

# Hamilton Academy

Priory Avenue, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, HP13 6SG

**Inspection dates** 20–21 June 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
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' progress varies too much from class to class and, as a consequence, achievement in mathematics is not as rapid as it is in reading and writing.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to undertake mathematical investigations and to solve problems.
- Teaching is not enabling consistently good or better learning for all pupils.
- In some lessons, the pace is too slow, expectations are unclear, work is too easy for some and too hard for others, and occasionally teachers spend too long talking.
- Until recently, leaders have not checked pupils' progress thoroughly enough. There is insufficient follow-up after lesson observations to help teachers improve their practice.

### The school has the following strengths

- Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make good progress.
- Pupils' progress accelerates in Year 6 because teaching is consistently good.
- Provision in the school for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Pupils from the many different minority ethnic backgrounds get on well together. Those who are potentially vulnerable, disabled or have special educational needs are fully included in all activities.
- Pupils' behaviour and their understanding of keeping themselves safe are good.
- The Principal, with effective support from the two deputy headteachers, has set the school on an improving course.
- The governing body ensures that safeguarding procedures meet the latest requirements. Their work to keep a close check on the school's performance is moving forward under the guidance of the newly appointed chair.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 24 lessons, of which eight were joint observations with the Principal and the deputy headteachers. In addition, the inspectors made a number of shorter visits to lessons. They heard a sample of pupils read in Year 2 and Year 6.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, staff, groups of pupils and a local authority representative.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including the data the school has collected on pupils' attainment and progress, procedures for keeping pupils safe, and the school development plan.
- In making their judgements, inspectors took account of the 94 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the 49 questionnaires returned by members of staff.

## Inspection team

David Wynford Jones, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
David Westall	Additional Inspector
David Harris	Additional Inspector
Janis Warren	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is considerably larger than the average-sized primary school. It was granted academy status in April 2012 and this is its first inspection.
- The accommodation is split over two sites which are about half a mile apart. Nursery, Reception and Years 3 and 4 are based at the Priory Road site. Years 1, 2, 5 and 6 are based at the Hampden Road site.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is much higher than that usually found. The largest group is of Pakistani heritage. The other pupils come from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. Approximately a third of the pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average, but few are at the early stages of learning English.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportions identified for additional support through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is below average. This is additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, those who are looked after by the local authority, and those with a parent in the armed forces.
- In 2012, the school met the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good or better by ensuring that
  - all teachers use assessment information more effectively to plan work that is at the right level of challenge for all groups of pupils
  - pupils of different ability know exactly what they are expected to achieve by the end of the lesson
  - lessons proceed at a quick pace and pupils do not spend too long listening to the teacher, particularly at the start of lessons
  - the very best practice is shared across the school.
- Raise achievement and quicken pupils' progress in mathematics by
  - providing more opportunities for mathematical investigations and to solve word-problems
  - making certain that all pupils understand and use a wide range of mathematical terminology
  - ensuring that all teachers follow-up comments in marking to check that the pupils have responded to earlier advice, to improve their work and reach their targets.
- Improve the leadership and management of teaching by
  - enhancing the skills of senior and year group leaders in helping teachers to consistently teach well
  - making sure that there is timely follow-up after monitoring activities and in checking that all pupils are making at least good progress.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- The school's current assessment data show that pupils' progress is uneven. It tends to be more variable in mathematics, with achievement typically below that seen in reading and writing. This is because too few opportunities are provided for practical investigative work and problem-solving, and so pupils lack confidence in finding things out for themselves.
- Additionally, some pupils do not understand and use mathematical vocabulary confidently and this slows them down when they are trying to solve word problems. However, there are some good examples within the school which can be shared. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils worked in mixed-ability groups to establish valid reasons why standard units are used to enable accurate measurement.
- Pupils' skills in reading are developing well. Most pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language, read with skills at least appropriate for their age. Younger pupils use phonics (the sounds that letters make) confidently to help them read unfamiliar words. Older pupils talk knowledgeably about their favourite authors and recommend books to each other.
- Pupils write for a range of purposes and in different styles. They work together to generate ideas for the story. They draft and refine their text. They often share their work with their classmates and ask for suggestions for improvement.
- Children in the Nursery make good progress. They quickly develop a love for learning and how to get on well together. Children continue to make good progress in the Reception classes. They settle quickly into a well-organised routine and move freely and confidently between the three teaching bases and the well-established outdoor area. From broadly average and sometimes below average starting points, the large majority meet the expected levels of development in all areas of learning.
- Standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 in reading, writing and mathematics are typically average. The school's predicted results and the work in pupils' books indicate that current standards in Year 6 are likely to be higher than in previous years. This is largely due to higher expectations, consistently good teaching and the use of more robust assessment procedures. These higher standards have yet to be reflected in other year groups.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar progress to others. More thorough half-termly checks have recently been introduced to see how well they are doing and additional support is being targeted well to move their learning on.
- In 2012, the achievement of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, and for whom the school received pupil premium funding, was around 18 months behind their classmates in mathematics and about a year behind in English. Due to effective school action, these pupils are now making up lost ground and the gaps are closing.
- Overall, the progress of boys and girls from different ethnic backgrounds, including those who speak English as an additional language, is broadly similar.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because pupils do not make consistently good progress over time. Teaching is not as effective in mathematics as it is in reading and writing, as reflected in pupils' achievement.
- Not all teachers use what they know about how well each pupil is doing to set work that is at the right level of challenge. As a result, some find the work too easy and for others, it is too difficult.
- Occasionally, time is not used to maximise pupils' achievement. For example, pupils spend too long at the start of the lesson listening to the teacher rather than taking an active part in their learning. At times, pupils spend too much time completing various tasks before being moved on to the next activity.

- Where teaching is most effective, for example in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 6, teachers have high expectations and are explicit in what they expect pupils of different abilities to achieve. Questioning is used well to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding. Teachers are adept at planning tasks that move all pupils' learning forward at a good pace.
- Well-targeted support is enabling vulnerable pupils to make up lost ground and those with special educational needs to meet their personal goals.
- Information and communication technology is used effectively in all years to bring lessons to life and to stimulate learning. Pupils are encouraged to share their ideas with each other and with the adults, and are given the opportunity to reflect on their work and to think about how it could be improved.
- In most lessons, teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and act as good role models to promote the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- There are many examples of good marking of pupils' work, but this is not yet consistent throughout the school, particularly in mathematics. Pupils are usually offered clear guidance about how to improve their work and reach their targets, but teachers' follow-up to see how this has been acted on is inconsistent.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They have a positive attitude towards learning. Lessons are very rarely interrupted by incidents of inappropriate behaviour.
- Pupils are polite and routinely demonstrate good manners as they move around the school. They are keen to take responsibility and take a pride in the school environment. They treat equipment and each other's possessions with respect.
- Pupils from different minority ethnic backgrounds get on well together. They value and appreciate each other's heritage. This contributes effectively to their good cultural development.
- Pupils say that there are occasional bullying incidents, such as name-calling, but that fighting, racist, religious or cyber-bullying are rare. They are confident that if an incident occurs, it will be dealt with quickly and fairly.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves and others safe and have a good understanding of potential dangers; for example when using computers to access the internet, when cycling and using the roads.
- Pupils' attendance is improving and is broadly average. However, the current rate has been affected by a 'sickness bug' which many pupils suffered from and which lasted for several weeks. The number of pupils taking holidays in term time is reducing due to the school's effective actions.

### **The leadership and management require improvement**

- Although there have been some improvements in the quality of teaching, the school's leaders have not previously ensured that teaching is consistently good and that all pupils make good progress. Until recently, checks have not been precise enough and follow up has been inconsistent. New assessment procedures being trialled in Year 6 are proving to be very positive and are supporting pupils' rapid progress; they are soon to be rolled out across the school.
- Senior leaders set high expectations and staff are supportive of the initiatives to improve their teaching skills. They attend courses and regularly swap ideas with each other. They share the Principal's vision for the development of the school.
- Analysis of pupils' progress data each half-term, outcomes from lesson observations and annual appraisal discussions usefully underpin the Principal's recommendation to the governors about promotions and teachers' pay awards.
- In all classes, there is an appropriate focus on developing pupils' literacy and increasingly, their

numeracy skills. Whole-school topics are used well to stimulate interest. For example, the 'Globe-trotters' theme was followed up by each year group studying different countries. This contributed well to pupils' cultural development and knowledge of the world.

- The wide range of activities promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development successfully. Pupils are given many opportunities to enrich their education; for example by taking part in sporting events and musical activities.
- Good relationships with the local authority have been maintained. Some of its services are being purchased and are proving effective, for example training for governors.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body is developing well and has taken on board the responsibilities associated with academy status. Significant emphasis is placed on ensuring the pupils are kept safe and that the school meets the latest requirements for safeguarding. The newly appointed Chair of the Governing Body is setting clear expectations for the development of the school and challenging targets to assist in this. Governors undertake regular training and are developing their skills in checking how well pupils are doing, and have a good understanding of how targets are set for teachers to improve, and the process for rewarding good teaching. The governing body monitors the school's budget appropriately and is now focused on making sure that the pupil premium funding is being used to support those who are eligible. The money for the current year has been allocated appropriately to support, amongst other initiatives, additional support staff, booster sessions for Year 6 pupils, support for pupils who speak English as an additional language and extra-curricular activities. Governors monitor closely the progress of the actions identified in the school development plan. These are based on an accurate evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and rightly focus on improving teaching and learning throughout the school.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137964
<b>Local authority</b>	Buckinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	406690

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Academy converter
<b>School category</b>	Non-maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	650
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Paul Basham
<b>Principal</b>	Graeme Aldous
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01494 522231
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