

Partington Central Academy

Central Road, Partington, Urmston, Manchester M31 4FL

Inspection dates

16–17 April 2019

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	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders, governors and trust leaders have successfully established a culture of high expectation and ambition for pupils. Everyone works together to achieve the school's mission to 'Believe, Achieve, Succeed'.
- The highly committed executive headteacher shares with the head of school a determination to raise standards for pupils. By the time they leave Year 6, pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, make strong progress that is consistently in line with that of other pupils nationally.
- Leaders and governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths, as well as where it needs to improve, because they draw upon a reliable range of information to help them evaluate the school's effectiveness. This is helping them to take the right actions to improve the school further.
- Teaching is effective and routinely meets the needs of almost all pupils, especially in reading, writing and mathematics. Sometimes, teaching does not encourage pupils to take enough pride in their work, especially in their handwriting. This detracts from the quality of the work they produce.
- The teaching of phonics for younger pupils is not as strong as that in reading, writing and mathematics. The changes that leaders have made to improve phonics teaching are not sufficiently embedded to ensure that more pupils reach the expected standard by the end of Year 1.
- Leaders and governors have established a curriculum that prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. Pupils develop very well spiritually, morally, socially and culturally and benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular activities.
- Leaders have ensured that there is a strong culture of safeguarding in school. Pupils say they feel safe and know who to ask for help if they need it.
- Children in the early years make a strong start to their education. The good teaching they receive enables them to make good progress from their typically low starting points.
- Leaders have established a number of important initiatives for keeping parents and carers involved in and informed about their children's education. Although parents generally support this, a substantial number believe that communication from school needs further improvement to enable them to support their children better in their learning.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by enhancing the quality and timeliness of the school's communication with parents so that parents feel better informed and better able to support their children's learning.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - ensuring that the recent improvements to the teaching of phonics are firmly and consistently embedded so that more pupils reach at least the expected standard by the end of Year 1
 - ensuring that teachers routinely expect the highest standard of handwriting and presentation from pupils in all year groups so that the work they produce is of a consistently high quality.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since the school opened in September 2016, trust leaders, governors and school leaders have established a culture of high expectations for pupils and staff alike. They share a clear vision aimed at raising aspirations for pupils. The executive headteacher is unwavering in her commitment to raising standards for pupils. Together with the head of school, she has successfully motivated her team of subject leaders, teachers and staff to share this commitment. This is having a positive impact on pupils' outcomes across all key stages, including for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- Leaders and governors analyse and evaluate a wide range of information, for example from the school's assessments and from observations of teaching and learning, in order to arrive at an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This helps them to plan the right actions to ensure that the school continues to improve.
- Leaders make effective use of the trust's strong professional networks to enable teachers and staff to share and learn from good practice with colleagues in partner schools. Teachers and staff say that they value these opportunities and that they are helping them to improve their practice.
- Leaders, including subject leaders, carry out a range of appropriate activities to monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the curriculum. They check the work in pupils' books and provide clear feedback and guidance to teachers and support staff so that they can improve their teaching. Subject leaders attend valuable meetings with leaders from other schools within The Dean Trust. This helps them to develop a better understanding of standards in their subjects and to ensure that the school's assessments are consistently accurate.
- Leaders have recognised that the quality of teaching and learning in phonics for younger pupils is not as strong as that for other subjects. They have recently provided teachers with extra training to improve their subject knowledge. However, these improvements are not sufficiently embedded to ensure that pupils currently in school benefit from phonics teaching that is consistently good.
- The curriculum enables pupils to learn across a suitably wide range of subjects and to develop well spiritually, morally, socially and culturally. Pupils have opportunities to take part in a good range of educational visits. Helpfully, they practise their reading, writing and mathematical skills across other curriculum subjects.
- Leaders ensure that they use the pupil premium funding effectively to improve the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils. This group generally makes progress that is similar to, and sometimes better than, other pupils nationally. Leaders also use the physical education and sport premium well. Pupils have more opportunities than previously to take part in competitions and sporting events, and teachers say that their subject knowledge has also improved.
- Parents are generally supportive of the school and of the changes that governors and leaders have made since it became part of The Dean Trust. However, information gathered through Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire and from parents who spoke to

inspectors suggests that a substantial number are not satisfied with the extent or timeliness of the school's communication with them. Evidence gathered during the inspection shows that leaders have introduced some useful initiatives to keep parents informed, such as newsletters and texts. However, there is scope to improve communication further so that more parents feel better informed and equipped to support their children's education.

Governance of the school

- The support and challenge that trustees and governors provide to the school are effective. They have clearly defined roles that leaders understand and which contribute to their ability to hold leaders effectively to account, for example for their use of the pupil premium funding. This has a positive impact on the school's continuing improvement.
- Governors are highly committed to their own development. The trust provides valuable training to the governing body to enable it to discharge its statutory duties well. Governors have a wide range of skills and strengths that contribute well to the overall effectiveness of the governing body.
- Individual governors have specific responsibilities for gathering information about particular subjects or the progress of groups of pupils, such as those with SEND. The detailed reports that these governors compile show that they ask important questions about the quality of education. These reports help all governors to develop a better overview of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Consequently, they are well placed to set the school's strategic direction.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Governors and leaders have established a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. The systems for checking and recording the suitability of staff to work with children are robust. Leaders have ensured that all staff, including those who are newly recruited and those who are temporary, have appropriate training and understand the school's systems for keeping children safe from harm. Staff are well trained to protect pupils from radicalisation and extremism.
- Staff are vigilant and understand how to report any concerns they may have about the welfare of pupils. Leaders communicate well with a range of children's services and make necessary referrals for help in a timely fashion.
- Leaders and governors ensure that pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe online. Pupils say they feel safe in school, and parents agree with this view.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Pupils benefit from teaching that is consistently good across the school. Teachers set high expectations for pupils' behaviour in class and for pupils' attitudes to learning.

Teachers' clear instructions help pupils to know and understand what they have to do. Pupils settle quickly to learning as a result, and very little time is lost in lessons.

- The training that leaders, including subject leaders, provide to teachers helps them to improve their subject knowledge across a range of subjects. Teachers use this knowledge to plan learning which typically meets the needs of almost all pupils, especially in reading, writing and mathematics. The learning that teachers plan usually builds upon what pupils already know and can do. Teachers' questioning encourages pupils to think carefully about their answers, and helps them to deepen their understanding. For example, pupils in Year 6 improved their comprehension skills when their teacher's questioning prompted them to think more carefully about the meanings of particular words.
- Teachers' and teaching assistants' subject knowledge in phonics is less secure than it is in subjects such as reading, writing and mathematics. This sometimes results in teaching which is less effective. When this happens, it hampers the progress that younger pupils make in phonics. Although teachers value the high-quality training they have recently had, it is not sufficiently embedded to have had an impact on pupils' outcomes.
- Teaching assistants work effectively because teachers ensure that they have the information they need to provide pupils with the right support. Those who spoke to inspectors said that they value the training that leaders and teachers provide, and that it helps them to work with pupils more effectively.
- Teachers plan learning that provides pupils with opportunities to practise their reading, writing and mathematical skills in a range of subjects. For example, work in their books shows that pupils in Year 5 use their mathematical skills to help them order and understand the data they collect in science. These opportunities contribute well to the progress that pupils make.
- Pupils develop good attitudes to learning because of the good relationships that they have with their teachers. They behave well in lessons and are almost always attentive and focused. However, pupils do not always take enough pride in their work. This is because teachers do not routinely expect the highest standards of presentation from pupils, particularly in their handwriting. Sometimes, pupils' work is untidy and difficult to read, and this detracts from the overall quality of the writing that they produce.
- Teachers provide pupils with feedback in line with the school's assessment policy. Pupils understand what this feedback means and know that it helps them to improve their work. Teachers also provide pupils with homework in line with the school's policy. The majority of parents are of the view that the amount of homework pupils receive is appropriate.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders and governors have established effective systems for teachers and staff to gather a range of information about pupils and the factors that might have an impact on their ability and readiness to learn. Teachers and staff say that they value these

systems because they help them to understand pupils' welfare needs better and to take the right action to help them.

- Pupils develop an awareness of fundamental British values and of difference and diversity within their community and the wider world, for example in family structure, gender and disability. They learn about different faiths and cultures and take part in activities with local churches.
- Pupils who have special responsibilities in school explained to inspectors how they have to apply for their roles and convince leaders that they have the necessary skills to carry out particular duties. This helps them to prepare for the next stage in their education and for the world of work.
- Pupils benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular activities that help them to develop personally. Pupils spoke enthusiastically with inspectors about their participation in clubs as diverse as those for football, mindfulness, gardening and films. Pupils in Year 6 explained how they value the extra activities that their teachers provide to help them prepare for national tests.
- Leaders have established a clear moral code for pupils to follow. Adults model respectful relationships and the school's values are reinforced through posters and displays of pupils' work. Pupils' participation in charitable works helps them to develop empathy and an awareness of the needs of others.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around school and in classrooms because they want to meet their teachers' high expectations for their behaviour. Pupils speak respectfully to their teachers and to one another, and listen to what others have to say. Pupils develop generally positive attitudes to learning, and this has a good impact on the progress that they make.
- Leaders and governors have worked hard to improve pupils' attendance. The procedures they have established have reduced the number of absences over time. Attendance for pupils currently in school is broadly in line with national averages and continues to improve. Leaders are not complacent and are determined to improve attendance even further, especially for the few pupils whose absence is more persistent.
- Pupils who spoke with inspectors valued the support that they receive from their teachers to help them resolve differences with their friends. They understand what bullying means and say that it is rare, although, when it does happen, their teachers act quickly to address it.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Outcomes for pupils in reading, writing and mathematics have been improving as a result of the actions that leaders have taken. Pupils' progress by the time they leave key stage 2 has been consistently in line with the average for pupils nationally in recent years. Published information from the key stage 2 national tests in 2018 shows that an

above-average proportion of pupils reached at least the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher standards in all three subjects also improved and is close to the average for pupils nationally.

- Pupils currently in school continue to make strong progress in reading. Those who read to inspectors demonstrated fluency and enjoyment. They used appropriate strategies to help them to read and understand unfamiliar words. Teachers help pupils to improve their vocabulary and to use resources such as a thesaurus to explore a wider range of words. This is having a positive impact on the progress that they make in their reading comprehension.
- Improvements that leaders have made to the teaching of mathematics are having a positive impact on pupils' outcomes. Evidence from pupils' books and from the school's observations of teaching and learning shows that they have plenty of opportunities to solve problems and to practise their reasoning skills. Where appropriate, they practise their mathematical skills in other subjects. Consequently, pupils across the school are making strong progress in mathematics.
- Pupils have opportunities to hone their writing skills across a range of subjects and to practise writing for different purposes. For example, pupils in Year 6 wrote 'letters home' while learning about the experiences of soldiers in the trenches in the First World War. Although these opportunities contribute to pupils' progress in writing, work in their books shows that, too frequently, they do not take enough pride in the presentation of their work. This is particularly the case in their handwriting, which is not always legible, and which shows that the school's handwriting policy is not implemented consistently. This detracts from the quality of work and sometimes has a negative impact on the overall progress that current pupils are making.
- At the end of key stage 1 in 2018, pupils attained better at the expected standard in writing and mathematics than pupils nationally. The proportions attaining greater depth in writing and mathematics were similar to the national averages. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading was slightly lower than, but close to, the national average. Work in their books and information from the school's assessments show that pupils currently in key stage 1 are making clear progress in reading, writing and mathematics, although their work sometimes shows similar weaknesses in presentation to that seen in key stage 2.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the national phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 in 2018 was well below the average for pupils nationally. This marks a decline in standards in recent years. Although the needs of cohorts differ from year to year, evidence from the school's observations of teaching and from pupils' work shows that the quality of teaching in phonics is not typically as strong as that in other subjects. This is due to weaknesses in teachers' subject knowledge. Although leaders have taken appropriate steps to improve this subject knowledge, the changes they have made are not yet fully in place. Consequently, this remains a hindrance to the progress that pupils are able to make.
- Work in pupils' books and information from the school's assessments show that disadvantaged pupils across the school continue to make progress that is similar to, and sometimes better than, other pupils nationally. This is because of leaders' effective use of the pupil premium funding. Pupils with SEND continue to make strong progress from their individual starting points because provision for their needs is effective.

Early years provision

Good

- Children at Partington Central Academy make a good start to their education. They join the school either in the Nursery or, if they have attended nurseries elsewhere, the Reception class. In either case, children make strong progress from their typically low starting points. The proportion reaching a good level of development by the time they leave the Reception class, although below the national average, continues to improve.
- Leaders and managers have a clear overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the early years provision. This helps them to arrive at the right priorities for improvement. For example, leaders have noticed that boys sometimes start Nursery with skills that are less well developed for their age than girls. They have therefore prioritised the development of the learning environment, particularly outdoors, to appeal more to boys and to engage them better in their learning. Leaders are determined to improve the provision even further and are making good use of opportunities to share practice and expertise with partner schools in the trust.
- Leaders and adults have established simple rules and routines for children to follow. These help them to feel safe and secure because they know what to do. Consequently, children's behaviour is good and they learn quickly to look after their own needs.
- The relationships that all adults build with children are warm and encouraging, and have a positive impact on the way in which children develop greater confidence and become absorbed in their learning. This confidence helps them to adapt well to change, for example during recent alterations to the staffing in some classes.
- Adults usually use questioning skilfully to encourage children to talk and to share their thoughts and ideas. Children learn to listen to each other and to take turns in conversations. They know that what they have to say will be valued.
- Children benefit from teaching that is generally good. The activities that teachers and staff plan provide children with opportunities to select and read books, and to practise their developing writing and number skills in a range of ways. For example, during the inspection, some children were making Easter cards and made good attempts at writing their own messages inside.
- The teaching of phonics in the early years is not consistently strong. This is because there are weaknesses in teachers' subject knowledge. For example, sometimes, teachers do not identify children's misunderstandings or anticipate the mistakes they might make. At other times, teachers do not take enough care to choose vocabulary that builds upon children's prior experiences. When this happens, it has a negative impact on the progress that children make in phonics.
- Teachers and adults have developed good relationships with other nurseries and with the local children's centre to share important information that supports children's transitions from home to school. Governors are highly supportive of this work and are helping leaders to drive forward even better practices with partner schools in the trust so that transitions for children become even smoother.
- The early years environment is a safe and happy place for children. Leaders and managers make sure that staff are well trained to keep children safe from harm. They carry out a range of checks to ensure that children can work and play safely, and no

breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements were evident during the inspection.

School details

Unique reference number	143380
Local authority	Trafford
Inspection number	10087785

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	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	406
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	George Devlin
Executive headteacher	Anita Edwards
Telephone number	0161 775 2937
Website	http://partingtoncentralacademy.co.uk/
Email address	AnitaEdwards@forestgateacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Partington Central Academy is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- This is the school's first section 5 inspection since it joined The Dean Trust in September 2016.
- The school receives support and challenge from the trust's chief executive officer, the academies director and its local governing body. Responsibility for the school's performance lies with The Dean Trust board of trustees.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium funding is larger than average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is lower than average.
- The proportion of pupils receiving support for SEND is above average. The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is lower than average.

- The school has a Nursery class and offers both part-time and full-time places.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors held meetings with the trust's chief executive officer, the academies director, the executive headteacher, the head of school, governors and other school leaders.
- The inspectors made visits to classrooms to observe learning in all year groups.
- The inspectors scrutinised pupils' work, reviewed the school's assessment information and listened to some pupils read.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation and policies, including behaviour and attendance information, minutes of governing body meetings and safeguarding information.
- Inspectors met with a group of pupils, including some who are members of the school council, and spoke informally with pupils in lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day and took account of 71 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and to the free-text service.
- Inspectors also took account of 39 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Mavis Smith, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Ann Dimeck	Ofsted Inspector
Linda Griffiths	Ofsted Inspector

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