

Leighfield Academy

Newtown Road, Uppingham, Oakham, LE15 9TS

Inspection dates 3–4 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	Outstanding		1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher, other staff and the governing body lead and manage the academy well. They ensure that teaching and achievement are good and continue to improve.
- Attainment is above average by the end of Year 6, because pupils achieve well throughout the academy. Pupils' progress in writing is outstanding.
- All aspects of teaching are good overall at each key stage, with some outstanding practice.
- Teachers engage pupils' interest and enthusiasm, so that the pupils work hard and are keen to succeed.
- Teachers are particularly successful in giving pupils work at just the right level of difficulty, so that it is challenging, without being too hard. This leads to good progress for all.
- The excellent quality of education in the early years means that Reception-Year children make outstanding progress.
- The academy provides a wide variety of learning experiences in different subjects that pupils enjoy greatly. The activities available in music and sport are particularly extensive.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The academy is a happy, harmonious community, where relationships are excellent between pupils and with staff.
- Pupils behave well. They are safe and feel safe, because they are confident that their friends and the adults will take care of them. Attendance is high.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress in mathematics, while good, is not currently as strong as in English, particularly for girls, some of whom lack confidence in this subject.
- Progress is good rather than outstanding, because of minor weaknesses in teaching. In particular, not all teachers explain exactly what pupils should do when applying what they have learned in their work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 12 lessons, two of these as joint observations with the headteacher.
- The team examined a variety of documentation, particularly that which related to the academy's self-evaluation, the management of teaching, pupils' progress, and safeguarding.
- Inspectors held formal discussions with representatives of the governing body, members of staff, and groups of pupils. The team heard several pupils reading.
- Inspectors analysed samples of work in pupils' books and looked at displays around the academy.
- The team took note of the 51 replies to the online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as replies to the academy's own questionnaire for parents. Inspectors analysed 17 replies to a questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

Steven Hill, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Daniel Kilborn

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Leighfield Academy converted to become an academy school on 1 April 2013. When its predecessor school, Leighfield Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- The academy is average in size for a primary school. Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The academy provides full-time education for children of Reception age.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium is well-below average. The pupil premium is extra government funding provided to support the education of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve progress in mathematics to match that in English. In particular, help girls to develop more confidence in the subject, so that their progress matches that of boys.
- Make teaching outstanding, so that pupils make excellent progress, by eliminating any weaknesses in what teachers do, ensuring particularly that teachers always explain precisely what pupils should do when applying what they have learned in their work.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has successfully established a team of staff who work together to maintain a culture in which effective teaching and pupils' good behaviour and well-being are firmly established. Leaders, including governors, check systematically on the impact of current practice and are continually working with colleagues to improve teaching and learning.
- Findings arising from checks on pupils' progress are accurate and staff use the information well to give extra help to any pupils who are in danger of falling behind in their learning. Leaders have successfully introduced the new National Curriculum and are working together well to implement a new system to check pupils' progress against the new national requirements. As a result, leaders and staff are secure in their judgements on progress and act swiftly to remedy any weaknesses.
- Subject leaders have established good systems to monitor how well their subjects are organised and taught and to check on the impact on pupils' achievement. They have worked well with colleagues to build on successes and to address any areas of concern. Changes to how science is taught, for example, have increased pupils' interest through a greater focus on investigative and collaborative work.
- The leadership of education for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good and ensures that these pupils do well, both socially and academically. Excellent leadership of the early years leads to outstanding progress for children in the Reception Year.
- Senior leaders ensure that the quality of teaching is good. They check on each individual's performance through direct observation of lessons, by analysis of data on pupils' progress, and through examining work in pupils' books. Leaders give teachers advice about how to improve, set targets for future performance, and organise extra training to help teachers meet their targets. Regular reviews enable managers to reward good performance and to tackle any weaknesses that arise. Consequently, teaching is at least good throughout the academy.
- The academy spends pupil premium funding effectively to help meet both the social and the academic needs of disadvantaged pupils. Leaders ensure that extra help is matched carefully to the specific needs of individuals and check on the impact of this, so that support can be refined over time. The funding ensures that disadvantaged pupils take a full part in academy life and achieve well. This exemplifies the academy's commitment and success in ensuring equal opportunity for all its pupils.
- The academy provides a diverse range of subjects, which contributes well to pupils' enjoyment, interest and achievement. Pupils have particularly good opportunities to learn to play a musical instrument and to take part in a variety of sports. The curriculum contributes considerably to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The impact of this can be seen most strongly in pupils' extremely positive relationships with each other.
- The academy ensures that pupils learn about the variety of communities and religions in modern British society. They learn, too, about life in the wider world, through the academy's links with a school in China, for example. The academy promotes British values well. Pupils know that the academy does not tolerate discrimination. Pupils show respect for other people's feelings and beliefs, and enjoy learning about diversity. Older pupils talk enthusiastically about their visit to a Gurdwara, for example. Pupils learn about democracy at first hand, through elections to the school council, as well as through discussions and a variety of visitors. The academy prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- The primary school physical education and sports premium is used well. The academy has bought new equipment and provided extra training to staff. It has obtained the expertise of specialist coaches to extend the range of activities available to pupils, to enhance the expertise of staff, and to run a number of extra-curricular sporting activities. As a result, participation rates have risen, the academy has great success in inter-school competitions, and pupils are extremely enthusiastic about exercise and gain in health and fitness.

- The academy staff and governors are rigorous in monitoring the safety and well-being of pupils. Pupils are right to feel safe at the academy and parents are equally very positive about this. Safeguarding procedures meet requirements.
- Since becoming an academy, Leighfield has obtained support by buying into services, such as training, finance and human resources, from Rutland and Leicestershire local authorities. The academy has also employed independent consultants to help assess its effectiveness and to provide advice on how to improve, as well as utilising expertise within the governing body. This balance has proved effective, as is shown by the resulting good quality of education that pupils receive.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is effective. It provides good support to the academy and holds leaders to account for its performance. Governors challenge the academy’s leaders well, because they have a clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses, including in the quality of teaching and learning. They check on pupils’ progress and have a good understanding of the relevant data and their implications. Governors know how teachers’ performance is managed and ensure that good performance is rewarded and that any weaknesses are addressed.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are keen to learn and usually work hard in class. They say they find learning fun and take a pride in their success. They work well together, when required, and discuss their ideas productively. They share equipment sensibly. They get on equally well when they work on their own or with others, concentrating diligently, so that no time is wasted. They are persistent, if they have difficulties, but are confident in asking for adult help, if they need it.
- Pupils behave well around the academy, at break times and during lunch, for example. Their behaviour during assembly is often exemplary and this contributes strongly to their good spiritual and moral development.
- Boys and girls work and play happily together and enjoy each other’s company. A group of pupils from Year 6 stressed this as a positive aspect of academy life and said how much better they worked together following their residential trip in Year 5. They explained how much they had grown up during that visit and felt more responsible and confident.
- Pupils take on responsibilities willingly and perform them conscientiously, as play-leaders, or as members of the school council, for example. Pupils in Year 6 said how much they enjoyed looking after Reception-Year children at lunchtimes, helping them to settle in when they started at the academy.
- Pupils, generally, listen attentively to their teachers and concentrate well. Very occasionally, particularly in younger classes, a few pupils’ concentration lapses, or they do not listen to instructions carefully enough, and so they are unsure what to do next. This can slow their progress for a while.

Safety

- The academy’s work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe in the academy and contribute to their own safety through their sensible behaviour and their kindness and care for each other.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different kinds of bullying, such as cyber bullying, and know how this is different from other poor behaviour. They say that bullying seldom happens in the academy and they are confident that adults would deal with it well, if it occurred. Pupils told an inspector that they would be very confident in asking one of the adults for help, if there were problems. However, one said that such action probably would not be needed, as ‘...your friends would notice and would do something about it.’

- Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, for example, through learning about possible situations arising from use of the internet. They have had input from staff at Childline to help them understand what they can do if they have problems.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is good throughout the academy and is outstanding in the Reception Year. It makes a major contribution to pupils' good progress.
- Teachers make good use of information about pupils' progress to ensure the pupils are given suitably demanding work. The academy makes effective use of skilled extra adults to provide a balance of support and challenge to pupils who struggle with academic work. This ensures that all pupils, including those who are disabled or have special educational needs, are fully involved and learn well. At other times, extra staff work with the most able, challenging them to improve their work and providing them with more demanding tasks.
- Teachers plan learning to develop pupils' understanding systematically, so that they build on what they already know. They engage pupils' enthusiasm successfully, with lively explanations, and keep the pupils fully involved, for example, by comparing and discussing their ideas together. This helps pupils to sort out their thinking, as well as improving their speaking and listening skills.
- Staff keep a careful eye on how well pupils are getting on during lessons and step in quickly to correct misunderstandings. They question pupils effectively to encourage them to explain their thinking and to refine and improve their work.
- Reading is taught well across the academy. Consequently, the youngest children are given a firm grounding in phonics (how sounds in words are represented by different letter combinations), but also learn to recognise words that do not follow the usual sound-and-letter pattern. Pupils become fluent readers quickly. As they get older, their teachers make sure that they learn the skills they need to support learning in different subjects, as well as to read widely and for pleasure.
- Writing is taught particularly well, and Reception-Year children are helped to write independently from an early age. Excellent teaching of writing in Years 5 and 6 is leading to very rapid progress for many pupils.
- Mathematics is generally taught well, but teachers have not yet succeeded in helping all of the girls to gain confidence in the subject. This has been identified as an issue by leaders, who are working to address the problem, but it is too soon to evaluate the impact of the action taken.
- Teachers, often, give excellent explanations of ideas and knowledge that are new to pupils, illustrating those things well by good choice of resources, such as practical materials, or the interactive whiteboards, to clarify pupils' understanding. This leads to rapid gains in understanding.
- In Key Stages 1 and 2, there are minor weaknesses in teaching quality. In particular, for example, teachers do not explain, or demonstrate clearly enough to pupils just what they are expected to do when they come to apply new ideas and what they have learned to their own work. This means that progress often slows for a time, until extra help is given, or pupils work things out for themselves.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- All pupils make good progress in Key Stages 1 and 2. Progress in the Reception class is outstanding.
- Standards are usually above average at the ends of each key stage. Some variations from year to year and between subjects are mainly due to differences in the starting points of each cohort of pupils.
- The academy's data on recent progress, confirmed by work in pupils' books, show that achievement in writing is excellent, particularly in Years 5 and 6. Progress in reading is at least good throughout the

academy.

- Recent progress in mathematics, while good overall, is weaker than in reading and writing. At Key Stage 2, girls' progress lags behind that of boys in mathematics, except in Year 6, where recent progress is very strong in all three subjects. The academy has identified that some girls lack confidence in mathematics and is experimenting with a variety of approaches to help girls to do better, but the impact of these approaches has yet to be evaluated.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs progress as well as their classmates. They make good progress from their different starting points, because the academy is careful to provide them with tasks in class that are suitably demanding, but manageable. Staff check that they are keeping up with the work and provide extra support, if needed. In addition, the academy provides specific extra help outside the classroom to address each individual's particular needs and this helps them to make good progress overall.
- The small numbers of disadvantaged pupils make similar progress to that of their classmates and reach similar standards overall, so that their attainment is usually better than that of others nationally by the end of Year 6.
- The most-able pupils do well and reach high standards. The academy ensures that they are given suitably challenging work in all classes. In Year 6, an extra teacher is employed to ensure that they are challenged to deepen and extend their understanding in their final year in the academy. About half the current class have already reached the higher Level 5 in reading, writing and mathematics already, with several on track to reach the very high Level 6.

The early years provision

is outstanding

- The quality of education that children in the early years receive is exceptional and ahead of that in the rest of the school, because outstanding teaching enables the children to make rapid progress and achieve exceptionally well in all areas of learning.
- At the end of the early years provision, they are extremely well prepared to go into Year 1.
- The children are taught phonics effectively in dedicated sessions, so that are given a very good grounding in this basic skill. The reason children make excellent progress in literacy is that this initial learning is built on extremely well in other activities and in play. Adults encourage children continually to use their skills in reading and writing and the most able do this extremely well. For example, the children produce lengthy 'books' they have written about things that interest them.
- Teaching is outstanding. Adults have high expectations and children respond very positively. The staff are very skilled at intervening in pupils' play to extend the pupils' thinking and their vocabulary and to reinforce their learning. For example, children undertaking an exercise trail were encouraged to count how many step-ups they could do. They launched themselves into this enthusiastically, with one group accurately counting to 100, greatly enhancing their counting skills as well as their physical development.
- Children feel very safe and secure in the class and behave extremely well for their age, because of the excellent lead staff provide. They work together particularly well, sharing materials and equipment and chatting about their learning animatedly. They are equally confident in painting a picture in the style of Mondrian, using an 'app' on a tablet computer, or writing short sentences independently in response to the teacher's 'dictation'.
- Leaders manage the setting extremely well. Staff plan and work to make the most effective use of a wide range of equipment, both indoors and out. A good balance is kept between activities directed by an adult and others chosen by children themselves. Staff are organised well so that someone is always checking on children's progress and engagement and is able to intervene to extend learning through skilled questioning.

- Adults keep a very close track of how well children are doing, combining the results of staff observations with contributions from parents. This comprehensive picture of children’s interests and skills helps staff to challenge children to succeed, while building on children’s enthusiasms when planning activities.

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	139481
Local authority	Rutland
Inspection number	449953

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Emma Speirs
Headteacher	Debbie Sedgwick
Date of previous school inspection	Not applicable
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