

ARK Rose Primary Academy

Tees Grove, Kings Norton, Birmingham, B38 9DH

Inspection dates 13–14 May 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Inadequate 4
Achievement of pupils	Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching	Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management	Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that has serious weaknesses.

- Achievement is inadequate. Pupils have not made the progress that they should since the academy opened. This is particularly the case for the most able pupils and for those with special educational needs or disabilities.
- Pupils are not ready for the next steps in their learning because they cannot write well enough.
- Teaching is inadequate. Poor teaching in the first four terms since the academy opened means that pupils have not made good progress.
- Pupils have been taught by too many temporary teachers. This has disrupted their learning.
- Work in lessons does not challenge pupils to do as well as they can.
- Until recently, teachers have not made accurate assessments of each pupil to determine what they should learn.
- Pupils do not form letters correctly and do not take enough pride in the presentation of their work.
- A few pupils behave inappropriately when adults are not there to remind them of the academy's rules.
- There are currently no subject leaders in the academy. Systematic approaches to the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics are improving standards. Other subjects do not currently have this support.
- The academy is not making the best use of training programmes because of the high turnover of staff.
- Safety requires improvement because a few pupils do not observe the academy's 'zero tolerance' expectation on bullying, until staff remind them to do so.

The school has the following strengths

- The academy's senior leaders have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are quickly implementing effective systems.
- Pupils say that when bullying occurs, academy staff now respond quickly and effectively.
- Teachers receive good support from ARK Schools.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 11 lessons, three of which were observed jointly with academy leaders. Inspectors conducted two walks through classrooms observing the teaching of letter sounds (phonics), the curriculum and behaviour.
- The inspectors heard pupils read, looked at past and present work in pupils' books, and observed morning playtime and lunchtime activities.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the executive headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the assistant headteacher, the ARK Director of Primary Education, three ARK advisors, a group of pupils, and a representative of the academy trust and the Chair of the Governing Body.
- There were not enough responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) to show results. Inspectors looked at a recent academy survey of nine parents, and talked to 35 parents and carers before and after the academy day, including some parents who requested to talk with inspectors.
- Inspectors considered 12 responses to a staff questionnaire.
- The inspection team looked at a number of documents including: the academy's self-evaluation and planning for improvement; records of the quality of teaching; information on pupils' current progress and achievement; records relating to punctuality, behaviour and attendance; and the academy's safeguarding information.

Inspection team

Christine Malone, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Rachel Howie

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this academy requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

Information about this academy

- The academy is smaller than the average-sized primary school. It is a sponsor-led academy managed by ARK Schools.
- The headteacher has been in post since February 2014.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, for whom the academy receives additional income (the pupil premium), is much higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic heritages is slightly above average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported through school action plus and with a statement of special educational needs is above average. Both of these proportions are reducing.
- The academy does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum standard for pupils' attainment and progress.
- ARK Schools organises training and development meetings for leaders in all ARK schools.
- ARK Rose Primary Academy also has an executive headteacher, who is the headteacher at ARK Tindal Primary Academy.

What does the academy need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in order to accelerate all pupils' progress by:
 - ensuring that all pupils are sufficiently challenged in lessons, especially more-able pupils
 - ensuring that pupils with special educational needs are provided with the support that they need to enable them to make as much progress as their classmates
 - teaching pupils to form letters correctly so that they write more fluently and confidently
 - consistently demonstrating high expectations for pupils' work
 - ensuring that marking consistently provides children with precise advice to improve their writing
 - developing teachers' knowledge in the Early Years Foundation Stage, so that they can plan appropriate activities for children to practise what they have just learnt.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - employing a staff team of permanent teachers and teaching assistants
 - ensuring a robust induction for newly appointed subject leaders so that they quickly take responsibility for their areas of expertise
 - ensuring that better provision is made to help those who are behind to catch up
 - building the knowledge and confidence of the Early Years Foundation Stage leader so that the academy is consistently able to offer good teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes
 - communicating improvements in the academy effectively to parents
 - ensuring that provision for the small minority of pupils whose behaviour remains challenging

matches their needs and enables them to be successful in their learning and make accelerated progress

- developing the academy library so that pupils have access to a better range of materials
- reducing late arrivals so that no pupils arrive at the academy late unless for a legitimate reason.

An external review of governance and the academy's use of pupil premium funding should be undertaken to assess how these aspects of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is inadequate

- Pupils have not made the progress that they should since the academy opened. Pupils enter Key Stage 2 well below expected standards in English and mathematics. They are not catching up quickly enough before they leave in Year 6. This year, the small class in Year 6 is set to achieve the academy's targets for progress in reading and mathematics, and is close to achieving this in writing. However, standards in Key Stage 2 still lag far behind those expected nationally, especially in writing.
- Children start in the Nursery and Reception classes with skills that are generally below those typical for their age. Last year children made slow progress in the Reception class and they were not ready to start the Year 1 curriculum. This year, children are making progress at a faster rate but there are still considerable gaps in their learning.
- Results for more-able pupils are too low. No pupils are entered for Level 6 in the national tests for 11-year-olds. Teachers do not challenge pupils to work at higher levels. Few pupils reach Level 5 because they do not write at length well enough and they are not confident to solve complex mathematical calculations.
- Pupils known to be eligible for additional government funding (the pupil premium), and their classmates are performing at the same level in Year 2. In reading, writing and mathematics, pupils in Year 6 reach the same standards as their classmates. The Academy's assessment information indicates that this has continued in 2014.
- Pupils learning to speak English as an additional language also achieve at a similar level to their peers. In Year 2, they are one term behind in reading and writing and reach the same levels as their classmates in mathematics.
- Current work in pupils' books shows that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make inadequate progress. They are expected to join in activities in lessons that are not always matched to their needs.
- Pupils' progress in writing is still far too slow in all classes, especially in Years 1 and 3. Consequently, pupils are not ready for the next steps in their learning because they cannot write well enough. When they work in small groups, with a knowledgeable assistant, pupils make more progress in using the sounds that letters make to help them read and write.
- Since the introduction of a new reading and writing curriculum, pupils have made better progress. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 are catching up in reading so that, by the end of Year 6, they are working much nearer to nationally expected levels than pupils were last year. This is also the case in mathematics.
- Pupils make expected progress in mathematics in classes that have had the same teacher all year. Short, focused mathematical activities are enabling pupils to think for themselves. Pupils enjoy being competitive during tricky calculation challenges, and as a result, they are catching up.
- Until recently, teachers did not champion a culture that encouraged pupils to strive for success. Since January 2014, teachers have held higher expectations of pupils. As a result, pupils take more pride in their work and try harder in lessons.

- Pupils are making better progress than last year in reading in Key Stage 2, but their choice of books is limited. They say that the academy library is 'too babyish' and that it is 'hard to find books'.
- The primary sport funding has been used to provide pupils with a range of activities. Pupils who find it hard to work in groups have succeeded in activities such as street dancing. This has helped them to join in activities in class.

The quality of teaching is inadequate

- Poor teaching means that pupils do not reach the levels of which they are capable. Teachers do not challenge pupils to do as well as they can.
- Temporary teachers do not make accurate assessments to determine what pupils need to learn next. Work in pupils' books shows that, too often, all pupils are expected to complete the same work. This means that the most-able pupils are not being challenged and the pupils who are less able are falling further behind.
- Teachers generally expect pupils to use spelling and punctuation well in writing lessons but not in other subjects. Teachers do not make sure that pupils practise forming letters correctly and they allow sloppy habits to develop. Different teachers have different expectations of the presentation of writing. As a result pupils do not always take enough pride in their work.
- Teaching is inadequate in the Early Years Foundation Stage because teachers do not understand exactly what children need to learn. A series of temporary teachers since September has resulted in children not having a clear sense of their achievements this academy year. For example, although teachers successfully work with nursery children identifying numbers up to fifteen, there are too few additional opportunities for children to practise and apply new learning.
- In the previous school year, inadequate teaching resulted in over half of all pupils being thought to have special educational needs. Teachers are now better able to correctly identify those pupils who have additional needs. However, not all teachers and teaching assistants have the skills and understanding to help these pupils to catch up quickly. Consequently, they are falling further behind.
- Teachers do not always provide clear advice about how to improve when marking pupils' work and this restricts the progress pupils make.
- Most teachers ask questions in lessons that help pupils to think carefully and explain their answers. This is a result of ARK Schools providing recent training in these teaching skills.
- Teach First trainees are highly motivated and provide stimulating and well-managed learning activities for their classes.

The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. A small minority of pupils behave inappropriately outside when adults are not there to remind them of the academy's rules. At playtimes, some pupils are boisterous and play roughly with each other; for example, they throw bark chippings, and argue when playing football.

- The academy manages the challenging behaviour of a small minority of pupils effectively so that it does not limit or inhibit the behaviour of all pupils.
- Behaviour has improved from a very low standard in the last five months because it has been a high priority for the new academy leadership team. Pupils appreciate the new outdoor equipment that the headteacher has provided and they want to use it responsibly so that even more equipment is offered.
- The academy now has good systems for managing behaviour. Good behaviour is rewarded and pupils respond well to incentives.
- Teachers are keen to stop any inappropriate behaviour in lessons, but they do not use opportunities that arise to help children learn. For example, a child who was telling an imaginary dinosaur story was inappropriately interrupted, and became upset but this was not addressed in a way that allowed children to learn how to respect one another.
- Pupils do not take as much pride in their work as they could, except in Year 6 where pupils make a concerted effort to look smart and to work neatly in response to the high expectations of the teacher.
- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement because although there is now a positive, safe ethos around the academy, this is still fragile and leaders have not yet convinced all parents that the bullying culture has ended. Nevertheless, pupils say that they feel safe at the academy because of the work leaders and managers have done to improve safety. Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying including cyber bullying. They say that when bullying occurs, academy staff now respond quickly and effectively.
- Attendance is still below average. However, it is improving rapidly since school leaders put new measures in place at the start of April 2014. Pupils particularly like the attendance raffle. The academy has rightly identified late arrival of a few pupils as a focus and has introduced a walking bus. Pupils say this 'is good in helping them get to school on time'. This term, the walking bus has led to improved attendance of 20 pupils and has reduced the late arrival of 10 pupils.
- As a result of a clear behaviour policy being implemented effectively, and a more consistent approach by staff, the number of exclusions has reduced in 2014.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management of the academy are not yet good because the changes made by academy leaders have not yet improved teaching enough, and pupils' achievement still lags behind where it should be. However, academy leaders have shown that they have the skills to make the changes needed for long-lasting improvements.
- Since the academy opened, the governing body has worked tirelessly to try to employ permanent and effective leaders and teachers. Although this has been only partially successful, the appointment of a knowledgeable and determined headteacher, supported by a new leadership team, has meant that the academy has made rapid improvements since January 2014.
- The executive headteacher knows the academy well and is therefore able to provide focused

support for the headteacher. This has helped the headteacher to make many changes in a short time, particularly improving behaviour, and improving teaching in English and mathematics lessons.

- ARK Schools has ensured that this new leadership team is supported effectively. A new team of ARK advisors has been working with the academy since January 2014. This has meant that leadership of reading, writing and mathematics has improved. Clear and systematic teaching materials introduced by ARK Schools have helped the new and temporary teachers to focus more effectively on improving pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The academy's senior leadership team started to put rigorous systems in place in January 2014 with higher expectations of behaviour. This has been successful, and standards in behaviour are improving rapidly.
- ARK advisors provide skilled support for teachers in mathematics, reading and writing. They also support the new Early Years Foundation Stage leader. An ARK speech and language therapist has supported staff in Key Stage 1 to identify which pupils have specific speech and language difficulties. Academy data show that pupils have made rapid progress through this support.
- Staff value the training and support that they receive, especially those working within the Teach First programme. Recent training for teachers has improved how they ask questions in class so that pupils give fuller answers.
- The ARK advisor for the Early Years Foundation Stage has recently started to provide the necessary support for leadership in this part of the academy and understands what needs to be achieved for teaching to improve in the Nursery and Reception years. However, the employment of temporary teachers means that changes are slow to make a difference to teaching.
- The academy library is dull and does not contain enough interesting books. It does not, therefore, encourage older pupils to read more widely.
- Leaders ensure that safeguarding requirements are met. Since it opened, the academy has managed several challenging situations, including a serious incident that occurred away from the school site, when the academy followed appropriate procedure. Immediately after the incident, academy leaders sensitively alerted pupils and parents, and there has not been a repeat of the incident.
- Academy leaders have used the primary sport funding effectively and give examples of benefits for pupils, such as basketball and street dance improving fitness.
- Since January 2014, the academy's leaders have made changes that have led to rapid improvements. They have an accurate picture of what needs to be done. They are rigorous in looking at data and in deciding how leaders need to support teachers to ensure that each pupil does the best that they can. They are also accurate in judging the quality of teaching. They provide teachers with helpful feedback about their lessons. As a result, the quality of teaching has improved since January 2014.
- Although a few parents express lack of confidence in the academy, the academy is now providing a safe environment where staff respond to bullying effectively. Pupils say that they have confidence in the headteacher and the staff, and that bullying is no longer tolerated.

- Pupils can confidently explain how the academy helps them to understand what is expected of them socially and morally. The academy does not offer many opportunities for pupils to consider other faiths, and does not regularly include examples from different cultures in lessons. The academy promotes equality of opportunity for all pupils to join in a range of additional clubs.
- Inspectors strongly recommend that the academy should not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.

■ **The governance of the academy:**

- Governance is good because governors have not faltered in their work to employ a permanent and effective leadership team. They have managed several changes of headteacher since the academy opened because they were not satisfied when standards did not improve. They can explain clearly how improvements in the quality of teaching since January 2014 have led to pupils making more progress in some classes. The governing body is now appropriately focusing on continuing to improve the quality of teaching throughout the academy and on employing permanent teachers in all classes.
- The Chair of the Governing Body is aware of the current challenges facing the academy, and is confident that the headteacher, and the leadership team, have been tackling these effectively since January 2014. The governing body recognises that the pace of change has been too slow since the academy opened. The minutes of meetings of the governing body show that governors ask challenging questions which result in action being taken.
- Governors are informed about the work of the academy through regular reports from the headteacher and from their own visits. They check on pupils' progress. They have a good understanding of how pupil premium funding is spent and where it is making a difference. The governing body understands and uses the policy for rewarding good teachers, awarding pay rises only to those whose pupils make good progress. Governors have focused more on tackling under-performance. They have been successful in appointing permanent teachers in two classes, and Teach First teachers in four classes. Pupils in these classes are making faster progress than in the other classes where there are still supply teachers.

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>

Academy details

Unique reference number	138371
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	408782

This inspection of the academy 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	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Susan Walton
Headteacher	Penelope Webb
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	0121 458 5380
Fax number	Not available
Email address	info@arkroseprimary.org

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