

Culloden Primary – a Paradigm Academy

Dee Street, Poplar, London, E14 0PT

Inspection dates

30 June–1 July 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy
	This inspection:	Outstanding 1
Leadership and management	Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils	Outstanding	1
Early years provision	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The Executive Principal and Principal, supported by a dedicated team of senior leaders, engender a strong team spirit within the academy. This academy 'goes the extra mile' to provide very high quality provision for all of its pupils. The quality of education is continually improving.
- Academy leaders, and other members of staff, set no ceiling on their expectations for pupils' achievement. They provide tangible opportunities which motivate pupils to aspire to great things.
- Children settle very quickly in the Early Years Foundation Stage because of highly effective work with parents and carers.
- A high proportion of children reaches a good level of development by the end of Reception, demonstrating outstanding progress from their low starting points.
- Pupils continue to make rapid progress in all key stages. The proportion of pupils attaining higher National Curriculum levels at Key Stage 1 is particularly impressive. Similarly, the proportion of pupils reaching the highest National Curriculum Level 6 in writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 is exceptionally high.
- Pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs, including those in the deaf support base, achieve well. Teaching is carefully matched to their individual needs.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Pupils are highly motivated to achieve well, and therefore display strong attitudes to learning in class.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe very effectively. Within this safe and secure learning environment, pupils learn about the dangers of, for example, gang culture, drugs and traffic. The academy's work to ensure that pupils know how to keep themselves safe when online is equally strong.
- A rich curriculum provides a multitude of opportunities for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding because teachers have very high expectations and there is a very high level of consistency throughout the academy. Adults other than teachers are not always used to full effect.
- The academy's work to safeguard pupils is outstanding. Systems and structures are very robust. Any queries or concerns are followed up immediately.
- Governance of the academy is highly effective. Governors provide very robust challenge to leaders about their work. They ensure that they receive accurate information about the quality of provision within the academy.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 17 lessons. Some of these were joint observations carried out alongside senior leaders. Inspectors also made some shorter visits to lessons and observed a range of small group teaching activities delivered by teachers or teaching assistants.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils’ work through looking at the books belonging to a sample of pupils in each year group.
- Meetings were held with the Principal and Executive Principal, senior and middle leaders, teachers new to the profession and governors and directors.
- Inspectors observed pupils at breaks and lunchtimes and talked to them about their experiences in the academy. A more formal meeting was held with a group of pupils to talk about their work.
- A wide range of documentation was scrutinised. This included information about pupils’ achievement, policy documentation, records of the quality of teaching and information about safeguarding.
- An inspector spoke to some parents at the start of the day. Responses to the academy’s recent questionnaire to parents were considered, alongside 23 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. There were 87 responses to the staff questionnaire that were also considered.

Inspection team

Gaynor Roberts, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Bimla Thakur

Additional Inspector

David Radomsky

Additional Inspector

Fatiha Maitland

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Culloden Primary – a Paradigm Academy converted to become an academy school on 1 September 2013. When its predecessor school, Culloden Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall. It is one of three schools run by the Paradigm Trust. The board of directors has appointed a local governing body to oversee the work of the academy alongside the Executive Principal.
- Culloden Primary is larger than the average primary school, with around 600 pupils on roll. It is expanding, and currently has three classes in each year of the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, with two classes in older year groups. All children in the Early Years Foundation Stage attend full time.
- The academy has specialist provision for pupils with hearing impairment, the deaf support base. This provision has 26 places, and there are currently 24 pupils on roll.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs is below average. However, a high proportion of these pupils at Culloden Primary have more complex needs and require a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is much higher than average, with two thirds of pupils eligible for free school meals in 2014. This proportion has decreased in the current year, but remains high.
- Almost all pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds. More than two thirds of those on roll are from a Bangladeshi background, with the next largest group being Black African. A very large majority speaks English as an additional language.
- The academy meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress, at the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching further by ensuring that adults other than teachers are consistently used to full effect when supporting whole-class teaching or delivering sessions to small groups of pupils.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The Principal and Executive Principal have developed a highly skilled team of senior leaders. They are fully committed to the academy's values of community, high expectations and independent learning. These values are embedded throughout the academy's work; pupils can explain what they are, and how they are rewarded for demonstrating them.
- A culture of very high expectations permeates the academy. Leaders provide training and support for staff and expect them to perform well, providing very high quality opportunities for all pupils. Likewise, members of staff have high expectations of pupils in terms of both their achievement and behaviour. Leaders arrange aspirational visits, for example to Cambridge University, to show pupils that there are no boundaries to what they can achieve.
- The academy's culture of high achievement for all, regardless of background or ability, underpins their work to promote equality and tackle discrimination. Pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs, including those in the deaf support base, are fully included in the life of the academy. They work alongside their peers for most of the day and are only occasionally withdrawn from the class for specific teaching.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and innovative. Pupils make outstanding progress in English and mathematics because these subjects form the basis of most teaching and are threaded through the entire curriculum. Pupils learn about the British values of democracy, mutual respect and tolerance for those from other faiths, beliefs and backgrounds. This is taught exceptionally well throughout the academy. For example, pupils learnt about elections at the time of the General Election. They explained the related vocabulary, such as ballot box and polling station to inspectors. They then related this learning to their own elections for school council members. Consequently, pupils are very well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is very well developed through carefully planned curriculum opportunities and enrichment activities. Pupils perform in drama productions and, during the inspection, were rehearsing for their end of year musical celebration with great gusto. They are encouraged to reflect on what they learn about prejudice, and how it may make people feel. They learn about a range of world religions and develop a strong sense of right and wrong. Older pupils take on leadership responsibilities through the 'pupil managers' scheme. As a result, they become mature and thoughtful members of the community.
- The academy's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements. They are extremely robust and highly effective. Members of staff receive regular training in issues around safeguarding, and have been recently trained to recognise indicators of possible radicalisation or female genital mutilation. Any issues are reported swiftly to the relevant agencies, and followed up rigorously. The academy keeps comprehensive, dated and timed records of any concerns.
- The leadership of teaching is very strong. Senior leaders use a wide range of strategies to check on the quality of teaching, including book scrutinies, observations in lessons and analysis of information about pupils' progress. Regular unannounced visits to lessons ensure that leaders are very quickly aware of any dips in performance. Where they have any concerns that the quality of teaching may be falling short of their high expectations, they act quickly to provide support and guidance. This ensures that pupils continue to make rapid progress.
- Additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils is used extremely well and, as a result, these pupils do at least as well as others in the academy, and outperform others nationally. Likewise, the primary school sport funding has been used effectively to provide specialist coaching for pupils and enhance the adventurous activities element of the curriculum for all year groups.
- Academy leaders pride themselves on their development of leadership from within the academy community. Teachers new in their careers recognise the culture of reward through talent and ability. Middle leaders take on their responsibilities conscientiously. They suitably monitor provision relating to their particular area, and check that learning is effective.
- As part of a small multi-academy trust, the academy benefits from working closely with the other two schools. Leaders meet together to discuss their work, and check that their judgements about the quality of provision are accurate. The trust provides strong support in terms of financial and personnel management, and sets the strategic direction for the academies within it.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The board of directors and the local governing body know the academy very well. They drive forward improvements and make very effective checks on the academy's work. They are determined to provide

the highest possible quality of education and to inspire pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds to achieve great things.

- Governors hold leaders to account for their work, and ask probing questions to check for themselves that their high expectations are being met. They meet with pupils and a range of middle and senior leaders to ensure that practice is of a very high quality throughout the academy. They know what the strengths of the academy are, and where there have been dips in performance.
- Governors have implemented a robust and highly structured system of performance management for all staff. They receive information from leaders about the performance of staff, and do not agree to increases in pay unless they are convinced that the increases are well deserved.
- Governors have an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching in the academy, and of the achievement of pupils. This is because they attend training and commission external consultants to provide extensive reports on the academy's work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. In lessons, pupils display an eagerness to learn. They fully engage in learning because they aspire to high levels of achievement, and because they are highly motivated. Pupils transition between lessons rapidly and settle to work quickly because adults have very high expectations for behaviour.
- Pupils are respectful, courteous and inquisitive. They are confident communicators, approaching inspectors to ask politely what the purpose of their visit was. Pupils behave in a mature manner. For example, they queued sensibly for the water fountain in the playground during an especially hot day.
- In the playground, pupils enjoy the wide range of activities provided for them to engage with. Boys and girls get along well together, as do those from different backgrounds. The school's behaviour policy is applied consistently and fairly. It is understood by the pupils, who recognise that good behaviour gains rewards.
- Incidents of poor behaviour are rare, but when they do occur the academy has robust recording systems in place. These records include what action has been taken to follow up the incident and how parents have been informed. In the current year, no pupil involved in an incident has repeated the inappropriate behaviour on a second occasion. This demonstrates that the academy's work in this area is highly effective.
- Parents spoken to by inspectors, and those responding to questionnaires, have no concerns about behaviour in the academy. They say that any concerns are dealt with very quickly by teachers and leaders.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. The school has very robust and rigorous procedures in place to ensure that pupils are kept safe. Teaching about safety is embedded within the curriculum. For example, pupils learn about the dangers of drugs, smoking and gang culture. They learn how to be safe when out and about, through cycling proficiency courses.
- The academy's work to eradicate bullying is given a high profile throughout the building. There are posters, displays and reminders at regular intervals on corridors and in teaching areas. Assemblies, visiting speakers and a theatre production have all highlighted these issues and, as a result, pupils in this diverse community are very aware of how wrong it is to be prejudiced in any way. Incidents of bullying are extremely rare. If they do occur, they are dealt with swiftly and effectively.
- Pupils attend well. Any absence is followed up by the academy, and reported on to the relevant authorities swiftly if they cannot contact the parents or carers of an absent pupil.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- The quality of teaching in all key stages is consistently good, and often outstanding. Teachers use educational trips, visiting speakers and props to engage pupils in a topic and motivate them in their learning.
- Teachers have very high expectations. They plan carefully crafted lessons which focus precisely on the next steps in learning for individual pupils. They encourage pupils to stretch themselves. An example of this was in Year 1 when the teacher helped pupils to use their knowledge of sounds to correctly spell 'disgusting' and 'revolting'. Consequently, pupils make outstanding progress.

- Firmly established routines, which are consistently implemented throughout the academy, mean that pupils respond quickly to adult instructions. They move from one activity to another quickly and sensibly, and there is no learning time lost.
- Whole-school systems for the teaching of writing, including spelling and handwriting, and taught with a high level of consistency. As a result, pupils make exceptional progress in writing and attain very high levels. The teaching of reading is also very strong. In 2013, leaders identified a dip in the progress made by pupils in reading. This was addressed very swiftly through the implementation of a whole-school emphasis on reading and, in 2014, results recovered. Leaders have ensured that this improvement is sustained.
- When teaching mathematics, teachers use real-life situations to deepen pupils' problem-solving skills and develop their understanding of what pupils are learning and why. This means that pupils gain a thorough understanding of how mathematics works, and make excellent progress.
- The academy has established and embedded a policy for the marking of work and feedback to pupils about how they are doing. This is implemented with a high degree of consistency. Pupils have time to respond to the comments and suggestions made by teachers, which enhances their progress further.
- Pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs, including those in the deaf support base, are taught alongside their peers for most of the day. They are very well supported by staff who know them well and use techniques such as signing alongside specialist resources to ensure that these pupils are fully engaged in their learning.
- Generally, adults other than teachers support learning well. However, on occasion, they are not used to full effect. Whether supporting a teacher delivering a whole-class lesson, or delivering a session to a group of one or two pupils, there are times when they do not challenge pupils to extend their learning through questioning. At other times, they do not apply the academy programmes of learning as consistently as others, for example in the teaching of handwriting.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Children join the academy with skills which are well below those typical for their age. As a result of carefully planned visits and experiences prior to starting school, children settle extremely quickly and soon start to make rapid progress.
- Progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding because teaching is well planned to cater for their individual needs. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of Reception has increased year on year and is well above average.
- The attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 is above average in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils achieving higher National Curriculum levels was above average in 2014. In 2015, the proportion of pupils gaining the higher National Curriculum level in writing and mathematics is expected to be around double the national average. This represents excellent progress.
- At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils achieve similarly impressive results. In 2014, the proportion of pupils achieving expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics was very high. Over a third of pupils achieved the higher National Curriculum Level 5 in all three subjects. This is well above the national average. A quarter of this year group gained the highest National Curriculum Level 6 in mathematics, and over a tenth in writing. These figures are considerably higher than national averages and demonstrate the academy's high aspirations for their pupils.
- The most able pupils achieve very well, and a high proportion of them attain the highest National Curriculum Level 6 at the end of Key Stage 2 in writing and mathematics.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make similarly strong progress, and achieve just as well as others in the academy.
- Pupils make excellent progress in Key Stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2014, the proportion making expected progress was above average in all three subjects. The proportion making more than expected progress was well above average in writing and mathematics and just below average in reading.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve at least as well as their peers, often outperforming them. In 2014, disadvantaged pupils were two terms ahead of others in the academy in mathematics and writing, and half a term ahead in reading. Compared to national averages, disadvantaged pupils were over two terms ahead in mathematics, more than one term ahead in writing and half a term ahead in reading.
- The academy's forecast for Key Stage 2 results in 2015 shows achievement in writing and mathematics improving even further. They expect achievement in reading to be broadly in line with national averages.

- Pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs achieve well. Leaders carefully track the progress of these pupils to make sure that they are making at least good progress. Pupils in the deaf support base make similar progress to others with special educational needs within the school, but make slightly less progress in reading. This is because they take longer to learn the sounds that letters make due to their hearing impairment.
- These pupils catch up quickly. At the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 in 2014, pupils in the deaf support base attained levels in line with, or above, national averages for all pupils in writing and mathematics. They attained levels slightly below average in reading. This demonstrates excellent achievement.

The early years provision

is outstanding

- From a low baseline, children make exceptional progress in all areas of learning in the early years. Leaders and teachers work closely with parents and carers to arrange a comprehensive package of visits and meetings before the child starts Nursery. This includes offering sessions during weekends and holidays for those due to enter the Nursery in September. As a result, children become used to the environment, routines and high expectations of staff before they start their formal education. They then enter Nursery in September ready to learn.
- In 2014, over two thirds of children reached a good level of development at the end of Reception. This is above the national average and represents outstanding progress from their low starting points. Achievement in literacy and mathematics was above the national average. In 2015, achievement has improved even further, and just over three quarters have reached a good level of development. As a result, children are very well prepared for Year 1.
- Children in the early years provision are enthusiastic learners and respond eagerly to their teachers' questions, demonstrating strong attitudes to learning. They show pride in their work. Children play and work well together, exploring both indoor and outdoor learning areas with confidence. Established routines, alongside robust systems and policies, ensure that children are very safe.
- Well-planned, focused teaching activities are delivered by highly skilled adults and, consequently, children make outstanding progress. Teachers and other adults continually assess the progress children are making and use this information to inform their planning. Adults use carefully phrased questions to develop children's language and understanding in a wide range of adult-led and child-initiated activities.
- Leadership and management in the early years provision are outstanding. Leaders have a clear view of the strengths of the provision, and know what they want to develop further. They monitor the progress of children rigorously, ensuring that all make as much progress as possible. They provide over and above what is required, through additional holiday and weekend sessions, and full-time provision for all Nursery children. This demonstrates their dedication and commitment to providing all the children in their care with the best possible opportunities to succeed.
- Children who are disabled or who have special educational needs are fully included in the setting. Those from the deaf support base, and others with special educational needs, play and work alongside their peers. Their needs are very well met because adults know each child very well and make sure that they are offered opportunities which will extend their learning step by step. Leaders have embraced the additional challenge this year of catering for the needs of a group of children with complex educational needs within the early years provision. They have adapted their environment and approach, ensuring that appropriately trained staff are in place and that these children receive the same high quality provision as others.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the early years provision. One parent reported that Reception 'is fantastic' and another said that her child 'doesn't like it when the academy is closed'. Parents particularly value the extended transition period for young children prior to starting Nursery, saying that it helps their child become familiar with the new environment.

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	140064
Local authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	450361

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	590
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jeff Martin
Principal	Ben Carter
Executive Principal	Amanda Phillips
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	020 7364 1010
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