

Grange Primary Academy

Dorothy Road, Kettering, NN16 0PL

Inspection dates 5–6 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good		2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good		2
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 academy trust, the headteacher, leaders, managers and governors are working well together to improve teaching and raise pupils' achievement.
- The trust has provided high quality support since taking over responsibility for the academy.
- Senior leaders thoroughly analyse information about pupils' achievement and use their findings well to identify those who need extra help.
- Pupils behave well and rightly feel safe in the academy. Pupils with behavioural, social and emotional difficulties often make outstanding improvements in their behaviour.
- Provision in the early years is good. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes are making good progress. They are being prepared well for the move to Year 1.
- Most pupils currently in Key Stages 1 and 2 are achieving well and standards are rising.
- Teaching is good and there are some aspects that are outstanding.
- The academy provides excellent support to pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. It works closely with their families and other agencies.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In 2014, the academy's results at the end of Year 6 were well below average in mathematics and in English grammar, punctuation and spelling. Only a few pupils made more than expected progress in mathematics.
- At times, teachers do not set the most able pupils work that is challenging enough for them, especially in mathematics.
- Staff do not always instil in pupils a sense of urgency about how much work they should produce or push them to think for themselves. This is particularly the case in topic lessons and when pupils work in pairs.
- While the academy waits for some alterations to be made, the outdoor area for children in the Nursery does not support their learning as well as it should.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team visited 25 lessons across all the classes. In combination with looking at pupils' books, talking to them about their work and checking their progress over time, this provided a balance of evidence on teaching and learning. An inspector heard some pupils at Key Stage 1 read, looked at lunchtime and playtime arrangements, and talked with a group of pupils.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the consultant headteacher, the deputy headteacher, teachers with specific responsibilities including for English and mathematics, and the early years teachers. Discussions took place with the Primary Director Education from United Learning, representing the academy sponsors, and the Chair of the Governing Body.
- The inspection team considered the 15 responses to the online survey, Parent View, and took into account a survey of parental opinion conducted by the academy and the comments of a number of parents when they dropped their children off in the morning. The five completed staff questionnaires were also considered.
- The inspection team observed the academy's work and looked at a range of documentation. This included: the academy's self-evaluation and development plan; records of pupils' attainment, progress, behaviour and attendance; and systems for protecting and safeguarding pupils.

Inspection team

Margaret Goodchild, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Susannah Rolfe

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Grange Primary School became an academy on 1 August 2013. It is sponsored by the United Learning Trust.
- The academy is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Children in the Reception class attend full time and those in the Nursery attend in the mornings.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage but there has been an increase in the number of pupils from Eastern Europe so that the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is now average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is high. This funding is for pupils in the care of the local authority and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The headteacher is leaving at the end of the summer term. A consultant headteacher, provided by the academy trust, joined the academy at the beginning of the inspection week to provide temporary support to the academy until it appoints a new headteacher.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of pupils who make more than the expected amount of progress, especially in mathematics, and build on existing strengths in teaching by:
 - making sure that teachers always provide enough challenge for the most able pupils
 - stepping up existing efforts to improve pupils' grammar and spelling in Years 3 to 6
 - making sure that teachers and teaching assistants always communicate high expectations about the amount of work pupils should produce, and insist that they think things out for themselves, particularly in topic lessons and when they work in pairs
 - improving the outdoor area for children in the Nursery Year.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The academy trust and senior leaders are strongly committed to improving the quality of education and have a clear vision for the future. The trust has provided a significant amount of support since taking over responsibility for the academy. Direct support by the trust and by external consultants has contributed to improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Senior leaders produce a wealth of data and carefully analyse pupils' attainment and progress. They use this information very well to identify pupils who need extra help and to pinpoint where teaching needs to be improved. The information is shared with teachers, who are also involved in analysing their pupils' progress and include a record of it in their lesson plans.
- The leadership of teaching is strong and the academy has effective systems for managing teachers' performance. Senior leaders, supported by the trust, have been rigorous in tackling past underperformance and this has been a key factor in improving teaching and raising achievement. Leaders have established a culture in which teaching can flourish and pupils are expected to behave well.
- Senior leaders hold regular meetings with teachers to check how well pupils are progressing against their targets and they make sure that all pupils have equal opportunities. Leaders keep a close check to successfully avoid any possible discrimination and promote positive relationships between pupils.
- The leadership of special educational needs is good and there are thorough systems in place for tracking pupils' progress. English is led well and this has contributed to sustained improvements in reading and writing. New leaders in mathematics, supported well by the academy trust, are working to raise achievement in the subject, with a sharp focus on mental mathematics and problem solving. Staff are receiving regular training to improve their mathematics teaching. English and mathematics leaders check teachers' planning frequently and provide detailed guidance about where it needs to be improved.
- The academy uses its pupil premium funding well to support disadvantaged pupils. Leaders have spent the money mainly to increase the number of teachers and teaching assistants, and to fund a number of support programmes. The funding also helps the academy to fund the pastoral support team, to run clubs for identified pupils at lunchtime and after school, and to enable eligible pupils to be enrolled at The Children's University.
- The academy makes good use of its primary physical education and sport premium to increase pupils' physical skills and expand the experiences available to them. It has used some of its funding to extend the provision of swimming lessons and tuition for pupils in Years 2 to 6. This has resulted in a large majority of older pupils being able to swim 25 metres. The academy has also used its funding to develop pupils' competitive game skills and to increase opportunities for sport outside lesson time.
- The curriculum promotes pupils' academic achievement and personal development well. A wide range of experiences enrich their learning, including trips, residential visits, musical tuition. The academy also hosts a range of visitors who extend pupils' learning.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The academy makes pupils aware of British values and prepares them effectively for life in modern Britain. Involvement in the 'magistrates in schools' programme helps to make pupils aware of the importance of equality, fairness and order, while visits to different places of religion and celebration of various cultures teaches pupils to respect people who are different from them.
- Parents are made to feel welcome in the academy and a number are taking part in a special programme. This is designed to engage parents and families in helping to turn their children's achievement around and forges stronger partnerships between home and school.
- The academy has thorough systems for keeping pupils safe. It carries out careful checks on all adults who work with the pupils and liaises extremely well with other agencies to protect those who are at risk.

Arrangements meet statutory requirements.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governance is effective. Through its own monitoring and the work of a range of external consultants, United Learning has a very detailed knowledge of the academy's work and makes a strong contribution to its development. The trust makes training readily available to both leaders and teachers, and provides a wide range of expertise as well as constant challenge and support for senior leaders.
- The governing body also holds senior leaders to account and governors have a good awareness of data, including the spending and impact of pupil premium funding. United Learning and the governing body are very well informed about the quality of teaching and have supported the headteacher in tackling past underperformance. They make sure that teachers' pay closely reflects the impact of individuals on pupils' progress.
- Both United Learning and the governing body have high expectations for the academy and are working well with leaders to bring about continued improvements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good and there is a calm atmosphere around the academy. In lessons, pupils are attentive and usually focus well on their learning. Pupils say that they enjoy school, and they generally try hard and take care in the presentation of their work.
- There are clearly established routines and pupils respect the academy's systems for managing behaviour and for rewarding those who behave well. Teachers manage any challenging behaviour quietly and calmly so that other pupils' learning is not normally disrupted.
- The excellent pastoral support has enabled some pupils with behavioural difficulties to make outstanding improvements in their behaviour. The nurture room provides valuable support for these pupils, and for others who need extra help for some of the time.
- The academy provides a great deal of support for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Senior leaders, the pastoral manager and family support worker all spend a significant amount of time working with pupils and their families. Staff have received considerable training in recognising and addressing personal needs and they track all pupils' well-being throughout the academy.
- The attendance rate is broadly average and improving. All absences are followed up through well-established procedures.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe is good. Pupils say that they feel safe and know who to turn to if they have a concern. The academy makes them aware of risks and personal safety, and 'safety week' involves many external agencies, such the fire and police services, prison services and the local swimming pool.
- Pupils are aware of different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying, as a result of the academy's anti-bullying work. They say that there is some bullying but that when they report it to a teacher, 'it is soon sorted out'.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good and there are some elements that are outstanding. Classrooms are attractive and well organised. Teachers use display well to celebrate pupils' achievement and to stimulate their learning. Activities are varied and interesting and teachers have positive relationships with pupils.
- Teachers make good use of teaching assistants, and additional staff usually make a good contribution to pupils' learning. Targeted support by assistants often helps pupils to concentrate as well as to make

progress. Teachers and teaching assistants use questioning well to check pupils' understanding and to probe their thinking.

- The teaching of reading is good and all teachers place strong emphasis on developing pupils' reading skills. Teachers and teaching assistants are well trained in the teaching of phonics (how the sounds in words are represented by different letters). Sessions are planned thoroughly and staff match work well to the next steps in learning for different groups.
- Classes at Key Stage 2 have 'guided reading' sessions that boost pupils' reading skills. Those who need extra help with their reading receive support individually or in small groups. The academy has spent a considerable amount of money on books and the library is an attractive and exciting place. Parents who lack the skills or confidence to help with their children's reading at home are identified and supported by the staff.
- The teaching of writing is good. In the early years and at Key Stage 1, pupils have plenty of opportunities to express their ideas in writing and they do particularly well in Year 1. As they move up through the academy, pupils write for a range of purposes, and learn to organise and present information effectively. Teachers promote pupils' literacy skills well in a number of subjects.
- Teachers' marking is generally of good quality so that pupils are clear about how well they have done and what they need to do to improve. Teachers often set pupils little challenges as part of their marking which deepens their understanding. Marking is particularly good in Years 1, 5 and 6.
- Homework contributes effectively to pupils' achievement, particularly through the open-ended tasks from which pupils are able to choose. Completing six projects over the course of a year provides good opportunities for pupils to research themes in depth and exercise their imaginations.
- The academy has put in a lot of support for teachers to improve the teaching of mathematics. Teachers usually explain new methods of calculation well and pay good attention to teaching mathematical vocabulary. For instance, in Year 1, pupils learnt about vertices in a lesson on the properties of three-dimensional shapes. There were good examples during the inspection of teachers using assessment information to identify aspects of learning where pupils needed further clarification, and providing this.
- At times, work is not as challenging as it could be for the most able pupils. At the beginning of lessons when pupils are seated on the carpet, teachers sometimes go over work that the most able pupils can already do. When they move off to complete their tasks, teachers do not always give them work that is different enough to stretch them. This was seen particularly in mathematics but there are instances where it occurs in other subjects also.
- On occasion during the inspection, pupils made less progress than they could have done because the staff did not communicate a sense of urgency about how much work they should produce. This was most evident in topic lessons but it was also apparent when pupils worked in pairs, one often waiting for the other to complete a task instead of both working productively throughout. An over-reliance on paired work in some classes means that pupils do not always have enough opportunities to think for themselves and to record their own ideas before they discuss them with one another.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Since the school opened as an academy, senior leaders and the academy trust have taken firm action to raise achievement and to identify areas where pupils could make faster progress. Pupils' books and the academy's own data show that most pupils currently in the academy are making at least the expected amount of progress in reading, writing and mathematics, and standards are rising.
- A minority of children join the early years with attainment that is broadly typical for their age but many have weak skills in speaking and listening, reading and writing, and in their personal, social and emotional development. Children achieved well to attain broadly average standards by the end of the Reception year in 2014, which was a substantial improvement on previous years. Children currently in the Nursery and

Reception classes are making good progress.

- Pupils achieve well in reading throughout the academy. In 2014, results in the Year 1 screening of phonics (the sounds that letters make) were average. Standards in reading were broadly average at the end of Year 2, indicating that pupils made good progress at Key Stage 1. Standards were average at the end of Year 6, where the proportion of pupils who made expected and better than expected progress was in line with schools nationally.
- In the early years and at Key Stage 1, pupils make good progress in learning about the sounds that letters make (phonics). Pupils at Key Stage 1 who read to an inspector had good skills for tackling new words and showed a clear understanding of the story. Lessons and the academy's own data show that pupils at Key Stage 2 are making good progress in reading.
- In 2014, pupils reached broadly average standards in writing at the end of Year 2, representing good progress across the key stage. At the end of Year 6, attainment in writing was broadly average. The proportion of pupils who made the expected amount of progress at Key Stage 2 was similar to that nationally while the proportion who made better than expected progress was slightly lower.
- Most pupils currently in the academy are making good progress in writing. In the early years, children have good opportunities to learn to make marks, to form their letters and write for a purpose. The most able children in the Reception year produce lengthy pieces of independent writing. Pupils of all abilities in Year 1 are making outstanding progress in their writing, some producing imaginative stories that span several pages. There is good emphasis on re-drafting their ideas by the time pupils reach Years 5 and 6, and they produce substantial pieces of writing of good quality.
- Disadvantaged pupils outperformed their classmates at the end of Year 2 in 2014. At the end of Year 6, they were a term ahead of their classmates in reading, half a term behind in writing, a term behind in mathematics and four terms behind in English grammar, punctuation and spelling. They made better progress than the rest of their class in reading but did less well in writing and mathematics. Compared with pupils nationally, disadvantaged pupils were a term behind in reading, two terms behind in writing and five terms behind in mathematics. They made better progress than pupils nationally in reading, the same progress in writing and less progress in mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils currently in the academy are making slightly better progress than their classmates in reading and similar progress to them in writing and mathematics. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are making better progress than other groups.
- At the end of Year 2, standards in 2014 were broadly average in mathematics but they were well below average at the end of Year 6. The proportion of pupils making expected progress across Key Stage 2 was a little below average and only a few pupils made better than expected progress in the subject. Standards were also well below average in English grammar, punctuation and spelling in 2014.
- The academy is already taking action to raise achievement in mathematics and data show that most pupils are making at least the expected amount of progress in mathematics. The academy is putting an increased focus on grammar and spelling but some pupils at Key Stage 2 still struggle to pronounce and then try to spell words that are not entirely familiar to them.
- The most able children are making good progress in the early years and their progress is generally good at Key Stage 1. They are making the expected amount of progress in reading at Key Stage 2 but a bit less progress in writing and mathematics, where work is sometimes too easy for them.

The early years provision

is good

- With the support of United Learning, the academy has placed strong emphasis on improving provision in the early years. Achievement is now good because teaching is good. Children are well prepared for moving up to Key Stage 1.

- Children make good progress in learning about phonics because sessions are matched well to the next steps in their development. They have good opportunities to apply this knowledge for a range of purposes. Reception-aged children sound out letters well in reading and write for a range of purposes. For instance, they produce shopping lists for a party, write messages, sequence the events in a story and combine their letters increasingly well to represent words. Less able children in Reception and those in the Nursery have good opportunities to practise recognising and forming their letters. Children who are at an early stage in learning English have support from a Polish speaking assistant so that they settle quickly.
- The children are making good progress in mathematics. Older children are able to recognise and order numbers to 20, count objects and find one more or one less than a given number. The most able children know how to answer questions such as, 'How many do you have altogether?' by adding numbers to a total of up to 20.
- The early years is led and managed well. There are good systems in place for assessing what children can already do when they join the academy, including through home visits. Joint assessment with teachers from other schools has enabled the academy to make sure that its judgements about children's attainment are accurate. There are good opportunities for parents to help with their children's learning at home.
- Children behave well and feel safe. They are confident and clearly enjoy the activities the academy provides. The indoor area is well resourced but the outdoor area for use by Nursery-aged children does not meet their needs well enough. The academy is waiting to have a handrail fitted so that it can remove a partition to give younger children access to the bigger outdoor area used by children in Reception

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	139585
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	449919

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	222
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kevin Marchand
Headteacher	Neil Aiken
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy
Telephone number	01536 503368
Fax number	01536 511151
Email address	office@grange-pri.northants.sch.uk

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