

Bexhill Academy

Bexhill Road, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear, SR5 4PJ

Inspection dates

7–8 July 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 is very well led by a determined and very effective headteacher. He is ably supported by an equally determined senior leader and increasingly by middle leaders within the academy.
- Pupils achieve well throughout the academy. By the end of Year 6 they reach the levels expected for their age, particularly in reading and mathematics, often from low starting points.
- Teaching has improved over time. It is consistently good and some is better. This is because leaders have maintained a close focus on its quality and provided effective support to help teachers improve their skills.
- The academy has been very well supported by the Chief Executive Officer of the Trust. She has been able to utilise the resources available to increase leadership capacity in key areas at critical times and so improve the quality of teaching and increase pupils' achievement. Governors challenge and support the academy effectively.
- Middle leaders are relishing the opportunities to be responsible for planning and driving improvements in their areas of responsibility.
- The curriculum is well planned and ensures that pupils enjoy their learning. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and pupils develop a good understanding of life in modern Britain.
- Behaviour is typically good and pupils are friendly, polite and welcome visitors warmly. They are eager to talk about all the interesting things they are doing. The academy is a safe and secure environment.
- The early years is very well led and managed, and has improved since the academy opened. Children are happy and safe. They benefit from teaching that is typically good and sometimes better.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Standards in writing are not as good as they are in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils do not learn to spell securely and do not have sufficient opportunities to use their writing skills in other subjects.
- Pupils do not have the skills necessary to judge the quality of their writing and make improvements before it is marked.
- Not all teachers use the information they gather about pupils' progress in their lessons to change their plans during the lessons and so some pupils cannot move on quickly enough.
- The attendance of some pupils is not high enough.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning throughout the academy. They also observed pupils at work during visits to classrooms. One observation was jointly carried out with the headteacher and one with the deputy headteacher. Inspectors listened to pupils read in Years 2 and 6. They also looked at work in pupils' books.
- There were insufficient responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View) for the results to be published but inspectors considered the academy's own survey of parents' views and 19 questionnaires completed by the staff.
- Inspectors held meetings with pupils in Years 5 and 6 and the school council. They also talked informally with pupils at break times and lunchtimes. They talked with the Chair of the Local Governing Body and two other governors, and had a discussion with academy trust's Chief Executive Officer.
- Inspectors also held meetings with leaders within the academy including the leader of the early years provision, the special educational needs coordinator and middle leaders.
- Inspectors observed the academy at work and looked at a range of documentation, including information relating to pupils' progress, improvement planning and the academy's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its own performance. They also considered reports presented to the Department for Education, documents relating to the management of teachers' performance, and safeguarding and child protection documents.

Inspection team

| | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| Peter Eves, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Melanie Maitland | Additional Inspector |
| Sonia Humble | Additional Inspector |

Full report

Information about this school

- Bexhill Academy converted to become an academy on 1 March 2011. When its predecessor school, Bexhill Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall. It is a member of the WISE Academies Trust which is a partnership of four primary schools.
- There have been significant changes in staff, including at senior and middle leadership level since the school became an academy. A new headteacher was appointed in April 2014.
- This is a larger than average-sized primary school and the number on roll is increasing.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those supported by the pupil premium, is above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children looked after by the local authority.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- Children attend the two Nursery classes on a part-time basis and the two Reception classes on a full-time basis.
- In 2014, the academy did not meet the government's current floor standards which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is outstanding and so raise pupils' attainment, especially in writing, by:
 - ensuring that spelling is taught systematically through the academy so pupils learn their spellings thoroughly
 - making sure that pupils have sufficient opportunities to apply their writing skills in all subjects
 - developing teachers' skills in judging the success of their teaching and adjusting their plans accordingly during lessons so that pupils are moved on as soon as they are ready
 - developing pupils' skills in judging the success of their own writing.
- Work closely with parents to improve pupils' attendance.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is an inspiring and well-respected leader. He has a very clear picture of how he wants the academy to operate and this vision is shared by all the staff and by the WISE Academies Trust. He has forged a committed team of leaders at different levels, who are united in wanting the very best for their pupils. All the staff share this commitment.
- The WISE Academies Trust acted promptly to the dip in pupils' performance leading to the 2014 national test results for Year 6 pupils. The Chief Executive Officer spent a short period as acting headteacher until a new headteacher could be appointed. This increased the capacity within the academy to support the drive to raise standards. As a result, the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement have improved. The headteacher is very well supported by a very effective deputy headteacher and increasingly by middle leaders in the academy. Some are new to leadership and some new to the academy but, together, are proving to be increasingly effective in creating plans and driving improvements in their areas of responsibility. They have a detailed knowledge of the progress of each child in their year groups and of the performance of every teacher in their team. They take prompt action to address any shortcomings that are identified in the regular checks on both.
- There is very effective use of the pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils. The academy provides extra teachers for English and mathematics so pupils receive more personal attention from skilled staff. As a result, the achievement of disadvantaged pupils is good.
- The academy works successfully to foster good relations, tackle discrimination and to remove any barriers to learning so that all pupils have the same opportunities to do their best.
- The curriculum is carefully planned to meet the interests of all pupils. Each topic begins with an appropriate 'launch experience' and ends with a celebration of pupils' learning which is shared with parents. Pupils particularly enjoyed their 'Up North' topic and were able to demonstrate their street dance inspired by Billy Elliott at the end of topic.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is well developed both through the curriculum and the wide range of enrichment activities and after-school clubs. Pupils develop a good understanding traditional British values and of life in modern Britain. The school council is an elected body, which gives pupils an early experience of democracy, and pupils enjoy regular visits by the emergency services, including the police.
- The academy's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet all statutory requirements and effectively support the academy in keeping pupils safe. Staff and governors are well trained and the academy's designated officers regularly monitor the success of the safeguarding and child protection policies. The academy benefits from a highly effective Child and Family Manager. Pupils talk warmly of the help she regularly provides.
- Careful thought has been given to the use of the primary school sport funding. Leaders have ensured that teachers' ability to teach physical education has improved and pupils take part in regular sporting competitions and festivals. The academy also provides a wide range of sporting opportunities, such as street dance and geocaching, so that pupils experience many different types of sport and physical activities.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The Chair of the Local Governing Body provides considered and astute leadership. He and the other governors know the academy very well. They receive detailed reports from senior leaders and augment this through regular visits to the academy. Governors use this information to ask challenging questions of the headteacher and other leaders and hold them to account for the academy's performance. They are particularly well informed about the quality of teaching, and pupils' progress and attainment. Governors are fully involved in systems to manage teachers' performance and understand how this is related to teachers' pay.
 - Governors make full use of the capacity within the trust to support the academy to secure improvements in teaching and learning and tackling underperformance. This was particularly important when a dip in standards became apparent. Because of governors good understanding of the information relating to pupils' progress they were able to take swift action to remedy this dip. As a result, standards have returned to where they were when the academy was formed and the upward trend in performance has resumed.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The majority of pupils are delightful, polite and friendly. They are proud members of their academy community, and are happy to talk about all the fun and interesting things they do.
- There are good relationships between adults and pupils and both have high expectations of how pupils should behave. However, a small number of older pupils occasionally forget how they are expected to behave in lessons. This is dealt with appropriately and there is a well-understood system of rewards and sanctions available to staff.
- Pupils willingly take on roles of responsibility. Some are members of the school council, others are trained as play leaders and there is an active group who have an interest in enhancing the academy's environment.
- The majority of pupils attend the academy regularly and are punctual. The academy is working very hard to improve the attendance of a relatively small number of pupils. Attendance is rising slowly but is currently below the national average.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say that bullying is uncommon. They know what different forms it can take and what to look out for in case it happens. They are sure that if it occurred, it would be dealt with swiftly.
- Pupils speak highly of the Child and Family Manager who they say is always ready to listen and help. They also appreciate being able to share any worries and concerns with adults within the academy. Pupils say that the academy is a safe and secure place where they can learn and parents agree.
- Pupils develop a good understanding of potential risks, because they are taught in the classrooms, during assemblies and during visits by the emergency services. They are well informed about the dangers associated with social media and the internet, and understand how to keep themselves safe.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers are very well supported by the senior leaders and colleagues within the trust. The headteacher promotes high expectations and maintains a relentless drive to secure even better quality teaching. This has led to improvements in teaching since the academy opened and teaching now is typically good and there is some that is outstanding.
- Staff work closely together in their teams. They share ideas regularly within the academy and with colleagues in the trust's other academies. They are keen to continue to improve their skills and regularly reflect on their classroom performance in order to develop further their expertise.
- The academy has developed a consistent approach to marking and feedback. All staff use the same system to show pupils where their work has been successful and provide suggestions for improvements or next steps and pupils respond to these suggestions. As a result, pupils learn from their mistakes and make good progress. Pupils are not yet skilled at judging the success of their own learning and rely on adults to tell them how well they have done and what they need to do next.
- The teaching of reading is effective. Pupils are encouraged to read frequently both in school and at home. Older pupils talk about their favourite authors and say how much they enjoy reading for pleasure.
- The teaching of mathematics is good. Pupils comment on how enjoyable their mathematics lessons are and appreciate the number of opportunities to use their skills in other subjects to solve genuine problems. Pupils develop a sound foundation of basic skills and knowledge and these are built on systematically as pupils move through the academy.
- Teachers plan regular opportunities for pupils to write at length and to use their developing writing skills in their literacy lessons. In these lessons, pupils are able to adapt their style to suit different purposes. However, the quality of their writing is sometimes spoilt by simple spelling mistakes. Spelling is not taught systematically throughout the academy. In addition, pupils do not have enough opportunities to use their writing skills in other subjects.
- Teachers carefully plan lessons that capture pupils' interest and fires their imaginations. They skilfully question pupils in order to gauge their understanding and use this information to plan the next lesson. However, some teachers continue with their plans until the end of the lesson even though the responses

pupils give indicate they are ready to move on and so progress is not as rapid as it might be.

- Teaching assistants are skilled in supporting individual and small groups of pupils. They know the needs of these pupils well and can provide accurate support. They typically work as a very effective team with the teacher.
- Pupils say how much they enjoy their homework tasks. Year 1 pupils were eager to talk about their seaside homework and proudly showed off their impressive homework creations.
- Teachers make good use of information and communication technology in lessons. For example, Year 6 pupils skilfully used their computerised tablets to watch film clips and access a range of useful applications to help them improve their writing about an award winning music video.

The achievement of pupils is good

- From their starting points, pupils of all ages make good progress throughout the academy and reach standards that are in line with those expected of them at the end of Year 6, especially in reading and mathematics. This represents good progress over time. Standards in writing, while still broadly average, are a little lower.
- In 2014, standards at the end of Year 6 were below those expected and those pupils in Year 6 did not make as much progress as they should. This group of pupils experienced significant disruption to their learning due to a number of factors. The current Year 6 pupils have benefited from a more settled approach to the tests and the provisional results indicate that they are at the standards that were the norm before the dip in 2014.
- Children make a good start in the early years and begin to catch up to where they should be. By the end of Year 2, pupils reach standards that are broadly average in reading and mathematics. This represents good progress in Key Stage 1. Pupils make a good start in learning to read and the results of the end of Year 1 national phonics screening check are above average. These skills are built on and pupils become competent and keen readers by the end of Year 6.
- In Key Stage 2, the vast majority of pupils make the progress expected of them and the proportion who do better than this is comparable to the proportion that do so nationally. Pupils are ready for the next stage in their education.
- In 2014, disadvantaged pupils, those supported by the pupil premium, made slower progress than their peers and other pupils nationally and attained lower standards. They were approximately two years behind other pupils nationally in reading and mathematics and five terms behind in writing. Compared to other pupils in the academy, they were two terms behind in mathematics, three terms behind in reading and nearly five terms behind in writing. However, provisional results from the 2015 national tests in Year 6 suggest that these gaps have closed significantly both between disadvantaged pupils and others nationally and others in the academy. Academy data and inspection evidence shows that across the academy, disadvantaged pupils are making good progress from their starting points.
- The most able pupils make good progress because they are provided with work that makes them think. They have regular opportunities to use their developing mathematical skills in other subjects to solve real life problems.
- The provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good. Their needs are accurately identified and they are provided with very effective support from skilled adults who understand their needs well. As a result, these pupils make good progress from their different starting points.

The early years provision is good

- Many of the children enter the Nursery classes with the skills and knowledge that are below those typical of children of their age. Approximately one fifth of the children join the early years with skills and knowledge significantly below those expected for their age and have special educational needs. However, children make good progress and begin to catch up in their learning. The proportion who are ready for learning in Year 1 is increasing each year and in 2014 was close to the national average. Academy data and inspection evidence show that this proportion is higher this academic year than last year.
- The early years provision is well led by a very effective leader who has benefited from support from within the academy trust. She has a very clear picture of the strengths of the provision as well as where she wants to make further improvements. There is a very effective team who share the same ambition to make the provision as good as it can be.

- Children benefit from teaching that is typically good and sometimes better. Teachers and other adults plan learning that excites and interests children and encourages them to want to learn. During the inspection, children worked very hard to complete challenges set by a giant, who had taken some toys hostage, in order to secure their release. As children said: 'This is fun'. The closely-knit team of staff work very effectively together and make sure that no time for learning is lost.
- Behaviour is very good. Children settle in quickly and learn to play well together. They rapidly absorb the routines that enable early years to operate as a happy and productive environment where children can thrive. Safety is a high priority to all and there are well thought-out systems to ensure that children are safe, especially at the start and end of sessions. Parents are made to feel welcome and contribute willingly to children's learning journals. The end of Reception Year graduation ceremony was extremely well attended by very proud parents and relatives.

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

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| Unique reference number | 136487 |
| Local authority | Sunderland |
| Inspection number | 449975 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Academy converter |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 409 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Robert Symonds |
| Headteacher | Paul Martindale |
| Date of previous school inspection | Not previously inspected as an academy |
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