.
- Assessment information is not used precisely enough to build on pupils' prior learning and to ensure that pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, make at least the expected rate of progress, especially in mathematics.
- Feedback to pupils is at times too weighted towards the positive so that pupils do not always know how they could improve their work or extend their thinking skills.
- Pupils do not always get opportunities to consolidate the skills they have learnt in numeracy and literacy in other subjects. Teachers do not have the same high expectations of the quality of writing in topic work as they do in literacy lessons. Numeracy is underdeveloped in other subjects including science.
- Teaching in mathematics does not deepen pupils' understanding enough. This is because there are too few opportunities for pupils to apply their skills through reasoning and problem solving in Key Stage 1 or Key Stage 2. Pupils' work indicates that their work is heavily focused on calculation and number.
- Teaching of phonics is a strength of the academy. Pupils use their skills well to decode unfamiliar words. Additional adults are highly trained to teach phonics and reading. They show close fidelity to the phonics programme employed by the academy, ensuring that it is taught consistently well throughout the academy. They model the sounds of letters well for pupils. Teachers and adults demonstrate secure subject knowledge in phonics and literacy.
- Pupils engage positively with the homework tasks they have been set. For example, one pupil successfully used the e-learning portal, where mathematics homework is available online, to help her understanding of percentages.
- There are good relationships between teachers, other adults and pupils. Teachers create calm, purposeful learning environments where there is an absence of low level disruption to hinder learning. Teachers have well-established routines and high expectations of behaviour; consequently pupils settle quickly to their learning.
- Teaching assistants effectively support the pupils they work with in lessons. They use open questions to check pupils' understanding and modify the pitch and expectation for the groups of pupils or individuals they are targeting.
- Literacy is promoted well in science where pupils have the opportunity to write up their experiments.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

### Personal development and welfare

- The academy's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good and is rooted in its emphasis on core values in recognising every individual and providing a caring and learning environment.
- The personal, social, health and economic education curriculum and special assemblies make a significant contribution to pupils' safety and welfare. For example, Year 6 boys are confident to talk about their feelings and emotions in literacy lessons.
- Pupils know about democracy through elections for the school council and visits from the local Member of Parliament before the last general election. Pupils have collections for food banks and Macmillan nurses. They recently commemorated Holocaust Memorial Day.
- Parents who responded to the survey were overwhelmingly positive about how safe and happy their children are in the academy. A large majority also said that their children were looked after well. Pupils spoken to confirmed this.
- Pupils reported that bullying is very rare. They are aware of the different forms bullying can take. All are confident of reporting if an incident occurred and to whom to report it. The large majority of parents who expressed a view thought that bullying was dealt with well.
- Leaders make sure that they meet all statutory responsibilities for safeguarding, including appropriate training and checks on staff, volunteers and visitors.
- A few pupils are over compliant when given easy tasks in lessons. They do not always take enough responsibility for their own learning by seeking more challenging work.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- In lessons pupils are resilient and cooperative; they have good attitudes to learning and do not drift off task, even if an activity is undemanding or has been going on for too long. They listen well to instructions and collaborate in small groups or pairs effectively.
- Pupils take pride in their appearance and their work, which they present neatly, taking care with the quality of their handwriting.
- They work well with each other in lessons. Pupils of different backgrounds and faiths have good relationships in the classroom and around the academy.
- They are positive about others' differences and spoke with enthusiasm about their trips to different places of worship.
- Younger pupils are developing opportunities to be independent, making choices in their learning and taking responsibility for themselves and others.
- Attendance has continued to improve and is above the national average for primary schools. Similarly, the rate of persistent absence has fallen and compares favourably with the national rate.
- Most parents who responded to the survey thought that the academy does a good job in making sure pupils are well behaved.
- Pupils reported that there were a small number of pupils in each class whose behaviour is not good although inspectors did not see evidence of this during visits to classrooms. There have been a very small number of exclusions this academic year.
- At times a few older pupils are over directed by adults and they do not have enough opportunity to make choices for themselves about their learning. The academy is addressing this through the recent introduction of 'chilli challenges' whereby the pupil chooses the task they think is at the appropriate level of challenge for them, from 'mild' easier work to 'hot and spicy' more-difficult tasks.

## Outcomes for pupils

## require improvement

- Too few current pupils are making rapid progress in mathematics in Key Stages 1 and 2. Work in pupils' books indicates a strong focus on number and calculation but not enough reasoning and problem solving. This is holding back the most-able pupils from exceeding age-related expectations.
- The academy has moved to a new tracking system. Leaders are finding it hard to demonstrate how pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, are progressing until the end of the academic year.
- In the most recent Year 6 tests, the percentage of pupils achieving the highest possible levels in reading, and mathematics was below average.
- Not enough pupils have made expected or more than expected progress in mathematics from the end of Key Stage 1 to the end of Key Stage 2 in the last two years.
- A large majority of the parents who responded to the survey said that they thought their children were making good progress in the academy. Evidence from inspection showed that rates of pupil progress from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 were very varied, with writing much stronger than reading and mathematics.
- Pupils do not achieve the same standards of writing and numeracy in most other subjects and topic work as they do in their literacy and numeracy lessons.
- The attainment gap in reading and writing for disadvantaged pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 has narrowed in recent years. The proportion making overall expected or more than expected progress has fallen, however.
- The number of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs in the most recent tests in Year 6 was too small to be statistically significant.
- Standards in writing in Year 6 were above the national average in the most recent assessments and broadly average for reading and mathematics, so most pupils are suitably prepared for secondary education.
- In the most recent teacher assessments, pupils' attainment in Key Stage 1 was above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics, showing a rising trend. Disadvantaged pupils did particularly well by the end of Year 2 against national standards. This prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education moving into Key Stage 2.

- The proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in phonics in Years 1 and 2 in 2015 was above average.
- Pupils who need to catch up have been targeted for additional one-to-one reading support and have made rapid gains in their reading ages.

## **Early years provision**

**is good**

- Early years is led well by suitably qualified staff. The environment, both indoors and outdoors, is conducive to learning, although the indoors is more attractively presented. Resources are well organised for construction and small world play in particular. There are opportunities for early writing through mark-making.
- Adults engage children well in their learning. Relationships between adults and children are very positive. Adults ensure that children are able to develop their independence through a broad range of child-initiated activities.
- Children make good progress from their starting points and the proportion of children who reach a good level of development by the time they leave Reception is rising and above the percentage nationally. Children's progression in numeracy is not always as well evidenced as it is in literacy.
- Children use their phonics skills well to decode simple words; they are developing an interest in reading but this is stronger in girls than in boys.
- Children play well with each other and cooperate during turn taking and sharing of resources.
- Links with parents are good. Children's learning journals are kept well and show the progress over time children are making but do not always record next steps.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	139465
<b>Local authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10003589

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	212
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rhona Barnett
<b>Executive Headteacher</b>	Jonathan Smart
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 356 9973
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.brookvaleschool.co.uk">www.brookvaleschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:enquiry@brkvale.bham.sch.uk">enquiry@brkvale.bham.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	14–15 September 2010

## Information about this school

- Brookvale is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is about one in eight, in line with the national average. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is also average.
- The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above the average nationally. The proportion of pupils identified whose first language is not English is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium funding (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority) is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the academy midway through a key stage is slightly lower than the national average.
- The school has converted to an academy since the last inspection and is now part of the Arthur Terry Learning Partnership. The headteacher of the previous school is now the executive headteacher overseeing Brookvale and another primary school in the partnership. The Chair of the Governing Body was in post in the previous school. A head of school was appointed when the school became an academy but left in July 2015. The previous special educational needs coordinator, who had only been in place since April 2015, left in December 2015. One of the two deputy headteachers has just returned from maternity leave and is currently working part time.
- The academy is supported by a school improvement adviser who is linked to the partnership.
- Based on their unvalidated 2015 results, the academy meets the government's 2014 floor standards. These are the minimum standards expected for pupils' learning and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 20 lessons or parts of lessons, of which 17 were jointly observed with senior leaders. In addition, inspectors made a number of other short visits to lessons and other activities, for example to look at pupils' books or behaviour.
- Inspectors heard pupils read during lessons and also observed phonics sessions.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, senior and middle leaders, other members of staff, a group of pupils, two members of the governing body including the chair and three representatives from the partnership, including the interim chief executive officer.
- Inspectors took two telephone calls from parents. There were 29 responses for inspectors to take account of through the online questionnaire, Parent View, and 17 Parent View freetext responses.
- Inspectors also reviewed a staff questionnaire completed by 28 members of staff. Inspectors observed the academy's work and scrutinised a number of documents, including the academy's own self-evaluation, improvement plan, school information on pupils' recent attainment and progress, behaviour and attendance logs, and policies and procedures, including those on special educational needs, pupil premium, sports premium, safeguarding, child protection and behaviour.
- Inspectors reviewed the minutes of the recent governing body meetings.

## Inspection team

Mark Sims, lead inspector  
John Demmerling  
Sally Noble

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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