

Harris Primary Academy Chafford Hundred

Mayflower Road, Chafford Hundred, Grays, RM16 6SA

Inspection dates 15–16 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils' achievement in mathematics is not as good as it should be. The teaching is not making sure that pupils make consistently good progress throughout the academy.
- Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of pupils' handwriting or the way in which pupils present their work.
- Plans to bring about improvements in pupils' achievements are not clear enough about exactly what is to be done and by when, or how much improvement is expected.
- Leaders and governors have set phase leaders the task of improving the quality of teaching. However, phase leaders have not been in these roles for long enough to make a big difference.

The school has the following strengths

- The youngest children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- The teaching of early reading skills is good, and is built on successfully throughout the academy.
- Pupils value and enjoy the many opportunities they have to join clubs and attend out-of-school activities.
- The pupils behave well and say they feel safe. Behaviour in lessons is good and learning is rarely interrupted.
- The positive values that the academy promotes result in a very harmonious community where pupils play and work together well.
- Attendance is above average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 30 lessons and, in addition, visited some classes to look at how pupils who need extra help are supported when they are working in small groups.
- The inspection team scrutinised a range of documents including the school development and improvement plan, and policies about keeping pupils safe. The team members also listened to some pupils read and examined the work in pupils' books.
- The inspectors held discussions with pupils, teachers, the Principal, deputy headteacher, phase leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body, and the Director of Primary Education of the Harris Federation.
- The views of 18 parents were analysed through the Parent View website. The inspectors spoke to a number of parents at the start and end of the school day.
- The inspectors also considered the views expressed in questionnaires returned by members of staff.

Inspection team

Christopher Parker, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Kanwaljit Singh	Additional Inspector
Bimla Thakur	Additional Inspector
St John Burkett	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The academy is much larger than most primary schools.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium additional funding, because they are known to be eligible for free school meals, is less than half the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is double the national average. Over a quarter of the pupils speak English as an additional language. A very few pupils are at the early stages of learning to speak English.
- A greater-than-average proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are at school action (pupils who need extra support with their learning), but fewer than average are at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs.
- There is specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs in the form of an 'I CAN' unit for nursery-aged children with communication difficulties. The unit provides up to 15 places, and seven children currently attend each morning.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- Seven new teachers have recently joined the school.
- Harris Primary Academy Chafford Hundred converted to be an academy on 1 July 2012. When the predecessor school, Chafford Hundred Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged satisfactory overall.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, so that it is consistently good or better, to ensure that more pupils make faster progress, particularly in mathematics, by:
 - aiming high and stretching pupils, particularly the more-able, to achieve more
 - providing pupils of all abilities with work that will ensure that they build on what they already know and are able to do, at a good pace
 - making sure that all of the pupils' mathematics work is consistently and thoroughly marked in a way that helps them to improve.
- Improve the quality and presentation of pupils' work by making sure they form their letters correctly and develop a fluent style of handwriting.
- Sharpen the focus of improvement planning so that it explicitly sets out detailed timescales and, wherever possible, clear and measurable targets against which success can be gauged.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Most children join the academy with the skills and abilities expected for their age. They make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes, and this prepares them well for Year 1, but achievement requires improvement because this good progress is not sustained throughout the academy.
- Most pupils are making the progress expected of them and reach broadly average standards during their time at the academy. However, the rate of progress varies considerably from year to year, notably in mathematics. In some year groups, progress is slower than in others. As a result, standards are not as high as they should be by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics varies more than in reading and writing because the work the pupils are set is not always at the right level. Sometimes work does not stretch the more-able, and at other times it is too hard for some pupils. More good teaching of the oldest pupils results in faster progress towards the end of Key Stage 2.
- The academy has a well-developed approach to teaching early reading skills. As a result, pupils use their knowledge of the sounds that letters make to read unfamiliar words. Most pupils are reading books at the right level for them, but some pupils, particularly those who are doing well, are not always stretched by the books they are asked to read.
- The structure and content of pupils' writing, in a range of subjects, develops well as they move through the academy. However, the presentation of their work varies considerably. Too many pupils do not hold their pencil properly or form their letters correctly. As a result, too many do not have a fluent style of handwriting.
- In the Nursery, children with communication difficulties do well because of the work of the well-trained staff, who promote speaking and listening effectively. They question the children at story time to check their understanding and promote interesting conversation. The children benefit from a good balance of adult-led activities and those they choose themselves.
- The progress made by disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs reflects the inconsistencies in the progress made by all pupils. This is also the case for those supported by the additional money from the pupil premium. Pupils who arrive at the school speaking little English make good progress in learning to speak, read and write in English.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching varies too much. While good teaching is more prevalent than teaching which requires improvement, it is not sufficient to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress. Teaching is stronger in English than in mathematics because teachers ensure that work in this subject builds more effectively on what the pupils know and are able to do.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' writing often helps them to improve their work. Older pupils say that they find their teacher's comments very useful. The teachers' expectations of pupils' handwriting and the way they present their work are not high enough and, in some classes, the pupils' books are untidy. Poor handwriting and untidy presentation are too readily accepted.

- The teaching of mathematics is not as effective as the teaching of English. Too often, one group within a class has work that is too hard or too easy. Even in lessons where the teaching is helping most pupils to make good progress, there is still scope for the more-able pupils to be stretched further. The quality of the marking of pupils' mathematics work is inconsistent.
- Sometimes teachers successfully use the last few minutes of a lesson to question the pupils in order to find out how much they have learned. On other occasions, not enough thought is given to the purpose of this kind of review. As a result, the teacher uses questions that are not at the right level, and thus does not get an accurate picture of what the pupils need to learn next.
- The teaching of early reading is systematic. This is one reason why more pupils make better progress in English than they do in mathematics. In a lesson in a Reception class, for example, the teacher used a good range of approaches, including a video clip, to help the children to practice the 'z' sound and then use it in words and also write it.
- Teachers provide the pupils with interesting opportunities to write, and often provide them with a clear list of what they expect them to achieve in lessons. They offer them prompts and useful words to help them to improve their work. This was the case in a lesson in Year 6, where pupils were writing a letter to persuade the reader to accept their point of view.
- The teaching of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is most effective where adults who work alongside teachers support individual pupils using a range of approaches. Recently introduced arrangements for teaching of small groups of pupils who are not doing as well as expected are helping them to make faster progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are keen to learn and they concentrate well in lessons. Where more-able pupils are set a challenge, they rise to it. Pupils listen carefully and are eager to answer their teacher's questions. Older pupils contribute confidently to discussions. Around the academy and on the playground, pupils behave very well.
- The youngest children in the Nursery and Reception classes settle quickly into school life. They share and work well together, both in the classroom and outdoors. They behave well, listen carefully when asked to do so, and respond confidently in conversations with their teachers and the adults who work alongside them.
- Levels of absence are low. The governors do not sanction holidays in term time. Pupils are punctual and enjoy the many activities which the academy offers them. In discussion, many pupils say that they enjoy writing, and boys particularly welcome some of the new topics which they find interesting. Older pupils reflect positively on their own progress.
- Pupils say they feel safe and that behaviour in lessons and on the playground are good. They say that lessons are rarely interrupted by poor behaviour. The pupils are proud of their academy, they feel their uniforms 'make them smart', and they welcome the opportunities they are given to contribute to decisions, such as how the playground can be developed.
- Although a very few parents expressed concerns that bullying is not tackled well, pupils have no such concerns and discussions with them indicate that bullying is very rare. Pupils are emphatic that any unkind name-calling is very unusual, and never racist. They say that the school's values result in a harmonious community.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The Principal and governors are seeking to improve the performance of the academy. Governors took the decision to convert to an academy so that they could provide the pupils with a high-quality education. Changes have been made to leadership to give a sharper focus on improving teaching but these changes have yet to make a marked difference.
- Leaders have drawn up plans to improve the quality of teaching and to make sure that all the pupils make good progress. Although these plans have clear long-term aims, they do not set out precisely what will improve, by how much, and by when. Leaders have accurately identified the areas for development but the plan is not clear enough about how improvements will be made.
- The teachers' appraisal targets are linked closely to the targets set out in the school plans for improvement. The Principal checks the quality of teaching, and uses a range of other indicators such as the progress made by pupils in each class to determine whether governors should be asked to approve an improvement in a teacher's salary.
- The academy federation has quickly assessed the level and type of support which the academy needs in order to bring about marked improvement. Teachers with advanced skills and expertise have already made a number of visits to the academy. The academy federation has a strong commitment to ensuring rapid improvement.
- The academy has looked closely at the impact of funding through the pupil premium on the progress of those who receive extra support. It has ensured that some pupils achieve high standards at the end of Year 6. However, throughout the academy, its impact is more variable. This year it is funding more small-group teaching of those pupils who are not making the progress expected of them.
- Phase leaders have been given the task of improving the quality of teaching and ensuring that pupils make at least good progress. They are using some interesting ways to improve teaching, including using video to analyse how successful teachers are in helping pupils to learn. However, it is too early to evaluate the impact of their work on the academy's performance.
- The teachers use a broad range of topics to make learning interesting in a range of subjects. Pupils say they find the work they are set interesting, for example in science. The academy provides a wide range of clubs and out-of-school activities. Pupils appreciate and value trips and visits that bring learning to life.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The Chair of the Governing Body meets regularly with the Principal. Governors know how the academy's performance compares with that of other schools and that there is scope for improvement in pupils' progress. The Principal's appraisal targets are set by the governing body, and the governors make sure each teacher's performance is appraised. They receive information about the quality of teaching as part of Principal's report. The governing body asks searching questions of the Principal and other leaders. The school converted to an academy in a positive financial position as a result of careful decision-making. Governors have agreed to the use additional funds from the pupil premium to provide more small-group teaching. Since the school has become an academy, governors have benefited from both face-to-face and online training.

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	138349
Local authority	N/A
Inspection number	409370

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

Type of school	Academy
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	620
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tunde Ojetola
Headteacher	Michael Lovett
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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