

# West Town Lane Academy

West Town Lane, Brislington, Bristol, BS4 5DT

**Inspection dates** 4–5 June 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b> <b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The school's leaders and managers, including governors, have successfully reversed the declining trend of pupils' achievement.
- Over the past year, pupils' progress has speeded up and is now good. All groups of pupils are making better progress so that standards have improved and are now average.
- Knowledgeable teachers ensure that their lessons interest the pupils and pupils know exactly what is expected of them.
- Pupils respond extremely well to their class teachers. Relationships between pupils and their teachers are exceptionally good.
- Pupils' behaviour in and around school is very good. Classrooms are calm and pupils work together sensibly.
- Pupils feel safe in school and know adults will help them if they are worried about something.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage develop their confidence well in this nurturing setting. Close links with parents and carers help children to learn.
- Teachers are judged by the achievement of their pupils. A regular check on lessons and the work in pupils' books ensures that senior leaders have a good understanding of the quality of learning in each class.
- The Chair of the Governing Body, supported by an external School Improvement Partner, has high expectations of pupils and staff. Governors hold the headteacher to account for the performance of both pupils and teachers.
- Most parents and carers are very happy with the academy and would recommend it to another parent or carer.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some staff are unclear about lines of communication in the school and how to express their concerns to school leaders and governors.
- The most-able pupils do not always work at a pace which matches their ability and enables them to attain the high levels.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 28 lessons or part-lessons. Most of these observations were jointly carried out with senior leaders.
- Inspectors held meetings with staff, including senior and middle leaders, teaching staff and two members of the governing body. They also held a telephone conversation with the School Improvement Partner and met with groups of pupils.
- The inspection team scrutinised documents, including the academy’s self-evaluation and improvement plan, evidence pertaining to the quality of teaching over time, pupils’ progress tracking records, the governing body minutes and records relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of the views of the 103 parents and carers who completed the online Parent View survey.
- Inspectors also took account of the views 59 staff who responded to the inspection questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Lorna Brackstone, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Alan Hinchcliff

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Rowena Green

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This very large primary school converted to become an academy school in January 2012. When its predecessor school, West Town Lane Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The academy has expanded to meet local needs. There are three classes per year group in Reception and Years 1 and 2, and two classes per year group in Years 3 to 6.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. There are a slightly above average proportion of pupils who come from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is slightly lower than the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding provided to schools for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported by school action is above average. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The academy meets the government's current floor targets, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- Improve the progress of the more able by:
  - making sure that the lessons planned for pupils when they are organised into ability groups fully match their needs
  - improving the content, pace and challenge of the physical education lessons which are taught by specialist trainers.
- Ensure that the school's leaders, including the governors, always seek suitable external expertise when dealing with personnel issues.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Most children start school with levels of skill and knowledge typical for their age. All children, including the most able, make good progress during their Reception Year and are ready to start Year 1 with a good level of development. This is because the children are given exciting opportunities to build on their skills and extend their knowledge.
- Pupils progress well in Years 1 and 2, particularly when developing their understanding of phonics (the sounds that letters make). By the end of Key Stage 1, the majority of pupils can read and write with accuracy and confidence. In mathematics, carefully targeted work provides more-able pupils with the challenge they need to reach for higher levels.
- For the first two years of the academy, overall standards at the end of Year 6 were below average. Although most pupils made the expected progress from Year 2, those capable of doing better than this were not sufficiently challenged to do so.
- Over the past year, pupils' progress in Key Stage 2 has speeded up and is now good. All groups of pupils are making better progress. By observing lessons and scrutinising pupils' work in books, inspectors judged that standards have improved and are now average.
- In 2013, pupils who were eligible for additional funding, and those who were disabled or had special educational needs, did not do as well as their peers. The school's own records, supported by the evidence of pupils' work seen by inspectors, suggest that these pupils have made better progress this year. Learning mentor support, extra tuition (both in term time and during school holidays) and educational visits for these pupils have all been carefully monitored.
- In 2013, pupils eligible for extra government funding were working about four terms behind their peers. This gap has been narrowed to one term and continues to decrease.
- Pupils make good progress in reading and talk confidently about the books they have read. A particular strength is the way in which they use information books to help them with the topics they are studying. Pupils are using their literacy and numeracy skills more confidently in other subjects.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Pupils are well prepared for their lessons because teachers have established clear, daily routines with their pupils and make their expectations clear. Classrooms are attractive and conducive to learning.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge which they share enthusiastically with their pupils. Their explanations are clear and their questioning is challenging. This enables the pupils to engage in their learning, understand what they are being taught and participate in discussion.
- Information and communication technology resources are used well to reinforce learning points and visually engage the pupils.
- Pupils' books are marked consistently well with clear points for improvement that ensure pupils know what to do next.
- Reading, writing, speaking, listening and mathematics are taught effectively. Recently, Year 6 pupils have been grouped by ability for English and mathematics. This has speeded up the progress of those pupils who find learning difficult. However, teachers know that more-able pupils still need to be set greater challenges in these group sessions to enable them to progress at a faster pace.
- Teaching is good in the Reception classes. Attractive and stimulating classrooms encourage the children in their learning and help them make good progress.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress because they are supported well by teaching assistants who are well prepared. The clear targets provided for pupils' individual development are regularly checked and carefully evaluated.
- Adult support in class has been rationalised. Ensuring that pupils have lots of opportunities to

talk about what they are doing is also helping them have a better understanding of what they need to do next.

- Extra English and mathematics tuition supports pupils eligible for additional funding and has helped them to speed up their progress. Sessions are well focused and include extra help with reading and practice learning tables.
- The school recognises the importance of working together with parents and carers. They have electronic access to Reception children's learning diaries and this enables them to help them at home. Most pupils in Years 1 and 2 read regularly at home and practice with key words and spelling helps them with their work back in the classroom. Parents and carers can also help with the challenging research projects set by the school for older pupils to complete at home. Most parents and carers who responded to Parent View agreed that their children are taught well.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. All groups of pupils are very attentive in the lessons taught by their class teachers. They are eager to study, and work sensibly on their own, in pairs and in larger groups. Most pupils present their work neatly and proudly show what they have been doing to visitors. Older pupils display very mature attitudes to their learning.
- Pupils' behaviour in and around the school is never less than good. They are extremely polite and courteous, and get along with each other very well. Even when the weather prevented them from going outside to play, their behaviour was very good. Older pupils enthusiastically take on roles and responsibilities, and are proud of representing their school in sporting competitions.
- Pupils' behaviour is not always as good in physical education lessons. This is because they are not sufficiently challenged and become bored.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils know that there is always someone available to talk to about their problems or concerns. They are clear about the systems in place for rewards and sanctions, and understand the school's shared values. Pupils know about the different types of bullying and are clear about what to do if they experience it. They know how to keep safe when using the internet. A visit to the mobile life-skills unit has helped older pupils understand safety in the home.
- A rigorously systematic approach to those pupils who do not attend school regularly has helped attendance rates improve to slightly above the national average.
- Nearly all the parents and carers who responded to Parent View are happy with the way that their children are looked after at school. Very few considered that bullying was a problem. Most parents and carers felt that their concerns are dealt with appropriately.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- Senior and middle leaders have a good understanding of the strengths of the academy and what should be done to improve it further. Improvement planning is clear, and actions are carefully planned and evaluated. The capacity of the school to make further improvements is good.
- Since 2013, recognising that not all pupils were making good enough progress, governors and other school leaders have taken rapid and robust action. The restructuring of the leadership team, the introduction of a system to check on pupils' progress, and a structured approach to supporting those in receipt of extra government funding are helping improve pupils' achievement.
- The introduction of a much more rigorous approach to checking the quality of teaching is leading to improvements in pupils' progress. Teachers now have a much clearer idea of how they should be meeting the needs of different groups of pupils in their classes. Regular meetings with senior staff reinforce the accountability of teachers for the progress of their pupils.
- Improvements in the teaching of basic skills, and the wide range of topics they learn about,

contribute to pupils' improving literacy. They are then able to apply their skills to new fields. Topics such as 'Why war?', which focuses on The Second World War, and in particular the Bristol Blitz, and 'What is the missing link?', where pupils explore evolution, extend pupils' thinking. They also contribute effectively to their good-quality spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

- The headteacher and his team want all pupils to have the best possible education. Nevertheless, the decision to convert to an academy, the more than doubling of the numbers on roll, and extensive building work have distracted the leadership of the school from the management of staff. The quality and frequency of communication between school leaders, governors and staff have suffered as a result.
- A small number of personnel issues have not always been dealt with as well as they should because school leaders and governors have not sought access to suitable expertise when necessary. This has led to some disaffection and has had a negative impact on the morale of some staff.
- The school has strong partnerships with parents, carers and members of the local community. By using a social media site, the school is able to make swift contact with parents and carers. The majority of those who completed the Parent View survey would recommend this school to others.
- The new primary school sport funding is used effectively to fund a greater choice of after-school clubs for pupils. It has also enabled more pupils to attend sporting events and take part in local competitions.
- The external School Improvement Partner effectively challenges senior leaders about pupils' achievement. Also, by working alongside the governors when they set and evaluate the headteacher's targets, the School Improvement Partner ensures that pupils' achievement is at the forefront of any pay award. This external support also helps the academy to make accurate evaluations of its performance and plan strategically.
- **The governance of the academy:**
  - At a crucial time in the development and expansion of the academy, there has been a significant turnover in the membership of the governing body. While training has been helpful in clarifying governors' roles and responsibilities, and although governors bring a wealth of experience, a few are still tentative about using their knowledge to support and challenge the school's senior leaders. The Chair of the Governing Body clearly understands the changing needs of this growing school. The restructuring of the senior team and the recent appointment of a business manager have been designed to ensure that efficient use is made of the resources available. The Chair of Governing Body keeps a close check on the way that extra government funding is spent and regularly challenges senior leaders about its impact on pupils' achievement. Governors meet their statutory requirements by ensuring that safeguarding arrangements are secure. They are clear about the management of teachers' performance and know how good teaching is rewarded. The Chair of the Governing Body is a very regular visitor into the academy, and other governors attend meetings regularly and keep informed about key issues and events. However, not all staff feel confident about approaching governors with confidential worries or concerns.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137762
<b>Local authority</b>	Bristol
<b>Inspection number</b>	443847

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	510
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Marianne Croft
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jeremy Hughes
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	0117 3772295
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