

Scientia Academy

Mona Road, Burton-upon-Trent, DE13 0UF

Inspection dates 17–18 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Good
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Early years provision	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The executive headteacher, head of school and other leaders, including governors, are working effectively to improve teaching and learning. They have already ensured that pupils achieve well across the academy.
- All groups of pupils make equally good progress because leaders and staff work very effectively to identify and to reduce any gaps in their attainment.
- The executive headteacher and head of school have used training and coaching arrangements very successfully to help newly qualified teachers develop their expertise.
- Children in the early years are taught well and make good progress, especially in the work they do indoors.
- Most teachers plan lessons which interest pupils, challenge them appropriately and motivate them to work hard.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to support pupils who need extra help with their learning, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils respond admirably to teachers' high expectations. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent.
- Pupils are outstanding ambassadors for the academy. They are very mature for their age and are exceptionally friendly and welcoming to visitors. Pupils from different backgrounds get on very well with each other.
- The academy's outstanding procedures for ensuring pupils' safety result in all pupils being very well cared for.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There are not enough good activities organised in the early years outdoor area to develop and extend children's physical skills.
- Not all pupils in Year 1 develop their number skills securely enough for them to undertake problem-solving tasks successfully.
- Teaching is more consistently effective in reading and writing than it is in mathematics.
- Teachers, especially in Year 1, do not always challenge pupils sufficiently, or check their understanding well enough in lessons. Pupils' progress then slows because their misconceptions are not identified quickly.
- Some middle leaders are new and inexperienced. They have only just begun to develop the skills they need to drive improvement in their areas of responsibility.
- Governors are sometimes too dependent on leaders' reports when evaluating the work of the academy.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching through visits to classrooms to check on pupils’ learning. On two of these visits they were accompanied by the executive headteacher or the head of school.
- Inspectors heard individual pupils read and also looked at samples of pupils’ work.
- Inspectors held meetings with academy staff, a group of pupils, three members of the governing body, and the Executive Principal, who was representing the academy trust.
- Inspectors took account of the 19 questionnaires completed by staff, the 29 responses made by parents over the last year to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and the responses from staff, including ancillary staff) and parents to the academy’s own recent questionnaires. An inspector met with some parents during the inspection.
- Inspectors checked a range of evidence including: monitoring records; consultants’ reports; the academy improvement plans; the academy’s own data on pupils’ attainment and progress; and policies, procedures and practice relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Derek Aitken, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Timothy Hughes

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The academy is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The academy opened in temporary accommodation on 1st September 2013. It is sponsored by the REAch2 multi-academy Trust.
- In September 2013, there were 70 pupils taught in two Reception classes and a mixed Year 1 and 2 class. Staff and pupils moved to the current, purpose-built accommodation in March 2014. Since then, the number of pupils has more than doubled. In addition to the Reception children who attend on a full-time basis, there are now three Year 1 classes and two separate classes for pupils in Years 2 and 3.
- The number of teachers has grown to keep pace with the increasing pupil population. Nearly all the teachers were newly qualified when they took up their posts in September 2013 and September 2014.
- A part-time, morning Nursery facility started in September 2014. An afternoon Nursery class is due to start in September 2015.
- A small majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. This is a lower proportion than average. The remaining pupils come from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds, principally Pakistani and Eastern European. No pupils are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils (pupils supported by the pupil premium, which is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority), is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is average.
- No pupils have yet completed Year 6 so comparisons with the government's floor standard are not possible.
- Breakfast- and after-school clubs operate on the academy site. They are managed by the governing body and were included in this inspection.
- The academy is led by an executive headteacher, supported by a head of school.
- The academy is also supported by an Executive Principal, working on behalf of the Trust.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and pupils' achievement, especially in Year 1, by:
 - providing more activities for children in the early years to develop their physical skills outdoors
 - ensuring all pupils acquire a secure command of number
 - ensuring that all teachers check pupils' understanding closely during lessons, step in quickly to tackle misconceptions, re-shape tasks as necessary to accelerate pupils' progress and challenge pupils to deepen their learning once they have mastered a new idea.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - the less experienced middle leaders are supported well to develop the skills they need to drive improvement in their allocated areas of responsibility
 - governors improve their skills and effectiveness, by acquiring an in-depth, independent view of the academy's performance and use it to hold senior leaders fully to account.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The executive headteacher and head of school direct the academy's work exceptionally well. They have ensured that behaviour is outstanding and monitor the effectiveness of teaching staff closely. They lead by example, sharing their skills with newly qualified staff very successfully to enable them to improve their expertise. They have, thereby, established good teaching and teamwork across the academy and are rapidly improving pupils' achievement.
- The executive headteacher and head of school communicate their high ambitions for the academy's performance very effectively. Staff, too, are well motivated. They understand and fulfil their roles and responsibilities fully. They follow agreed policies consistently well, thereby ensuring that the academy's procedures and routines work smoothly.
- The senior leaders check the academy's work rigorously. This helps them to plan astutely to meet the complex challenges posed by the increasing number of pupils joining an academy, which will not be 'fully grown' until September 2017. They have reduced class sizes and deployed experienced staff carefully to support year groups or classes where this is needed, and to improve pupils' progress.
- The Executive Principal, working on behalf of the trust, provides the academy with robust challenge and support. He maintains a close overview of pupils' achievement and supports senior leaders' work to develop teaching expertly. He allocates resources, including staffing from other academies within the trust, carefully to help drive improvement.
- The senior leaders carry most of the responsibilities for checking the academy's work, which they do very effectively. Nearly all teachers are in their first or second year of teaching. Consequently, with the exception of the leadership of phonics, middle leadership roles are not fully established. This includes leadership of the early years, which is, nonetheless, benefiting from the skilled direction of a lead practitioner who is temporarily in charge of the setting. The leadership structure is changing, partly because teachers who were recruited in September 2013 are now undertaking training that is specifically designed to develop their leadership skills.
- The academy will be following an agreed approach to assessment, following the withdrawal of National Curriculum levels from September 2015. This approach is currently being piloted in other academies within the multi-academy trust.
- The academy ensures that all pupils enjoy the same, good opportunities to succeed and that no pupils experience any form of discrimination. Senior leaders track pupils' progress closely and quickly make suitable adjustments to teaching to support pupils who need extra help with their learning.
- Leaders regularly review their use of pupil premium funding and the impact of the actions they take to reduce or to close gaps in attainment. This is helping disadvantaged pupils to improve their progress.
- Senior staff carefully plan the curriculum (the subjects taught) and other experiences, for example, those linked to art and music and different places of worship. They make sure that pupils achieve well and thrive, and that their academic, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Leaders ensure that pupils appreciate and accept the different ways of life led by members of the various communities represented in the academy. Staff have conducted elections for pupil 'members of Parliament' to enable pupils to explore the democratic process, the way it reflects British values and its impact on life in modern Britain. Staff use assemblies purposefully to reinforce concepts of liberty and the rule of law. This ensures pupils are well prepared for life in British society.
- Senior leaders have spent the additional primary sports funding appropriately. They have, for example, provided more opportunities at dinner-times for pupils to take enjoyable exercise under the watchful guidance of skilled sports coaches from Burton Albion Football Club. These coaches have also worked with teachers to improve their skills in teaching aspects of physical education.

- Senior leaders, including governors, check that government requirements for safeguarding are fully met and that safeguarding arrangements are effective. They carry out the required checks when recruiting staff and ensure that required health and safety procedures are observed.

- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors support the school well. The Chair and other governors are equally committed to its success.
 - Governors receive very helpful overview sheets on pupils' attainment and progress from senior leaders. They analyse them carefully and ask senior leaders pertinent and challenging questions about pupils' achievement in all year groups. They know how well pupils are doing across the academy. They are aware of the strategies the academy uses to reduce gaps for disadvantaged pupils, although they have not assessed the impact of individual actions taken.
 - Governors keep a close eye on the development of newly qualified teachers and are kept well informed about their progress. However, although specific governors have been attached to individual key stages, governors recognise that the new governing body needs to develop stronger systems for checking the academy's effectiveness and for holding leaders to account.
 - Governors ensure efficient management of financial resources. They exercise their responsibilities for making pay awards for staff who meet targets set, appropriately.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Nursery and Reception children are happy, secure and enthusiastic learners, and they sustain these qualities as they move through the academy. Pupils of all ages comply instantly with teachers' requests and respond very positively to the academy's high expectations for their behaviour and engagement in lessons. Pupils value the school's rewards for achievement and positive behaviour, which motivate them to do well.

- In lessons, pupils are highly attentive and try to do their best at all times. They listen carefully to their teachers and eagerly answer their questions. They cooperate with each other very well, encouraging other pupils' efforts and helping each other to complete tasks successfully. They understand their targets and the purpose of the 'read and respond' challenges that teachers set them so that their standards of literacy and numeracy can improve. The presentation of their work is good.

- Pupils' behaviour at breaks and dinner-times is excellent. At such times they are equally happy to converse easily with each other, or to read books contentedly. Many pupils play energetically and happily with each other on the equipment or with the resources provided. Pupils are self-disciplined and very rarely need adult intervention to support them during play. They are self-reliant and able to direct their own play.

- Pupils move around the academy in their smart uniforms in an orderly, well-mannered way. They enjoy excellent relationships with staff and are exceptionally friendly, polite and welcoming to visitors. They relish the wider opportunities they have, for example, in after-school activities, to learn new skills and to socialise with their classmates.

- Pupils are very proud of the academy's brand-new accommodation. They play a full part in ensuring that it is kept in good order by treating the facilities with the utmost respect. Pupils behave very maturely for their young age, including at dinner-times, when they take all possible care to avoid causing litter.

- Pupils are reflective and show a keen acceptance of diversity. They understand and respect the rules, know what is right and wrong and mix with each other exceptionally well.

- There have been no recorded incidents of persistent bullying and very few instances of misbehaviour since the academy opened. Pupils' enjoyment of life in the academy is reflected in their well-above average attendance.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils are closely supervised at all times. Robust external gates, electronic internal and external entry systems and well-maintained premises ensure the academy's complete security. Procedures for protecting children, including risk assessments and the vetting of staff, as well as any visitors who will have contact with pupils, are fully understood and implemented by all staff.
- The academy's arrangements for tracking pupils' behaviour and well-being are comprehensive. Case studies are carefully documented and staff take appropriate actions to help pupils who need extra support to improve their behaviour or attendance. As a result, pupils' attendance is never less than average and is improving.
- Staff, parents and pupils are exceptionally positive about pupils' well-being. The academy has rapidly gained the confidence of parents. It is quickly developing a varied series of activities, for example, coffee mornings, where staff and parents discuss strategies to promote their children's reading skills, self-confidence and welfare. The breakfast club's educational activities prepare pupils well for their learning in lessons.
- Pupils feel very safe in this highly cohesive community. They know who to turn to if they are worried and are confident about the high quality of support they can expect from adults or their peers. They show by their highly considerate behaviour that they understand and respect the importance of not causing harm, intentionally or otherwise, to each other. They have a good awareness for their age of the principles of e-safety, such as logging on securely to the internet and the dangers of viewing inappropriate images.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is typically good, but is a little better in reading and writing than it is in mathematics. It is at its most effective in the early years and in Years 2 and 3.
- Teachers insist on high standards of pupils' behaviour and manage them expertly. They make sure that pupils stay alert, work hard and enjoy learning. They promote very positive attitudes and relationships and enable pupils to develop the confidence to work purposefully at all times, including when they are on their own or working in paired tasks.
- Teachers set pupils enjoyable work and ensure they settle to their tasks and to get to grips with new ideas without delay. They make effective use of lesson starters to get lessons off to a purposeful start and to help pupils recap their knowledge. They plan lessons carefully, and explain tasks clearly, so that pupils know what they have to do when they are working unaided. This ensures pupils generally make good progress in lessons.
- Teaching assistants and other adults are well briefed and support teachers well. They guide and question pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, closely. This enables pupils to recall factual information, for example, about Florence Nightingale, and to explain their ideas about the demands placed on her by her work clearly.
- Teachers' expert teaching of early reading skills enables pupils, including those from a minority ethnic background, to make good progress. When introducing new sounds, teachers do so in a clear sequence so that all groups of pupils can understand how these sounds link together. Most teachers consistently set pupils challenging speaking, reading and writing tasks that develop their skills well and which reinforce the knowledge they have already gained. Staff check pupils' reading skills closely and intervene quickly to avert any potential underachievement.
- Teachers generally develop pupils' mathematical skills well. They provide suitable resources which enable pupils of all levels of ability to grasp key concepts, for example, of addition and subtraction. However, not all pupils develop the secure number skills they need to solve mathematical problems, and this aspect of the teaching of mathematics is not always practised well enough in some lessons.

- Staff's recent focus on improving writing skills, including for the most-able pupils, is working well. Teachers use different methods, including drama, to plan activities that stimulate pupils' imagination, and enliven their use of characterisation and vocabulary.
- At times, teachers, particularly in Year 1, do not check pupils' understanding closely or in a timely way. This occurs more frequently in mathematics lessons. Teachers do not always re-shape tasks quickly to correct pupils' misconceptions, for example, of the relationships between numbers. They do not always challenge pupils to deepen their learning when they have mastered a new idea.

The achievement of pupils is good

- The attainment of Year 2 pupils in reading, writing and mathematics was above average in 2014 and these standards are being maintained this year. Given their below average starting points on entry to the academy, this represents good achievement for these pupils. Across the academy, pupils from different ethnic backgrounds do equally well.
- In Key Stage 1, nearly all pupils make expected progress in Year 1. Their progress speeds up in Year 2, enabling more pupils to work at the higher levels. Year 3 pupils have built well on the progress they made last year, especially in reading and writing. The attainment of current pupils, particularly in reading and writing, continues to be above the levels expected nationally for their age.
- Results in the Year 1 screening check for phonics (the sound that letters represent) were above the national average in 2014. This reflects the good progress pupils make in developing their early reading skills. All pupils in Year 2, including the least-able pupils, are developing their phonics knowledge well and confidently split up and blend new words. All pupils read accurately, most read fluently and with enjoyment, and some vary their expression to suit different emphases in the texts.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress from their starting points across the academy. This is because teachers identify any who are slipping behind and act quickly to provide support.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress from their starting points. A few of these pupils have a complex range of difficulties. The skilled one-to-one teaching they receive, and teachers' good use of specially adapted resources, enables these pupils to make good progress.
- The most-able pupils achieve well, as staff are increasingly adapting teaching to provide them with more challenging work. These pupils work systematically through problem-solving tasks and have frequent opportunities to design mathematical questions and to solve problems unaided. They show good levels of analysis when they read texts and learn to interpret the actions of the characters in stories well.
- The number skills of some pupils in Year 1 are not fully secure. This slows their progress when they try to apply their calculation skills in problem-solving tasks.

The early years provision is good

- Children's knowledge and skills when they join the academy are broadly typical for their age, but there are some weaknesses in their ability to communicate, including in their speaking and listening skills and in their personal and social development. This is largely because children join the Nursery and Reception with varied or no pre-school experience. All groups of children make good progress in almost all areas of learning. The proportion of children who achieved a good level of development was above the national average in 2014. This means that most children are fully prepared for learning in Year 1.
- The early years is led and managed well. Staff check children's progress closely and adjust teaching to close gaps in children's performance as necessary. Children learn well because staff take full account of what they already know and can do. Adults plan indoor activities purposefully to develop their skills. They provide the most-able children with suitably challenging tasks. Additional adults are used effectively to

reinforce and to extend basic literacy and numeracy skills. Reception children use number lines confidently and write out digits correctly when they work through subtraction tasks.

- Phonics teaching is especially successful: staff use resources and activities, such as singing, reading and role-play tasks, expertly to develop children's early mastery of language. Nursery children identify initial phonemes for the days of the week and can confirm the correct day confidently. They pick out sounds from picture clues quickly and use letters accurately to make words.
- In the outdoor area, teachers provide children with too few opportunities to develop their physical development. In particular, there are limited opportunities for children to work with large apparatus to challenge themselves, to build up core body strength and to perfect climbing and balancing techniques.
- Staff impress on children the importance of taking responsibility for their learning. Their well-established routines ensure children's behaviour is consistently good. They listen attentively and, in discussions, cooperate fully with other children and show very positive attitudes to their work. Teachers use reward schemes, such as 'into the rainbow', to help children recognise good achievement and to celebrate their classmates' successes. Staff know the interests of individual children well and target their questioning very effectively to stoke children's enthusiasm for learning.
- Staff form trusting relationships with children. They ensure that children are safe at all times. The indoor and outdoor areas are secure and all welfare requirements are met.

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	139602
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	450279

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	171
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Carnwell
Headteacher (Executive)	Yateen Bhoola
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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