

Kentmere Primary Academy

Kentmere Avenue, Smallbridge, Rochdale, Lancashire OL12 9EE

Inspection dates

30–31 January 2018

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- A 'culture of excellence' lies at the heart of all that happens at Kentmere. A sustained period of rapid improvement at the school has led to consistently high outcomes for pupils.
- The school's ambitious and determined headteacher ensures that all staff have the highest expectations of pupils. The impact of her work has been transformational.
- A talented and unified group of senior and middle leaders carry out their roles exceptionally well. No part of pupils' development is left to chance.
- Pupils' attainment has risen dramatically over recent years and they typically achieve higher standards than others nationally, including disadvantaged pupils.
- Pupils are confident, motivated and perceptive learners who are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- High-quality teaching and learning permeates the school and across an exciting curriculum. Teachers ensure that lessons are purposeful and busy, and pupils are supported skilfully by high-quality teaching assistants.
- The standards of pupils' writing are high across the school, though there is still room for improvement in the promotion of pupils' oral skills.
- The local governing body, ably aided by the Wardle Trust, has struck a careful balance between challenge and support. Governors and the trust's oversight have proved highly effective.
- Through the school's curriculum, pupils achieve well in all areas of learning. Staff plan topics very carefully to maximise their learning in different subjects.
- The behaviour of pupils is exemplary and they are kept very safe. They have very positive attitudes to their learning, and have respect both for each other and the rules of the school.
- Staff morale is very high, because there is a strong culture of support and development which benefits all members of staff.
- The provision for children in the early years is outstanding. This is because leaders are highly effective in equipping children with the skills required to be ready for Year 1. Children benefit from a rich and varied set of learning experiences.
- There is a myriad of extra learning opportunities for pupils to develop their interests and talents. This enriches the school's strong focus on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to develop further pupils' spoken language skills, so they match the high quality of their written work.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher has overseen a period of dramatic improvement at the school. Her determination to improve outcomes for pupils has been highly successful, largely because of a well-organised and consistent focus on high expectations.
- Supported by an equally assured deputy headteacher and a strong leadership team, the headteacher's drive for excellence has transformed the school into a place where high standards are now typical.
- All staff feel part of the improvement journey. They are given responsibility and provided with high-quality training and development, and thus feel empowered to 'go the extra mile' for pupils and the wider community. As a result, staff morale is very high.
- The local governing body and the board of trustees have provided a careful balance of support and challenge, ensuring that the pursuit of excellence has been maintained. They oversee highly effective systems for self-evaluation.
- The day-to-day management of the school is a notable strength. It runs like a well-oiled machine, with no time wasted and all learning opportunities maximised. Expectations are very high, and pupils respond positively to the extra challenge they receive.
- Leaders have been highly successful in appointing and developing a strong team of talented teachers and teaching assistants. Highly effective teamwork ensures that they plan exciting and challenging lessons together, constantly assessing and evaluating their work and that of the pupils. There are constant checks on teaching and learning. This is not the sole responsibility of one or two leaders. The involvement of a wide range of teachers in this work contributes to staff knowing in depth how well pupils are progressing.
- The school's curriculum very effectively engages pupils' interest. It has depth and variety. Year 6 pupils could recall detailed information about their space topic, and also relate this to a more ethical debate as to whether the dog Laika should have been sent into orbit. Such careful planning of topics provides depth in the humanities subjects, but also extends pupils' English skills and a more general understanding of morals and ethics.
- Leaders' oversight of the use of the pupil premium funding is exemplary. Spending is related specifically to improvement priorities and monitored very closely. Staff check on their plans regularly and change them quickly if there is no clear impact of progress for this group of pupils. There is a well-understood system of communicating this information to governors.
- Sport is given a high profile, and pupils benefit from a variety of clubs, fixtures and activities in a range of disciplines. Leaders use the primary school physical education (PE) and sport funding wisely, and ensure high-quality teaching within the planned curriculum. Participation in sporting activities has risen substantially over the last two years, with almost half of all pupils now regular attendees.

- A large amount of time and thought has been invested in developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Regular 'sunshine days' assist with promoting clear messages of positive citizenship. Opportunities to learn about other cultures and societies are woven into the school's curriculum. A new initiative, involving a school in northern Spain, is enabling pupils to practise their Spanish, while also learning about another community in Europe.
- Leaders ensure a strong focus on equality, and are successful in developing a culture of respect for others. For example, a group of Year 6 pupils spoke maturely about how they had agreed to share washbasins for boys and girls in an effort to overcome gender stereotypes.
- Leaders ensure the good use of funding for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. They are quick to deploy teaching assistants where there is greatest need, and they review regularly how effective the support is. This group of pupils is included fully in the life of the school.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the leadership of the school and the improvements that have been made. The school responds to any suggestions or queries quickly. For example, parents requested some changes to the arrangements for homework, so leaders changed the homework policy to introduce a set of wider enquiry-based options. Parents are also appreciative of the community nature of the school, with its 'focus on respect, kindness and bringing the diverse community together', as one parent put it.
- In the past, the school benefited from good-quality support from a variety of providers. While the trust has very effective, quality-assurance arrangements, its involvement is now predominantly in checking the accuracy of the school's own rigorous evaluations and assessments. This is because leadership has now become very strong.

Governance of the school

- The governing body has played a key role in the rapid improvements at the school. The governors have established an effective balance between challenge and support. Their vision of a relevant curriculum, based on first-hand experiences for pupils, has matched the aspirations of staff. They are understandably proud of the excellent progress made and make sure the whole school community is aware of this, sending home a monthly newsletter to parents to keep them informed of the school's work.
- Governors' expertise enables them to challenge information thoroughly. For example, they noted the drop in reading attainment for key stage 2 pupils in 2017, and checked the school's response carefully to satisfy themselves the necessary improvements had been made.
- Governors support leaders and staff by providing a well-resourced and safe school environment. Finances are directed carefully to those actions which promote pupils' development most. The governing body ensures that all staff receive regular appraisal and professional development.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

- Governors and leaders are meticulous in ensuring that all safeguarding arrangements are in place and meet statutory arrangements. Policies and procedures are up to date and understood clearly.
- Training is provided regularly for all staff and governors. Staff are clear about their responsibilities, and what they would do in any circumstances where a child was in danger. Recent 'Prevent' duty training has taken place, assisting staff in their knowledge of extremism and radicalisation.
- Pupils are unanimous that they feel safe and are treated with care and concern. This view is shared by parents. Records of how the school liaises effectively with other agencies and parents to ensure pupils' safety and security are impeccably maintained and stored safely.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Committed and skilful teachers, supported well by enthusiastic and effective teaching assistants, set the highest of expectations for their pupils. This leads to consistently high-quality learning. Teachers have a shared approach to planning and assessment, meaning they are constantly discussing how they can do things better in order to improve outcomes for pupils.
- No time is wasted in lessons. They often start with competitive, challenging activities before moving on to an even deeper exploration of concepts and to new content. Staff check if any pupils are struggling and provide further guidance before the next lesson begins. In this way, the school does its very best to make sure no child is left behind.
- Teachers demonstrate strong subject knowledge across the curriculum. Teachers model high standards at all times, for example in a Spanish lesson where pronunciation was modelled very well, and in a PE lesson, containing excellent knowledge of pupils' skill development.
- The excellent teaching of writing has led to rapid improvements in pupils' skills right across the school. Teachers capture pupils' attention and interest, bringing out impressive emotion and expression in their compositional writing, They promote the use of a broad range of vocabulary in pupils' written work, and are working on how to match this in pupils' speaking skills, for example in debates and presentations.
- Pupils value learning, and are highly respectful of the opportunities they receive. They show pride in their work, listen attentively, and engage in lessons when prompted. They make the most of the time in lessons, often wanting to carry on after the bell has gone for breaktime.
- The teaching of mathematics is a notable strength. Pupils respond enthusiastically to the regular challenge they receive through carefully chosen activities and the good-quality resources that assist them in solving problems.
- Leaders have altered the way in which reading is taught this year, following a slight dip in the standards Year 6 pupils attained in 2017 national assessments. Excellent subject knowledge, coupled with the effective use of appropriate texts for pupils' ages, has led to good improvement, so Year 6 pupils' attainment in reading has returned to the previously high level. Pupils are enthusiastic readers and are often inspired to continue

with further reading at home. Attractive reading displays, rich in language, pepper the corridors and classrooms.

- Teachers set homework regularly and this is typically fully completed and valued. Responding to parents' wishes, teachers have prepared a series of options under a bronze, silver or gold level, each giving pupils a greater variety of tasks from which to choose in order to follow their own interests. This is in addition to them regularly practising spelling and times tables.
- Pupils take a full part in assessing their work and that of their classmates. This helps to correct any misunderstandings, while also extending their learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are increasingly confident learners by the time they leave the school. This is as a result of the excellent support and guidance they receive from staff. They told inspectors how the wide range of learning opportunities gives them the chance to find enjoyment in their learning.
- The breadth of the curriculum, and the way in which it is taught, means pupils show great maturity when discussing challenging issues such as homophobia, radicalisation or war. The 'sunshine days', which are also open to parents, confront these issues with care and sensitivity. The comprehensive teaching about a range of faiths also contributes to pupils' good understanding of modern Britain.
- Pupils are highly respectful of each other, meaning bullying is extremely rare. They know well what bullying is and the different forms it can take, and are very confident in the school's ability to deal with any incidents should they arise. The very high presence of adults around school, at all times, means pupils feel very safe and cared for very well.
- Pupils have a range of valuable opportunities to find out about roles that they may take up in society. Community partnerships give pupils the chance to find out about future jobs and employment. They also have the chance to take a lead on issues in school through membership of the anti-bullying ambassadors group, digital leaders or eco-committee. This assists in developing their awareness of civic duty.
- Pupils' attendance is above the national average. Pupils are punctual to lessons and are well prepared to learn.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Staff are uncompromising in their expectations of pupils' conduct. As a result, pupils show great pride in their appearance, appreciation of their surroundings and they look after equipment carefully.

- Pupils are highly motivated and self-disciplined learners. For example, when pupils leave the busy breakfast club and return to class, they select their reading book and begin the day with reflective reading. They do not need adults to remind them to do this. This is typical both of the high regard they have for their education and their self-motivation.
- Pupils' work is almost always the best they can do. More often than not, it is very well presented. During lessons, pupils are absorbed in what they are doing and they are fully involved throughout.
- On the playground, a high number of adults assist in the smooth running of break and lunchtimes. Regular training equips pupils to take the lead in organising games and activities. The calm, purposeful transition between these periods and the start of lessons is an example of the way in which routines are followed in an exemplary manner.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- In 2017, attainment at the end of key stage 2 was well above the national average in mathematics and writing, and in line with the national average for reading. This followed a year of exceptionally high performance in 2016 at key stage 2 in all subjects. The school's accurate assessments for current pupils indicate a return to a high level of attainment in reading and the maintenance of high standards in writing and mathematics. Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Progress for a majority of pupils in all subjects is rapid. The systems to check on progress mean that staff intervene to guide and support pupils whose progress might slow. This ensures that the overall progress made by pupils is excellent.
- At key stage 1, pupils typically attain standards higher than their peers nationally, with a significant proportion attaining at greater depth. This is consistent across reading, writing and mathematics. Inspectors looked at a variety of pupils' work in key stage 1 and concluded that these standards are being maintained this year.
- Pupils' writing, in particular, is fluent and expressive by the time they leave Year 6. Standards in grammar, punctuation and spelling are very high across the school, exemplified by the 2017 Year 6 test results, which were above average for both the expected standard and the higher standard.
- Pupils love to read. This is typified by the example of a Year 6 pupil who explained how the class was inspired by a book suggested by the teacher. She read the book at home, deepening her knowledge of a cross-curricular topic. Books and texts have a very high profile in the school, and are of good quality and of a suitably varied range.
- Outcomes in mathematics are similarly impressive. Pupils apply very well their understanding of number to real-life problems and challenging activities. They are adept in explaining their work, using a well-formed mathematical vocabulary, and are confident when giving reasons why a particular strategy or calculation is appropriate.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make very strong progress similar to their peers. Individualised programmes of work are skilfully taught, incorporating whole-class objectives wherever possible. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities progress

through their individual learning journeys which are checked regularly and any adaptations are made briskly as a result.

- There is very little difference between the progress of disadvantaged pupils when compared to their peers. However, this group typically outperforms other pupils nationally in writing and mathematics because their attainment is consistently high.
- For the last three years, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 has been higher than the national average. Inspectors heard pupils from various year groups read and found they used phonic strategies very effectively to assist them with their reading of new and unfamiliar words.
- Pupils also achieve well across other areas of the curriculum. Much of the work seen by inspectors in pupils' books showed an accurate completion of challenging tasks that promoted key skills' development in science, technology and the humanities.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Leadership in the early years is inspirational. A highly dedicated team of teachers and support staff ensure that all children get the very best start to their education. This team sets very high expectations of what children can achieve.
- Activities, in all the attractively laid out areas for learning, are planned thoroughly to maximise the opportunities children have to learn. For example, in the construction area some bricks are coated with tin foil to give the chance for children to turn their building into a rocket. This linked effectively in with the outer space theme on which children are currently working.
- Learning is exciting. In the two Reception classes, children were captivated by the arrival of an 'alien' suitcase from outer space. One at a time, the teacher revealed the items inside and used expressive vocabulary as the children sat captivated. Later on, several children completed some high-quality paintings of the alien using the clues found in the suitcase. This is typical of the carefully planned activities throughout the early years.
- Children show excellent learning skills. For example, three Nursery children persevered independently when working on a painting task. They showed great resilience and patience to complete the task fully, and took good care of the materials. When clearing away, all children contributed sensibly to the task and quickly, eager to move on to the next learning activity.
- Staff use questioning very effectively to develop children's language skills, which are on average very low compared with those typically found for their age on entry to the Nursery Year. Their questioning helps children to speak, and then write, in clear sentences.
- Leaders ensure that there is a strong culture of safety. Training is offered to all staff, and any risk is assessed on a regular basis. Regular team meetings assist in centralising any key information and ensuring that they follow up concerns immediately.

- The assessment of children's development is very detailed. Children's learning journeys are packed full of information that helps to check on how well they are progressing. Staff are quick to inform parents of any changes that are required, or any particular interests that their children might have.
- The school works in partnership with parents to secure a positive collaboration from the minute they start at school. The school has recently won a Leading Parent Partnership Award which recognises the efforts of staff in this area. Workshops, especially concerning early language development, are numerous and most valued by parents, as are the homework packs provided.
- Children behave exceptionally well, respecting the rules and routines in the rooms. They are respectful of each other and are very good listeners. Movement around the setting is conducted with the minimum of fuss. They love the rewards that can be gained when they behave particularly well.

School details

Unique reference number	141400
Local authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	10042416

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	339
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Simon Day
Headteacher	Sarah Isberg
Telephone number	01706 647533
Website	www.kentmereacademy.co.uk
Email address	isbergs@kentmereacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school became an academy in February 2015 as a member of the Wardle Trust. The school has its own local governing body, which reports to the trust's board of trustees through the chief executive officer. The school is beginning to work closely with the trust's three other academy schools.
- The school runs a breakfast club and an after-school club each day.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- There is one Nursery class and two Reception classes. Thereafter, pupils are educated in mixed-aged classes.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language.

- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is similar to that found nationally.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is higher than the national average.
- The school has won several national awards. These include the Eco-Schools Silver Award, the Artsmark Silver Award and the School Games Gold Award.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors carried out observations of teaching and learning in all classes. Three of these observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher and/or deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors looked at a sample of the writing, mathematics and topic books from all year groups and the learning journeys for those pupils with SEN and/or disabilities and children in the early years.
- In addition to observing the teaching of reading in lessons, inspectors also heard a number of children read in Year 1 and Year 2.
- Inspectors held meetings with school leaders, representatives of the local governing body, the school's human resources and safeguarding manager, the Wardle Trust's chief executive and the Wardle Trust's quality assurance officer. They also met representatives from Year 2 and Year 6, members of the school council and members of the digital leaders group.
- The inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including information about pupils' attainment and progress, the school's self-evaluation and action plans, records related to the behaviour and attendance of pupils, information about their care and safeguarding, minutes of the governing body meetings, and records relating to the monitoring of teaching and learning.
- The inspectors considered the views of a variety of parents with whom they spoke, and the 19 parents who contributed to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.
- The inspectors considered the views of the 40 staff who contributed to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Jeremy Barnes, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Sandie La Porta	Ofsted Inspector
Barbara Harrold	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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