

# Coupals Primary Academy

Chalkstone Way, Haverhill, Suffolk CB9 0LB

## Inspection dates

20–21 September 2017

|  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>                 | <b>Good</b>              |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management   | <b>Good</b>              |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | <b>Good</b>              |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare  | <b>Good</b>              |
| Outcomes for pupils                          | <b>Good</b>              |
| Early years provision                        | <b>Good</b>              |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Since the Samuel Academy Trust started working with Coupals Primary Academy, school leaders have made many improvements to the quality of education pupils receive. Academic standards have risen and pupils are making quicker and better progress.
- The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, has a clear understanding of what constitutes effective teaching and learning. He leads the school with determination and has been instrumental in bringing about continued school improvement.
- Leaders develop staff well. Those who demonstrate leadership potential are given opportunities and training to take on new responsibilities. Consequently, middle leaders are becoming increasingly effective and so the leadership capacity within the school is strong.
- The governing body is resolute about pupils achieving well. Governors rigorously check the school's performance and hold leaders stringently to account.
- Since the school became an academy, there have been many changes in teaching staff. As a result of effective training, high expectations and rigorous performance management, teaching is typically good across the school.
- Pupils behave well in lessons, breaktimes and when moving around the school. They are polite, work hard and want to do well.
- Leaders have recently developed a creative curriculum with relevant and purposeful activities for pupils. This is not yet fully embedded across the school to provide a wide range of opportunities for pupils to learn and achieve well in subjects other than reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers plan learning activities that enable the vast majority of pupils to make good progress. However, expectations of the most able pupils are not high enough in some subjects and throughout the school.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to write at length for sustained periods of time and so do not consistently get the chance to demonstrate that they can apply their knowledge of phonics and grammar in their writing across all subjects.

## **Full report**

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

- Improve leadership and management further by:
  - building on the high standards pupils already achieve in reading, writing and mathematics by fully implementing the school's new curriculum provision across year groups to ensure that pupils receive a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum and achieve the best they can in all subjects.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment further by:
  - ensuring that the most able pupils are given challenging work so that they make accelerated progress across all subjects
  - providing pupils with more opportunities to write regularly at length and across all subjects.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Leaders, governors and trustees are very ambitious for the school and are committed to improving the life chances of all pupils. As a result of leaders' drive and determination, the school is now a positive, happy place where pupils are able to learn and develop in confidence.
- The headteacher provides strong leadership and, with support from the deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher, has played a key role in the significant improvement of the school since it became an academy. The leadership team works well together and shares a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
- The school has experienced several changes in recent years, including a high turnover of teaching staff and expanding from one class in every year group to two, a change which has significantly increased pupil numbers. Throughout these changes, leaders have maintained a clear focus on school-improvement work to raise the quality of teaching and learning. Improving teaching, pupils' progress and attainment are priorities and remain the central focus for the school.
- Middle leaders are new to their roles and responsibilities and are swiftly gaining experience in identifying key actions related to these areas. They speak with growing confidence when demonstrating the impact of their actions. Alongside senior leaders and governors, middle leaders have the capacity to build upon these improvements and develop the school even further.
- The leadership team sets high expectations for all staff and its passion for continuous improvement inspires everyone working in the school to strive for the best possible outcomes for pupils' personal and academic achievement. Staff receive regular training and speak positively about the opportunities to work together and contribute to the school's improvement. The performance of staff is managed effectively, the quality of teaching is improving, and staff are justly proud to be part of Coupals Primary Academy.
- Leaders use the pupil premium funding effectively to support disadvantaged pupils. Any barriers to learning are quickly identified and rapid intervention addresses areas of difficulty so that pupils receive appropriate help and are ready to learn. Disadvantaged pupils reach similar standards to other pupils in the school and sometimes outperform them. They are now attaining more closely to the attainment of other pupils nationally.
- Strong leadership of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities by the knowledgeable special educational needs and disabilities coordinator (SENDCo) ensures that funding is well spent. Highly personalised provision and close monitoring of pupils' progress ensure that teaching, including programmes of support, is well suited to pupils' needs. Consequently, these pupils make good progress from their starting points and achieve well.
- The primary physical education (PE) and sport premium funding is used well. Pupils now take part in more physical activities, including inter-school competitions, with other schools in the trust. Pupils have access to a range of sports resources, especially

at lunchtime. More pupils now regularly attend out-of-hours sports clubs and pupils report an increased level of enjoyment in PE. The school employs a specialist coach to work alongside teachers. This has increased teachers' confidence to deliver high-quality PE lessons.

- Leaders have been well supported by the trust in improving standards within the school, and also by the opportunities provided to share and develop good practice through working with other academies within the trust. The resources, specialist teachers and training programmes the trust provides have improved the quality of teaching, pupils' outcomes and the transition for pupils moving on to Year 7. As a result, pupils are well prepared for the next stages of their education.
- The majority of parents are happy with the school and the progress their children are making. Parents spoken with during the inspection, and the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, demonstrate that parents hold the headteacher in high regard and appreciate the hard work of staff. Parents also recognise the positive changes that have taken place since the school became an academy and the improvements that have been made. One parent spoke for many by saying: 'Coupals is a lovely school. The teachers, support and administrative staff are kind and caring. My child is progressing well.'
- In order to raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics, leaders have focused on rigorously teaching these basic skills to all pupils. This has been effective, and standards have risen in reading, writing and mathematics across the school.
- Leaders have recently introduced a motivating curriculum of well-planned activities to capture the imagination of pupils and further support the effective development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. However, this curriculum is not yet fully embedded across the school to enable pupils to develop their skills and knowledge, and make meaningful connections across subjects in order to broaden their understanding. Consequently, pupils do not always achieve as well as they could across all subjects.

## **Governance of the school**

- Samuel Ward Academy Trust provides strong support and challenge to school leaders about the quality of the school's work. The trust works well with the governing body to ensure that governance is increasingly effective. Governors rigorously check the arrangements for the appraisal of staff. Salary increases are linked to the contribution that staff make to school improvement and to pupils' outcomes.
- Governors ensure that their statutory responsibilities, especially in safeguarding pupils' welfare, are fully met and effective. Governors understand the information they receive from the headteacher and other leaders, and ask challenging questions to hold leaders to account to ensure the best possible outcomes for all pupils. Both the pupil premium and sport premium funding are managed efficiently under their scrutiny.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and staff rightly place a high priority on ensuring that pupils are kept safe. The trust oversees the rigorous checks carried out prior to making staff appointments. All

staff and governors receive regular and appropriate safeguarding training. This enables staff to adhere consistently to school policies and procedures.

- The school works closely with external agencies and initiates appropriate actions to ensure the safety of pupils. Records show a good level of rigour in pursuing the involvement of other agencies for vulnerable pupils who may be at risk.
- Pupils say that they feel safe at school and are confident that staff will quickly resolve any issues or concerns they may have.
- The overwhelming majority of parents who completed the Ofsted online questionnaire during the inspection agreed that their children are safe and well cared for at Coupals Primary Academy.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- The high expectations of leaders and appropriate training for staff have resulted in improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school. As a result, pupils make good progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The relationship between pupils and staff is positive, encouraging, and highly conducive to learning. Pupils enjoy their lessons and want to learn. Pupils respond positively to the tasks they have been given and strive to meet the high expectations of their teachers.
- High-quality feedback and accurate assessment inform lesson planning well. Teachers assess pupils' learning as a matter of routine and address any misconceptions swiftly. Teachers inform pupils of how well they are doing so they can be moved on quickly, when appropriate.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well by the school. They have received training and apply it skilfully to provide effective support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and disadvantaged pupils. Teaching assistants have good subject knowledge and they plan closely with teachers. As a result, teaching assistants' work contributes effectively to the increasing progress that pupils make when in their care.
- Reading has been a key focus throughout the school. Leaders were disappointed with the key stage 2 reading outcomes in 2016. In response, they analysed effectively how to improve teaching and successfully made changes to ensure that their chosen teaching approaches better meet the needs of the pupils, particularly in the development of pupils' vocabulary and their comprehension skills. As a result, pupils now make better progress in reading and the unvalidated results for 2017 are much improved, particularly in the number of pupils attaining a higher standard.
- Improved teaching in mathematics results in pupils achieving well. Leaders have introduced a whole-school focus to increase pupils' understanding of basic mathematical concepts. Pupils are also given many opportunities to apply their problem solving and reasoning skills in lessons. Teachers regularly check pupils' understanding and reinforce previous learning.
- The quality and quantity of work in pupils' books from the previous academic year, and

in displays around the school, indicate that the teaching of writing is improving over time. Evidence in pupils' books shows that the teaching of writing incorporates spelling, grammar and punctuation skills effectively. However, teachers do not always ensure that pupils have plenty of opportunities to produce extended pieces of writing across the curriculum to further improve and evidence their writing skills.

- The school's broad and engaging curriculum needs to be further embedded across the school so that the progress pupils make in other subjects is as strong as it is in reading, writing and mathematics.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

**Good**

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils live up to the school's core values of 'readiness, honesty, and determination'. Pupils can accurately explain to inspectors what these values mean. They know that it is important to be organised and 'ready to learn'. Pupils commented that: 'You have to be honest if you need help, or you have done something wrong.' Pupils also confidently told inspectors that: 'You must never give up, and even if you have struggled or something is hard – you can always make it through.' Pupils know that keeping these values will support their learning and they enjoy receiving rewards when they demonstrate the values throughout the school day.
- Pupils enjoy school. They like their teachers and want to please them. As one pupil stated, 'Everyone respects the teachers and we respect each other.' Pupils are generally confident learners who are a credit to themselves, their teachers and the school. Year 6 pupils wear their 'leading by example' uniform badges with pride.
- Pupils are able to take on a range of responsibilities, including being class monitors, acting as digital leaders and overseeing recycling as eco-leaders. In addition to these specific roles, all pupils take responsibility for keeping the school neat and tidy. Inspectors observed several instances of pupils instinctively helping others, tidying up or going out of their way to say a kind word or assist in a situation.
- Through a well-planned programme of personal, social and health education, pupils develop a good understanding of how to stay safe in a variety of situations, including when using the internet.
- Pupils told inspectors that they would like more lessons in subjects other than reading, writing and mathematics so that they: 'learn as much as we can about lots of different things'.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Good behaviour is evident throughout the school due to the consistent implementation of the school's effective behaviour policy.
- Pupils are friendly and considerate, often displaying a helpful attitude towards each

other. For example, inspectors observed some Year 6 pupils happily working on tasks together, asking for, and giving, each other support to complete their tasks. One pupil told an inspector: 'There is a lot of friendship to go around in this school.'

- Leaders analyse the number and nature of behavioural issues and are active in putting appropriate support in place to improve behaviour. The frequency of incidents of poor behaviour has reduced over time.
- Pupils' conduct throughout the school day is commendable. Lunchtime in the dining hall is a pleasant social time when pupils show good manners and chat politely with each other. Outside, playtime is enjoyable for all and no one is left out. Generally, pupils use the wide range of equipment available sensibly: they share and take turns well. Pupils can be trusted to follow the rules and behave well when moving around the school or in any of the outdoor areas.
- Pupils want to come to school and overall attendance is similar to the national average. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils is improving. This is because the school works very closely with families and provides strong support to alleviate any issues affecting pupils' attendance.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Children join the early years with skills that are broadly typical for their age, although some children start with communication and language skills that are lower than is typical for their age. However, because of the effective use of assessment, leaders ensure that children's specific and individual needs are identified early. Consequently, children make good progress in the Reception Year. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year is increasing and is currently in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the national phonics check at the end of Year 1 has risen rapidly. The school's assessment information demonstrates that pupils are making better progress in developing and using their understanding of phonics throughout the school. This is because phonics is taught systematically and pupils use their phonics skills accurately when they read books. The unvalidated results for 2017 in Year 1 indicate that pupils reached well above the national average for the previous year.
- The unvalidated results for 2017 show that, by the end of key stage 1, the proportion of pupils who met the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics is in line with the national average for 2016.
- At the end of key stage 2, the unvalidated results for 2017 show that standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above those seen nationally. This above-average attainment is the result of effective teaching and good progress in all year groups. As a result, pupils are well equipped with the necessary academic skills to be fully ready for the next stages of their education.
- In the previous academic year, disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, made better progress than before due to more effective teaching and the good use of the pupil premium funding. The school's assessment information over time indicates that disadvantaged pupils are catching up with others in the school,

and other pupils nationally.

- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. This is because their needs are quickly identified by staff and they are effectively supported in their learning. A number of parents told inspectors that they were pleased with the way that the school helps their children to succeed.
- Generally, the most able pupils achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics, because of effective teaching and appropriate challenge, but this is not yet consistent for all most-able pupils, in all subjects and across the school. As a result, some of the most able pupils do not achieve the higher standards that they are capable of.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- Leadership and management of early years are good. Expectations are high, and provision is improving because staff are encouraged to try new ideas linked to the children's needs and interests. Consequently, children are being well prepared for Year 1.
- The majority of children start in Reception with skills and abilities that are typical for their age. However, staff recognise the limited speaking and listening skills of some children when they join the school. Consequently, there is an emphasis on encouraging children to speak clearly and in complete sentences. Teachers and teaching assistants ask insightful questions and give children time to reply. Staff model the use of language well. As a result, children quickly learn to speak in whole sentences, which are increasingly grammatically correct.
- Children's learning records from the previous academic year demonstrate that children make good progress from their starting points. The proportion of children who attain a good level of development by the time they leave Reception is broadly in line with the national average. Due to the good teaching, levels of attainment are rising.
- Staff know the children well and have ensured that all welfare requirements are met. Children are supported to be ready and willing to learn. Rules and routines are established quickly so that children settle promptly and respond well to their teachers' expectations of behaviour.
- There are a range of opportunities for children to play, discover and learn, particularly outside. Despite only recently joining the school, many children already display good levels of independence and are able to cooperate, share ideas and persevere in their learning. Whether 'making cakes' in the sand tray, building a den outside or acting out a story about wild animals, children make good use of the skills they have learned.
- The school engages well with parents. Information is frequently shared with them and they are regularly invited into school. Parents who spoke to inspectors said they value the care and attention given to their children.
- Through the children's learning records, parents are encouraged to take an active part in their children's learning. For example, parents are asked to reflect on their child's achievements and their next steps. Staff use this information to help plan tailored learning experiences to meet the needs of the children that ensure continued progress.

## School details

|                         |          |
|-------------------------|----------|
| Unique reference number | 141371   |
| Local authority         | Suffolk  |
| Inspection number       | 10036099 |

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

|                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Type of school                      | Primary  |
| School category                     | Academy sponsor-led  |
| Age range of pupils                 | 4 to 11  |
| Gender of pupils                    | Mixed  |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 253  |
| Appropriate authority               | Board of trustees  |
| Chair                               | Elaine McManus   |
| Headteacher                         | David Maguire  |
| Telephone number                    | 01440 763933   |
| Website                             | <a href="http://www.coupalsacademy.co.uk">www.coupalsacademy.co.uk</a>     |
| Email address                       | <a href="mailto:admin@coupalsacademy.co.uk">admin@coupalsacademy.co.uk</a> |
| Date of previous inspection         | Not previously inspected   |

## Information about this school

- Coupals Primary Academy is an average-sized primary school and converted to an academy in January 2015. The school is part of the Samuel Ward Academy Trust.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below the national average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who receive special educational needs support, or who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan, is in line with the national average.
- The school meets the government's floor standards for 2016, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of key stage 2.

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in every class and attended an assembly. Several of the observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- A wide range of pupils' current workbooks, and those from the previous academic year, were looked at by inspectors throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, various subject leaders, the SENDCo, the early years leader, the human resources officer, newly qualified and trainee teachers, a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body, and the chief executive officer of the trust.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils informally in class and around the school at break and lunchtimes to seek their views about the school.
- Inspectors met with several groups of pupils more formally to discuss many aspects of school life.
- Inspectors heard some pupils in Year 1, Year 3 and Year 6 read. Inspectors talked to pupils about their reading habits and looked at their reading records.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's website and a range of school documents, including: assessment information; minutes from governing body meetings; the school's own evaluation; improvement plans; and records about behaviour, safeguarding children and attendance.
- Inspectors considered the 19 parent texts, and 20 responses made by parents to the Ofsted online Parent View questionnaire. They also spoke to some parents before and after school. Additionally, inspectors looked at the 12 views expressed by members of staff in response to the staff questionnaire.

## Inspection team

|                            |                         |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Fiona Webb, lead inspector | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Christina Kenna            | Ofsted Inspector        |
| Lesley Stevens             | Ofsted Inspector        |

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