

Place Farm Primary Academy

Camps Road, Haverhill, Suffolk CB9 8HF

Inspection dates

1–2 March 2017

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

- Since her appointment in April 2016, the headteacher, in partnership with the deputy headteacher, has brought about considerable improvements to pupils' achievement and to the quality of teaching.
- The current progress of pupils is good. After disappointing Year 6 results in 2016, progress in reading is now good and progress in writing and mathematics is improving rapidly.
- The quality of middle leadership is strong in a wide range of areas. English, mathematics, special educational needs and the foundation subjects are all led extremely well.
- Support for disadvantaged pupils has improved significantly since the appointment of a pupil premium champion in September 2016.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers ensure that lessons are interesting, well organised, calm and purposeful. Pupils are given accurate feedback so that they have a clear understanding of how to keep improving their work.
- The quality of support provided by the Samuel Ward Academy Trust has been particularly effective in supporting the headteacher to bring about significant school improvement.
- The teaching of phonics is of a high standard. Children in the early years and pupils in key stage 1 get a good grounding in the early stages of learning to read.
- Children in the early years get off to a good start. From relatively low starting points they make rapid progress in all areas of the curriculum so that they are well prepared for Year 1.
- Governance is strong. A small but highly effective local governing body set up in December 2016 is ambitious, knows the schools well and is driving improvement.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils concentrate well and try hard.
- The most able pupils are not achieving as much as they could in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Current progress in science is not as good as in other areas of the curriculum.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the rate of progress that the most able pupils make by:
 - ensuring that all teachers set tasks for the most able pupils that are sufficiently demanding and that are matched to their abilities
 - developing the partnership with parents so that they can be more involved in supporting their child's learning.
- Accelerate progress in science so that pupils make the same progress that they do in other subjects by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to take part in scientific activities
 - improving the leadership and teaching of science, ensuring that teachers have the same expectations for the quality of work produced by pupils in science as they do in other subjects.
- Reduce the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent during the year so that it is in line with or below the national average.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The current headteacher was appointed in April 2016. On taking up the post she took rapid action to appoint a series of strong middle leaders in a wide range of subjects. They have since brought about rapid improvements both in the level of progress pupils make across all aspects of school life and in the quality of teaching. As a result, standards have improved significantly and outcomes for current pupils are now good.
- The partnership with Samuel Ward Multi Academy Trust has been very effective. Since joining the trust, the quality of school support has been significant. The director of primary education and school advisor know the school well and have put in place rigorous regular school evaluations, support to deal with underperformance in teaching, one-to-one coaching for middle leaders and a system for school improvement. This support has played a crucial role in helping the senior leadership transform the school.
- Leaders regularly monitor the quality of teaching and provide suitable feedback for improvement. This is linked to additional training which targets the next areas for development. As a result, there is a culture of improvement within the school where all staff are striving to develop their teaching practice.
- The appointment of a highly effective pupil premium champion has transformed the support given to disadvantaged pupils. Pupil premium funding is used effectively. Since September 2016, each pupil has an individual plan for how they will be supported. Teachers' planning takes into account each child's needs and additional learning activities are put in place within lessons and outside curriculum time. The most able disadvantaged pupils are making good progress because of the additional challenges that are being planned for them. The difference between the rate of progress being made by disadvantaged pupils and others is closing and has disappeared in some year groups.
- The additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is targeted well to support pupils effectively.
- Senior leaders have put in place rigorous systems to manage teachers' performance. Teachers are set challenging targets and their progress towards meeting these targets is monitored closely. Effective systems are in place to ensure that teachers are given support to meet these targets.
- The quality of middle leadership is particularly strong and is a key reason for the improvements that have taken place since September 2016 in most subjects. The leadership of English exemplifies this. Building on effective and well-embedded strategies, the English leader's passion for the subject and drive to improve standards in every area is having a positive impact on academic performance so that progress in reading and writing is now good.
- The school provides a good curriculum, which covers a broad and balanced range of subjects and themes. This year there has been an emphasis on securing rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Nevertheless, a wide range of subjects is studied and standards in many areas such as physical education, music, art and computing, are good.

- Following disappointing results in 2016 leaders have understandably prioritised teaching in reading, writing and mathematics so that pupils can reach the new, higher standards. The quality of the curriculum with respect to physical education and music is strong, but there has not been enough focus on the teaching of science. Consequently, in this subject not enough pupils are working to the level that they should be.
- British values and other cultures are taught well across the school. Pupils in school took part in a number of activities related to the national European Union vote and voted themselves in a mini referendum. Themed assemblies help pupils understand about multicultural Britain and these are supported by a range of activities across the curriculum. Year 5 pupils are looking forward to learning about life in London through their residential visit, where they will be sleeping on a ship in the city.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is a strength of the school. The school's approach to developing the pupils 'mind-set' has helped develop characteristics such as resilience, determination and understanding for others.
- The physical education and sport premium funding is used effectively to develop the skills of pupils and increase teachers' expertise. Specialist coaches from a secondary school demonstrate lessons to teachers in the school. The performance of school teams has been excellent, with the rounders and basketball teams competing in the Suffolk championships.

Governance of the school

- Governors have been through a significant period of change as the school changed academy trusts. They have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement within the school and make regular visits to monitor and evaluate the impact of school improvement actions.
- Governors have high expectations for what needs to be achieved and responded well to the disappointing results in 2016. They have supported the school to make a range of significant improvements to staffing, teaching and the curriculum. They monitor the impact of these changes closely.
- Governors know how additional funding is being spent with regard to supporting disadvantaged pupils and improving the physical education curriculum. The information they receive about the management of teachers' performance helps them to make well-grounded decisions about teachers' pay.
- Governors monitor the progress of different groups of pupils carefully. They question leaders appropriately and arrange visits in line with the key areas for improvement.
- The governing body oversees the school's safeguarding arrangements by reviewing and updating relevant policies regularly.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The leadership and management of safeguarding are strong. Both the headteacher and deputy headteacher show a determination for keeping pupils safe and they are

supported by staff who keep meticulous records. This means that vulnerable children are monitored closely and that children with complex and challenging needs are given the support they require.

- Leaders have ensured that all staff receive the training that is required to stay up to date. The single central record and the checks on staff recruitment meet the requirements of government guidance.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching has improved because of carefully planned training programmes, the introduction of effective systems for monitoring performance and the appointment of strong teachers to a range of middle leadership posts. As a result of good teaching in all year groups, pupils are now making progress in line with their peers nationally.
- Teachers are particularly effective at making lessons interesting, and this leads to enthusiastic learning. Teachers use questioning skilfully to develop and extend pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- Teachers help pupils understand the learning that is expected through clear explanations and supportive discussions at the start of the lesson. Effective verbal and written feedback provided by teachers, together with pupils' own accurate assessment of their work, supports good progress in a large majority of classes.
- Pupils of different abilities read widely and with proficiency. Children are supported well in the Reception class and as a result they enjoy books and learn to read quickly. Similarly, in Year 1 the good-quality teaching of phonics helps pupils develop skills to tackle more-challenging books. The library is excellent. It provides a stimulating environment and is stocked with a wide range of good-quality books. Older pupils read confidently and often choose challenging books to read. They can talk confidently about plot development and how to create tension within a story.
- Teaching in mathematics is effective. The introduction of a new approach, 'maths mastery', has had a significant impact on standards throughout the school. Pupils benefit from activities that are designed to challenge them and develop their thinking. Teachers have received good-quality training in how to deliver successful lessons.
- Leaders have ensured that teachers use funding and resources to challenge the most able disadvantaged pupils well. These pupils receive helpful guidance on how to improve their work and receive additional support through extra classes and targeted help from the school's pupil premium champion.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported in lessons. The co-coordinator leads a team of staff effectively. Each pupil has a support and success plan written in partnership with parents and the child. This maps out the curriculum to be adopted and sets learning targets for each term. The 'Rainbow Class' provides additional, effective support for pupils needing extra support. The level of training among staff is high, with some holding qualifications in dyslexia, nurture and speech and language.
- Although teaching is typically good, some inconsistency remains. The teaching of science is not as effective as it could be because it lacks leadership. In addition, insufficient curriculum time has been set aside so that pupils can engage in purposeful

scientific activities. Parents of the most able pupils are not supported to be as involved in their pupils' learning as the parents of other groups of pupils are.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils feel safe and well looked after. Parents who responded to the inspection survey confirm that their children are looked after well.
- Pupils learn to stay safe on the internet through a range of class activities planned throughout the year and also through a special week of focused activities. Discussions with pupils show that they are aware of potential risks when going online.
- Pupils are proud of their school, their work and their appearance. Much of the work in their books is of a high quality, with good presentation, and they take care to look after their exercise books.
- Pupils say that bullying rarely occurs and that teachers respond promptly when they raise concerns. The school's values related to a 'growth mind-set' approach are understood well. Pupils apply this mind-set to the way they treat one another and in their positive approach to classwork.
- Pupils learn to respect one another's backgrounds and treat each other kindly. Incidents of prejudiced behaviour are rare. Adults and pupils do not tolerate discrimination. New pupils joining the school are made to feel welcome.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is well developed through a carefully planned series of assemblies, classroom activities, regular visitors to school and off-site trips. Older pupils set a good example to the younger ones and there is a range of opportunities to support the local and wider community through charity work.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The atmosphere around school is calm and orderly. In class, pupils enjoy their lessons and work hard. They can concentrate for extended periods of time and work well when unsupervised. In one example of this, during a Year 5 mathematics class, older pupils used a range of practical equipment, combined with written work, to support their understanding of mathematical equations.
- Pupils' attendance in the past has been below the national average. This year the attendance from September 2016 to March 2017 is in line with the national average. However, as was the case last year, a higher proportion of pupils are persistently absent than the average.
- The school's expectations for behaviour are clearly explained to pupils, and staff apply the behaviour policy consistently.
- Breaktimes and lunchtimes are well organised and appropriately supervised. Due to a lack of outdoor space, these breaks are staggered. This arrangement is managed well and pupils move in and out of class quietly as they go outside and return to class.

- Around school, pupils are well mannered and polite. They hold doors open for adults, wait patiently, take turns and use 'please' and 'thank you'.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Current pupils are making good progress in a wide range of subjects. The work in pupils' books, discussions with pupils and the school's assessment information confirm that pupils are now making much better progress than they have done in the past.
- In 2014 and 2015, standards across the school were rising, with the proportion reaching the expected level increasing each year. In 2016, there was a significant drop in progress, with reading, writing and mathematics all being in the bottom 10% of all schools when compared to the national average. The school has attributed this to a range of factors, including staffing changes for the Year 6 classes.
- The percentage of children who reach a good level of development in the early years was in line with the national average, representing good progress from children's individual starting points. Improvements in the teaching of phonics have led to similarly impressive results, with the school achieving higher than average in 2016.
- Historically, results at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 have been below those of other schools nationally. Pupils' progress is now much better due to strong leadership in English and mathematics and teaching that is usually good.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the high levels at the end of key stage 2 was low last year and evidence from the inspection shows that this is still an area for development. Not enough is done to support and extend the learning of the most-able pupils.
- Outcomes for pupils who have special needs and/or disabilities are good. The special educational needs coordinator has set up robust systems to track their progress. The information is used to ensure that effective intervention is put in place when pupils are at risk of falling behind.
- In 2016, the progress that disadvantaged pupils made was below expected. In response the school commissioned a review of disadvantaged pupils' performance and appointed a pupil premium champion. The strategies adopted since September 2016 have led to a significant improvement in the rates of progress for all disadvantaged pupils, including the most able. Differences between their rate of progress and that of other pupils have been reduced significantly.
- Analysis of pupils' work in books shows that outcomes for science are not improving as quickly as those in other areas.

Early years provision

Good

- A large proportion of children start at the school with skills and knowledge that are below those typical for their age. As a result of good teaching and effective leadership, they make rapid progress across all areas of learning. By the end of the year the proportion achieving a good level of development is in line with the national average. Children make particularly good progress in their development of early reading skills.

- Leadership of the early years is good. Planning is detailed and activities to support literacy and numeracy are thoughtfully prepared so that children can build on their previous learning.
- The atmosphere in the Reception class is productive and hard-working. Children move from activity to activity freely and behave well in a wide range of situations. One group of children were seen using a real hammer and nail in the 'building zone'. An adult monitored the children from a distance but because of their good behaviour and sensible attitudes did not need to intervene.
- Family engagement as part of the learning process is strong. Several instances were noted where the early years leader had adapted provision to suit the needs of children and communicated these sensitively to the parents concerned. A computer software package is used to help parents share the learning that is taking place at home. Many parents upload pictures from home and these are discussed in class. Adults within the classroom use this information when they talk to children. This good level of communication makes an important contribution to the rapid progress made by many children in this class.
- There is a strong focus on the development of early reading, writing and mathematical skills. Many children were seen to be choosing writing activities and trying hard to write independently. Adults provided appropriate support but were also effective in encouraging children to try their very best.
- Effective use of the additional funding provided in early years is ensuring that the progress of disadvantaged children has accelerated this year. The class teacher is aware of each child in this group and monitors their progress closely, setting regular targets for their progress.
- Activities in the outside area were not as effective in supporting reading, writing and mathematical development as those indoors. Some opportunities to encourage purposeful learning are missed.
- Safeguarding procedures are effective and risk assessments are kept up to date. This ensures that children are safe and well cared for.

School details

Unique reference number	138161
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10023475

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	416
Appropriate authority	The Samuel Ward Academy Trust
Chair of Local Governing Body	Nick Franks
Headteacher	Jane Sendall
Telephone number	01440 702836
Website	www.placefarm.suffolk.sch.uk
Email address	placefarminfo@placefram.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	23–24 April 2013

Information about this school

- 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.
- Place Farm Primary Academy is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- The school has been a member of the Samuel Ward Multi Academy Trust since December 2016.
- The proportion of pupils who have special needs and/or disabilities with an education, health and care plan is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is above average.

- The headteacher was appointed to the post in April 2016. Previously she was head of school.
- Since the last inspection the school has changed academy trust.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons in each year group. Many were jointly observed with school leaders.
- Pupils' work in a wide range of subjects was scrutinised.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the assessment leaders, the English and mathematics coordinators and other middle leaders.
- Discussions were held with representatives from the multi-academy trust and from the local governing body.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils in all classes and met with a group of pupils for a discussion.
- A range of documentation and school policies were reviewed, which included the school's self-evaluation, records of attendance, assessment records of pupil progress and school improvement plans.
- Policies, documents, training logs and procedures relating to safeguarding were also scrutinised.
- Inspectors took account of 29 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and considered the free-text responses from parents. One additional email was considered and questions from this were raised with school and trust leadership.
- There were no responses from staff or pupils to questionnaires about the school.

Inspection team

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Mandy Short	Ofsted Inspector
Elizabeth Hackett	Ofsted Inspector
Richard Hopkins	Ofsted Inspector
Heather Hann	Ofsted Inspector

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