

Mount Street Academy

Mount Street, Lincoln, LN1 3JG

Inspection dates 12–13 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Pupils make rapid progress and achieve exceptionally well in reading, writing and mathematics with outcomes high compared with national averages.
- Most teaching is outstanding and none less than good. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and plan interesting work and inspirational activities which help pupils to think for themselves. While steps have already been taken to improve further the teaching of letters and sounds (phonics), teaching is not yet consistently outstanding in this aspect of English.
- Highly skilled teaching assistants work alongside teachers to provide pupils with very effective personalised and small group support.
- The schools' creative curriculum and inspiring themes provide an excellent range of opportunities for pupils to excel in a variety of subjects.
- Children make an excellent start in the Nursery and Reception classes, quickly becoming confident learners. They benefit from outstanding teaching in classrooms and in the inspiring outside area.
- Pupils' outstanding behaviour is supported by excellent provision for their spiritual, moral social and cultural development. Pupils feel extremely safe in school and get on very well together.
- Parents think highly about the school and leaders use very effective ways to involve parents in their children's learning, for example, by using social media.
- The executive headteacher and head of school are inspirational leaders who lead by example. They have a highly positive impact on the quality of teaching and levels of pupils' achievement at the school.
- The governing body provides very effective support and challenge to the school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 20 lessons, including groups who were being given extra help. Three lessons were seen together with the executive headteacher or head of school. In addition, the inspectors visited assemblies and made a number of short visits to lessons and learning areas.
- Separate meetings were conducted with governors, staff, senior leaders, and two groups of pupils. Discussions were held with an adviser from the CfBT Schools Trust and a representative of the National College for Teaching and Leadership. The inspectors talked to pupils during lessons, listened to pupils read and scrutinised samples of their work.
- The 55 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the results of the school's own surveys of parents' views were taken into account. The views of several parents who communicated with the inspectors during the inspection were also taken into consideration.
- The inspectors took account of the 49 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- A number of documents were reviewed. These included the school's improvement plan, its self-evaluation report, information about pupils' current progress, arrangements for safeguarding and records of pupils' behaviour and attendance. Reports from the CfBT Education Trust about the school's effectiveness were also examined.

Inspection team

Cathy Morgan, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sara Storer

Additional Inspector

Peter Heaton

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This Infant and Nursery school converted to become an academy on 1 October 2011. When its predecessor school, Mount Street Infant and Nursery School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding. It is part of a wider partnership of schools supported by the CfBT Education Trust.
- The executive headteacher leads both this school and the Lincoln Carlton Academy. There is an additional head of school.
- The school is the lead school in the Kyra Teaching School Alliance.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- There are three classes in each year group and part-time Nursery provision every morning and afternoon.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority and other groups.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on the good steps already taken in making sure the teaching of phonics is consistently outstanding.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Children usually join the Nursery and Reception classes with levels of knowledge and skills below those expected for their age, especially in aspects of communication and language and linking sounds and letters. They make outstanding progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage because outstanding teaching ensures that individual children's needs are met. A systematic approach to the accurate tracking, assessment and evaluation of children's achievement ensures that they are all exceptionally well prepared for Key Stage 1.
- The results of the 2013 national screening check for reading at the end of Year 1 were below the expected standards. The school urgently reviewed its teaching of phonics to ensure greater consistency in the use of new resources and methods. Inspection evidence shows that as a result, children thoroughly enjoy learning phonics and current reading skills exceed greatly what is expected. Nevertheless, despite considerable improvements, the teaching of phonics is not yet consistently outstanding.
- Pupils in Year 2 perform exceptionally well in the national tests in reading, writing and mathematics, with attainment being significantly above national averages. Inspection evidence confirms that high standards continue to be the norm, particularly in reading where almost half of pupils in Key Stage 2 gained Level 3 grades in 2013. A scrutiny of pupils' work and the school's excellent monitoring system show that almost all pupils are working at the level expected for their age and a significant proportion of pupils are again on target to reach the standards, by the end of Year 2, which are usually seen when pupils are in junior school.
- Pupils from a wide variety of backgrounds learn exceptionally well. Excellent individual help from highly skilled teaching assistants enables disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs to make the very rapid progress that is typical of this school. This reflects the school's commitment to equal opportunities, making sure that all have the chance to succeed.
- The school has well-targeted strategies to support the small number of pupils for whom it receives the pupil premium. In 2013, attainment in English and mathematics for pupils known to be eligible for this additional funding was about two terms behind the very high levels of their classmates in English and one term in mathematics, but was much better than that of such pupils nationally. Inspection evidence shows that this gap has narrowed quickly and data demonstrate that more pupils are now achieving the highest levels.
- Pupils work shows high levels of achievement in science, history, geography, information and communication technology (ICT) and in physical education. There are many opportunities for pupils to use the exceptional outdoor learning areas and to apply their mathematical and literacy skills in all subjects. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their exciting and themed homework projects such 'super-heroes', which enable them to create high quality animations and models which demonstrate their excellent ability to work independently.
- The school has a particularly strong reading culture and pupils spoke enthusiastically of their keenness to read. Those who find it difficult to learn to read respond rapidly to the individual help they receive from highly effective teaching assistants. Pupils read fluently and with great expression, using all the strategies they have been taught to successfully tackle unfamiliar words. Teachers take every opportunity offered in lessons for pupils to practise their reading skills.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- All pupils make excellent progress in their learning because much of the teaching across the school is outstanding and it is never less than good. Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievement and teachers constantly strive to provide inspiring learning experiences and stimulating activities for pupils. This demonstrates the positive impact of the successful and extensive training staff receive in the use of innovative teaching methods.
- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and question pupils skilfully to assess their understanding and improve their learning. Expert use is made of extra questions to increase the 'cheeky' challenge for pupils and probe their deeper thinking, and this accelerates their progress further. Teachers and their assistants teach with confidence and enthusiasm and their excellent use of information about how well pupils are doing ensures that they are extremely clear about what they want pupils to learn.
- In one outstanding lesson, pupils in Year 1 were captivated whilst investigating the properties of two-dimensional shapes. Excellent planning of a wide range of stimulating activities, including art, ICT and paired guessing games, enabled pupils to rapidly develop their understanding and use of numerous specialist terms, such as isosceles, hexagon, octagon and ellipse, and they were highly motivated to use these shapes creatively in their high quality drawings and paintings.
- Teaching assistants play a key role in the outstanding teaching. They are highly skilled, for example in supporting all aspects of learning in the Nursery and Reception classes and in sensitively supporting disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs across the school.
- The excellent communication with parents and the effective programme of home visits, ensure that children settle very quickly when they join the school. Great emphasis is placed on developing children's speaking and listening skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage and all pupils are given extensive opportunities to extend their writing and numeracy skills both indoors and outdoors.
- Staff are highly effective in using praise and rewards to build pupils' confidence and self-esteem. They are actively encouraged to communicate with one another to improve aspects of their work and that of others. Teachers make excellent use of marking, and their regular 'learning talk' sessions with individual pupils ensure that despite their very young age, they have a clear view of what they need to do to reach their potential. Pupils of all abilities are actively involved in setting and monitoring their personalised targets to ensure that any small gaps in pupils' learning are addressed promptly.
- Reading is taught well across the school. This is because staff have improved their skills in teaching early reading skills and provide sufficient time in lessons for pupils to read. The school is very aware of the need to ensure the teaching of phonics needs to be consistently outstanding rather than good.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary and pupils demonstrate excellent attitudes to learning. They are highly motivated to learn from an early age, beginning with discovering the meaning of their unusual class names, which is a key factor in the school's

continuing success.

- Pupils are polite, respectful and very caring. Staff work hard to provide 'a safe haven in which children flourish' and pupils say that they feel very safe and secure at school.
- Pupils understand different types of bullying and know how to keep themselves safe. Even the youngest children take responsibility for wearing their 'out of class' badges when they need to leave the room so that everyone knows where pupils are at all times.
- Almost all parents who responded to the online survey of parents' views or who spoke to inspectors agreed that their children are happy at school and this is also reflected in the high rate of attendance. The school works very hard to ensure that all pupils attend regularly and are punctual. The highly effective family support worker has established strong relationships with families to rapidly improve the attendance of some pupils.
- High expectations, consistent approaches, and a very effective use of rewards and sanctions help pupils to develop high levels of self-discipline and confidence. Consequently there are few incidents and no disruptive behaviour in lessons.
- Pupils are highly motivated to abide by their 'golden rules' and the opportunity to earn points towards their 'golden time', when they choose from a range of interesting and exciting rewards, such as a tea-party with the headteacher or a 'disco' with their classmates.
- Pupils say that there is no bullying and that they are 'proud to belong to Mount Street Academy'. They value and enjoy the many opportunities they have to suggest ideas, vote on improvements and act as members of both the school and learning councils.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils flourish in their personal development because the school fosters exceptionally strong relations and tackles any form of discrimination.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Outstanding leadership and management by the executive headteacher, combined with the excellent support of the head of school and other leaders, ensure that pupils receive the best possible education. The relentless ambition of all staff and the governing body has created a school where everything possible is done to promote the achievement and personal development of its pupils.
- The management of the school is very much a shared responsibility and teachers fulfil their various leadership roles exceptionally well. Sharp self-evaluation identifies priorities accurately and clear action plans demonstrate that this strong team know what needs to be done to drive forward further plans for improvement. The innovative systems to rigorously monitor the impact of their work, such as the use of the 'striving for excellence' spreadsheet, provide further evidence of the schools' excellent capacity for further development.
- Teamwork throughout the school is excellent and there is a high level of professionalism among all staff who are fully committed to engaging pupils and fostering their love of learning. The executive headteacher and head of school lead by example and demonstrate meticulous attention to detail in all aspects of their work. The senior leadership team are highly effective role models, particularly to those who are new to teaching.

- Joint planning across the school promotes strong relationships amongst staff who are all keen to learn from one another and to continually improve their knowledge and skills. All staff value the many opportunities they have to learn about and apply innovative teaching methods based on sound research findings.
- Teachers and their assistants clearly understand their roles, responsibilities and lines of accountability. Staff accept responsibility for pupils' outcomes and teachers are set sharp and clear performance targets which have to be met before a rise in salary can be considered.
- The schools' outstanding creative curriculum provides an excellent range of opportunities for pupils, not just in English and mathematics but in a variety of subjects. Pupils benefit from inspiring themes and 'WOW' days which they each help to plan and there are considerable strengths in the organisation of science through inspirational 'I investigate' weeks. The school uses highly effective ways to further involve parents in their children's learning, for example, using ICT to upload video clips of pupils' work through the use of 'Twitter'.
- The teaching of physical education is being enhanced through the appointment of a highly qualified specialist teacher who is ensuring that the new school sport funding is providing specialist training for staff and giving pupils expert tuition to ensure a positive impact on improving their health and well-being.
- Responses to the staff questionnaire and discussions held with staff demonstrate that they too are extremely proud of their school, one staff member wrote, 'I still pinch myself every morning because I can't believe how lucky I am to work here'.
- Leaders and the governing body ensure that good use is made of pupil premium money to help eligible pupils to achieve well academically and to take part in all aspects of school life. This has ensured that these pupils make better progress than such pupils nationally.
- The school benefits from being part of the CfBT Schools Trust which thoroughly and regularly checks the work of the school. Senior leaders are highly successful in promoting the strengths in teaching practice as a teaching school and are exceptionally effective in fulfilling their role in supporting other schools within and beyond the academy network.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The relatively new governing body are able to exploit the wide range of expertise and considerable educational experience of its members. The new chairperson has already had a positive impact on the strategic planning process which enables robust and extensive checking of all aspects of the school's work. Governors while being very supportive of the school, at the same time question and really challenge leaders about how well the school is doing. They know about the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements and are confident that what they know points to the school being outstanding. Governors make sure that safeguarding policies and child-protection procedures fully meet statutory requirements. They are well informed about the management of teachers' performance, including that of the headteacher, and they review teachers' pay accordingly. They know what the school does to reward good teaching and if necessary to tackle underperformance. Governors are fully aware of the use of pupil premium funding and the results this funding produces.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	137551
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	425109

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	352
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Pearson
Headteacher	Marie-Claire Bretherton
Date of previous school inspection	Not inspected previously
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