

Forest Gate Academy

Daniel Adamson Avenue, Partington, Manchester, Greater Manchester M31 4PN

Inspection dates

13–14 June 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders, including the trust and governors, have made astute and decisive recruitment decisions which have made a significant difference to the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes.
- Although pupils' progress at the end of 2017 was weak for reading and writing, pupils' progress in these subjects this year across the whole school, including Year 6, is good. More pupils are achieving the standards expected for their age than before.
- This year, in Year 6 many more pupils than previously have reached the higher standard and in Year 2 are working at greater depth in English and mathematics. This is not so in other subjects. Too few pupils in other year groups are exceeding the school's expectations for their age, especially the most able.
- Teaching is consistently good across the school. Newly qualified teachers are supported extremely well to deliver high-quality learning.
- While the standard of pupils' writing is strong and improving across the school in English, teachers' expectations of writing elsewhere in the curriculum are not as high. Teachers do not enforce the school's handwriting and presentation policy as strictly as they could.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils are sensible, kind and considerate. They represent their school very well and have high regard for their teachers.
- The school's work to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is commendable.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and they are well cared for. The curriculum is planned well to protect pupils from risks. It helps them keep a healthy mind and body.
- Children make good progress in the early years. They are taught well, enjoy learning and grow in confidence.
- Governors hold leaders to account stringently. The governance structure is effective in monitoring the work of the school. Their work, and that of the school leaders, to promote parents' and carers' positive engagement with the school is developing. However, a small but significant minority of parents express dissatisfaction with some aspects of the school.
- The trust has been pivotal in the school's rapid improvement journey. It has an effective network of support to sustain improvements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen pupils' progress across the school even more by:
 - ensuring that teachers increase the levels of challenge in English and mathematics, so that more pupils exceed the age-related standards set by the school
 - deepening pupils' knowledge and understanding of other subjects in key stages 1 and 2
 - ensuring that the good-quality writing standards seen in pupils' work in English are embedded throughout the curriculum.
- Strengthen the school's work to engage positively with parents and respond to their concerns.
- Ensure that the school's handwriting and presentation policy is consistently adhered to.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The trust and governors have taken swift and decisive action to address the weaknesses in school leadership, teaching and the curriculum which resulted in a sharp dip in pupils' performance in 2016 and 2017. The newly appointed executive headteacher has brought much-needed rigour to management systems. The curriculum is now fit for purpose and well planned. The good-quality teaching of new staff has improved pupils' progress across the school. Leaders have halted the decline in standards and in pupils' progress, particularly in reading and writing.
- The leadership of teaching is strong and effective. The trust makes excellent use of its school-centred initial teacher training provision to recruit the very best newly qualified teachers. These teachers are highly trained and knowledgeable about the primary curriculum. Their confidence in the classroom is high. Teachers regularly share good practice and work closely with outstanding practitioners from within the trust.
- Leaders have set up robust systems to check the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. The tracking system has been refined so that all staff know which pupils are not making the progress they should. The support plans for any underachieving pupils are effective.
- The school has a high proportion of disadvantaged pupils. The government funding for this group is spent efficiently and the impact of its use is evaluated carefully. Previously, this group did not always do as well as other pupils nationally. Better provision and improved teaching across the school mean that many more are making good progress and reaching the standards they should.
- The leadership of special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is good. Pupils receive effective support and their needs are closely monitored.
- Subject leaders have reviewed and redesigned the curriculum well to meet the needs of pupils. The leadership of mathematics is strong. As a result of effective support from the trust's subject network and teachers' strong subject knowledge, pupils develop good confidence and do well in mathematics. The leadership of English is effective. Leaders have implemented a successful reading and writing programme of study across the school. The school's data shows that an increasing proportion of pupils are acquiring skills appropriate for their age.
- The curriculum for subjects other than English and mathematics is strengthening. Pupils have a broad range of opportunities to develop their artistic, linguistic and sporting skills. Humanities subjects, including religious education, help pupils to challenge stereotypes, develop their empathy skills and understand others from different cultures and backgrounds. Pupils demonstrate sound moral values. Consequently, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is developed very well.
- The premium sports and physical education funding is used very well. Its impact on pupils' participation in activities and health and fitness is monitored well. Pupils are engaged in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils compete in a number of sporting competitions with other schools.

- The school provides an excellent range of additional clubs, which appeal to a wide range of pupils' interests. These include yoga, drama, healthy eating, book club, art club, sewing and hairdressing.
- Leaders ensure that the curriculum to support pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) is well thought out and meets pupils' needs. Classes use their PSHE lessons to deepen their understanding about particular themes such as e-safety, stranger danger, relationships and bullying. Assemblies are used to showcase their understanding. Pupils are taught sound values of tolerance, understanding and acceptance of difference.
- Leaders have tackled high rates of absence and exclusion effectively. Closer monitoring, increased parental contact with key families and the recruitment of an educational welfare officer have made a considerable difference to pupils' attendance and behaviour.
- The trust has developed its levels of support for the school. The school receives training from specialist literacy and mathematics professionals from the family of schools in the trust. The academy director has been instrumental in facilitating good-quality school-to-school support. This has enabled pupils' assessments to be checked more easily.
- Leaders enjoy high levels of support from staff and parents. However, a few parents expressed some reservations about how their concerns have been handled.

Governance of the school

- The governing body has taken decisive action to tackle weak performance. This has led to the appointment of new leaders and teachers. Committees have been organised more efficiently since the last inspection so that governors can monitor the school's performance more rigorously.
- Governors keep good oversight of safeguarding. They review the school's safeguarding arrangements regularly and require leaders to prove their effectiveness.
- Governors do not rely on the information provided by leaders. They also check for themselves by visiting the school. They meet with the student council to gauge the effectiveness of leaders' work and pupils' views.
- Governors have increased their presence at events and at the school gates to make themselves available to parents. However, they acknowledge that the current strategy to encourage more positive engagement with parents has not been wholly effective for some.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding leaders are highly knowledgeable and experienced. They deal with pupils' concerns at every level promptly and effectively. Leaders have close links with outside agencies and the local authority. All staff receive safeguarding training, including level 1 and on the 'Prevent' duty. Systems to report signs of abuse are well used, indicating good vigilance by staff.

- Leaders are highly attuned to the risks in the local community. The curriculum is carefully designed to help pupils protect themselves.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching is good. As a result of focused training and development, the quality of teaching in English and mathematics has improved and is now good. Newly qualified teachers are supported extremely well; they deliver high-quality learning regularly.
- The vast majority of pupils are highly engaged in their learning. Teachers engender excellent attitudes among pupils. They reinforce excellent behaviour and social skills. Consequently, pupils work well with one another and cooperate.
- The teaching of reading is effective. Teachers have developed their practice well, especially in the teaching of phonics. Pupils develop good skills from a young age to decode unfamiliar words and read with confidence and with good intonation. Their comprehension skills are improving through focused daily 'basic skills' tuition each morning and afternoon in all classes.
- The teaching of mathematics is a strength of the school. Teachers are well supported by the mathematics leader and the local network leader to develop pupils' arithmetic and problem-solving skills. More pupils are now applying their skills to real life situations regularly. The most able pupils are challenged well through regular 'mastery' activities.
- Pupils' writing skills are improving quickly. The new strategies to promote writing, such as 'talk for writing', are making a positive difference across the school. Pupils' discussions are structured and clear; they give effective feedback to their peers. This has impacted upon their writing, as pupils demonstrate increasing sophistication in their written work in English as they get older.
- Pupils, however, do not use their improved writing skills consistently in other subjects, such as religious education and history. Older pupils' writing, for example, is often just recording simple information or short descriptions rather than more complex writing. Their use of grammar, spelling and punctuation is not as accurate as in their English lessons. Teachers' expectation of pupils' writing is not as high as it could be.
- The school has introduced a new handwriting policy, which encourages cursive writing and neat presentation. This approach is not embedded consistently across the school by teachers.
- Teachers are improving their skills to help pupils do well for their age, but this remains an area for further work, especially in foundation subjects. Teachers' questioning is often skilful and effective. Teachers help pupils to deepen their understanding and often target their questions according to pupils' ability.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well by teachers in the classroom. Teaching assistants who support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, and have been suitably trained, are particularly effective. They work with the main teacher seamlessly.
- Teachers take regular opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. They develop themes, such as prejudice, across a range of

subjects. For example, pupils' work on Martin Luther King in history and on the suffragettes in their other topic work came together successfully in a musical demonstration of their understanding of prejudice and injustice. Pupils discuss moral issues maturely. Teachers encourage respect for difference, especially in religious practice.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils have developed excellent personal and social skills. They are well-mannered and polite; they cooperate with each other and accept each other's differences.
- Pupils learn about a range of issues in their PSHE lessons, such as social skills, emotional literacy and British values. The very low rates of prejudiced-based behaviour in school are testament to the success of this work.
- Pupils' mental health is promoted well through mindfulness sessions and growth mindset activities.
- Pupils participate in a number of extra-curricular activities. Healthy eating and physical fitness are promoted well.
- Pupils learn about e-safety and how to recognise danger, including 'stranger danger'.
- Bullying is rare. Pupils feel safe and they are very well supported by the staff in the school. Most parents agree with this view.
- Occasional disagreements between pupils occur, but these are generally sorted out quickly and teachers take prompt action to stop the escalation of inappropriate behaviour.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The vast majority of pupils behave themselves extremely well, both in and out of class. Pupils cooperate with teachers and the vast majority follow the school rules consistently.
- Pupils now attend school much more regularly. The proportion of pupils persistently absent from school is decreasing. This is due to the effective work of the behaviour leader and the education welfare officer.
- The recent drive to improve lateness to school has been effective. Pupils are highly aware of the need to be in class in good time.
- Most parents, pupils and staff agree that behaviour is managed well.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' progress in mathematics has been consistently good at the end of key stage 2. Their progress in writing and reading has been inconsistent and sometimes weak since the last inspection. Intensive work to address the legacy of weak teaching has accelerated pupils' progress currently in these subjects across the school, especially in Year 2 and upper key stage 2. Pupils from all starting points now make good progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress, especially in mathematics and reading. The proportion of pupils reaching the school's expected standards for their age is improving and in some year groups they outstrip their peers.
- In 2017, the majority of pupils in key stage 1 in English and mathematics reached the standards expected of them. Few exceeded these. This year more pupils are working at greater depth, especially in Year 2.
- The proportion of Year 1 pupils who reached the expected standard in the phonics screening check was above average.
- The proportions of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils working at greater depth or the higher standard in English and mathematics have historically been low. This year, more pupils are doing so in English, mathematics and science. However, few pupils excel in other year groups and rarely in other subjects.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress. Individuals are carefully supported by well-qualified teachers and assistants.
- A culture of reading is encouraged throughout the school. Pupils read regularly and are encouraged to read at home. The recently improved guided reading sessions at the end of each day are making a positive difference to pupils' comprehension skills. Generally, pupils are confident readers because they can use their phonic skills to sound out unfamiliar words.
- Pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education. Links with the main secondary school are strong. The current headteacher confirms that pupils are among the most-ready for secondary school.

Early years provision

Good

- The leadership of early years is strong and effective. The leader has implemented an effective assessment system, which has meant that children's weaknesses when they start school are addressed well. Parents play a significant role in forming that initial assessment.
- Children make good progress in early years from their predominantly low starting points. More children than previously are reaching a good level of development and are ready to start Year 1. Children develop good number and shape knowledge and understanding. Their literacy skills are improving quickly.
- Disadvantaged children are provided with good support when they need to catch up. Additional funding is used well, for example, to provide extra support in the form of one-to-one tuition to advance their phonic skills.

- Children with SEN and/or disabilities are provided with skilled support. This enables this group of children to access all the play activities and progress just like everyone else.
- The range of learning materials both indoors and outdoors is vibrant, interesting and constructive. The early years curriculum in both classes is planned very well.
- Children play well with each other. They are sensitive and kind. Standards of behaviour are good.
- The adults are trained well to listen to children and guide them appropriately with good questions, which make them think. The 'talk for writing' approach is implemented well in both the Nursery and Reception years. Children enjoy listening to story books and talking about their own made-up stories using pictures. Children are encouraged well to sustain their concentration.
- Children are happy, safe and well cared for. Parents agree. The school encourages parental support through the 'open door' policy in the morning and through the 'e-learning journeys', where parents can comment on their children's progress.
- At the time of the inspection, there were no breaches of the statutory welfare requirements.

School details

Unique reference number	138788
Local authority	Trafford
Inspection number	10045882

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	258
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Mr George Devlin
Principal	Miss Anita Edwards
Telephone number	01617754356
Website	www.forestgateacademy.thedeantrust.co.uk/
Email address	office@forestgateacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	13–14 May 2014

Information about this school

- This school is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school.
- The school is part of The Dean Trust.
- The Nursery operates a morning and afternoon provision.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is much higher than the average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is higher than the national average.
- The school operates a breakfast club from 8am, and an after-school club until 5pm.
- Since the last inspection, there is a new chair of governors and an executive principal and head of school have been appointed. The executive principal oversees the school and the neighbouring Partington Central Academy. The trust provides additional

support to the school through an academy director, who oversees performance and collaboration between the schools in the trust.

- In 2017, the school met the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors evaluated the quality of teaching and learning in all year groups, which included observing lessons and examining pupils' workbooks in most subjects.
- Inspectors met with all leaders, including those who are also the leaders of English and mathematics, and the SEN coordinator. The lead inspector met with the chair and vice-chair and other members of the governing body. The chief executive officer of the trust and the trust's academy director were interviewed.
- Inspectors took account of 46 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, including the free-text facility, and 14 responses to the staff survey. Pupils did not respond to the online survey. Inspectors spoke with some parents before school and took account of comments sent to Ofsted from parents during the inspection. The lead inspector reviewed the responses to the school's own parents' surveys.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of school documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, behaviour logs, safeguarding records, performance information and school policies.

Inspection team

Zarina Connolly, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Joan Williamson	Ofsted Inspector
Lyn Pender	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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