

# Hillyfield Academy

Higham Hill Road, London, E17 6ED and Aveling Park Road, London, E17 4NR.

**Inspection dates** 22–23 October 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b> <b>1</b>
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	Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school

- As a result of high-quality teaching, pupils' standards of attainment in writing and mathematics have been consistently above average for several years. Higher proportions of 11-year-olds achieve very well in these subjects compared to pupils in other schools nationally.
- The teaching of reading has been reorganised and standards are rising rapidly.
- Strong and improving teaching means that all pupils, including disabled pupils, those with special educational needs, the more able and those who benefit from additional funding, progress very well.
- The high quality of teachers' marking very precisely helps pupils to understand how they can improve their work. Pupils typically are fully engaged in learning. Teachers of subjects like art provide very rich experiences, to which pupils respond enthusiastically.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to school and are proud to talk about what they have learned. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is typically exemplary. Pupils show a high degree of respect and care for each other.
- Pupils feel safe in school and have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe.
- The school's leaders and governors show a relentless commitment to maintaining high standards. The quality of teaching is monitored frequently and the difference it makes to pupils' progress is evaluated meticulously. Additional challenge or further support is then provided for pupils when required. This has led to teaching being highly effective and pupils learning exceptionally well.
- Visits and a lively approach to topics that draw upon several subjects contribute to pupils' social and cultural development.
- The extensive range of extra-curricular opportunities offered to pupils is a strength. These promote their personal development and self-confidence excellently.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 38 lessons or parts of lessons taught by 31 teachers. One session was observed jointly with a head of school. The other head of school and a deputy headteacher joined inspectors on a series of short visits to Key Stage 1 and early years classrooms. In addition, three other deputy headteachers joined an inspector looking at pupils' books.
- Inspectors observed pupils' activities at breakfast club, break and lunchtimes, and at an assembly.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, representatives from the governing body, and subject and school leaders. Discussions took place between an inspector and the external school improvement professional.
- The inspectors took account of the 129 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and to three phone calls from parents. Inspectors also held informal discussions with parents. The views of staff were taken into account through meetings and the 60 responses to staff questionnaires.
- The inspectors listened to pupils read and discussed their choice of reading books.
- The school's own attainment records for the current year as well as previous academic years were scrutinised in addition to published information on pupils' achievement. Planning documents were examined.
- Records relating to pupils' safety and welfare, including security checks on staff, were also examined. Behaviour logs and attendance records were scrutinised.

## Inspection team

Patricia MacLachlan, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Michael Elson	Additional inspector
Rachel McCallum	Additional inspector
Clifford Walker	Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is much larger than the average-sized primary school. The early years provision comprises a full-time Nursery and six Reception classes. Children attend full time from the age of three or four.
- An above-average proportion of pupils are supported by the pupil premium (extra money provided by the government for disadvantaged pupils who are eligible for free school meals and for looked after children). About four in ten pupils are supported by this additional funding
- The largest groups of pupils are of White British and Other White heritage. There are also sizeable groups of pupils of Pakistani, Other Asian, African and Caribbean heritage groups. About six out of ten pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Lower-than-average proportions of pupils are supported by school action. About seven pupils in a hundred have disabilities or special educational needs that are supported this way. The number of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above the national average, with about 14 pupils in every hundred supported this way.
- A unit for specialist provision for six young pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder was opened this September. A new site (Park site) more than a mile away was opened last year for additional Reception and Key Stage 1 classes.
- Hillyfield Academy converted to become an academy on 1 January 2011. When its predecessor school, Hillyfield Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding.
- Since the school became an academy, there have been several appointments to the leadership team. Two heads of school have been appointed recently. Two deputy headteachers joined the school in January 2014 and two further deputy headteachers were appointed this September.

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

- Improve the teaching of early years children from good to more consistently outstanding across both sites by:
  - more systematic evaluation of children's skills and knowledge of measurement, and exemplify progress throughout the year
  - training all adults who work with early years children to further develop how they ask questions and devise activities that will prompt children to give fuller and more detailed answers.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are outstanding

- The energetic heads of school, supported by the executive headteacher, lead focused and frequent observations of pupils' learning and scrutiny of their work in order to maintain the high quality of teaching. This has been extremely successful. Deputy headteachers, each responsible for two year groups, plan and teach with their respective teams. This has ensured consistent approaches. As a consequence, they make a direct impact on improving standards.
- While leaders have been very successful in maintaining most aspects of the school's effectiveness, the early years provision was extended last year to an additional site. A newly appointed deputy headteacher has made a good start in guiding staff to apply consistent assessment methods for the increased number on roll in both settings. Leaders are determined to get this aspect of the school to the same high standard as the rest of the school.
- Year leaders are effective and make weekly checks on pupils' work to make sure that they are responding to their teachers' detailed marking. They also check that teachers are setting work of a correct level of difficulty for pupils.
- Leaders have made a good start in providing a stimulating programme for pupils in the new specialist provision. Provision is very well managed and the impact on pupils' progress is marked socially and academically.
- In recent years, standards in reading had been slightly lower than those in writing and mathematics. Leaders have very successfully addressed this. Their focus on daily guided reading in English lessons, with additional resources and training for teachers, has raised pupils' progress and attainment.
- Robust systems have been developed to make sure that only those teachers who meet the targets that are set for them move up the salary scale. The heads of school do not shirk from difficult conversations about teaching performance on the rare occasions when these are necessary to secure improved teaching. Extensive programmes of support, paired teaching and sharing of best practice help teachers to improve their work and quickly develop good, or better, practice. Teachers new to the profession receive effective support.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is extremely strong. Pupils reflect on the differences between right and wrong in carefully planned personal education lessons that focus on ethical values. Values of tolerance and democracy in British and other societies are highlighted in history and other lessons and in lobbying the borough council on matters of local concern.
- Pupils acting as peer mediators or pupil advocates give valued opportunities to exert an influence on fellow pupils. 'We are chosen because we have the right skills and I enjoy my role', is a typical comment. Participation in musical presentations and art gallery visits widens pupils' cultural horizons. Visitors from different places of worship extend pupils' spiritual understanding of Christian and other major faiths. Visits to, and work about, contrasting parts of the country help to prepare pupils effectively for life in modern Britain.
- The government's sports funding has been used well to engage coaches to train class teachers and assistants. Consequently, skills in teaching physical education and games have improved. Additional clubs have attracted large numbers of pupils, who are entering and winning more competitions. The positive impact on pupils' fitness is being measured by a local university. The committed school sports leader is providing lunchtime clubs for pupils who cannot stay after school. The school aims for 100% participation and a wide range of sporting opportunities.
- The pupil premium grant to improve the attainment of disadvantaged pupils is used effectively to reduce the gaps between their attainment and that of their peers.
- Safeguarding systems meet current requirements and policies are applied consistently. Leaders promote equal opportunities and do not tolerate any discrimination that may arise.
- Leaders work with other schools in the area to develop assessment arrangements for the new curriculum.
- The academy is a stand-alone organisation that supplements effective local authority support for moderation and special education provision with independent advisers.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Members of the governing body know the standards of achievement and teaching in the school. This is because they are given clear information in regular reports from school leaders. Governors use published national data to ask challenging questions about comparisons of pupil outcomes in the school with those of pupils nationally. They make regular visits to check that reported improvements are taking place. The governing body has improved its effectiveness by undertaking training programmes, including those organised by the local authority. Governors understand the link between teachers' pay

increases and pupils' progress and have revised the pay policy. The governing body receives summaries of teachers' performance from the headteacher. They are aware of what support has been provided to improve teaching and if there has been any underperformance in the past. Checks are made that extra government funding for disadvantaged pupils is spent on the intended groups and that this is helping to improve their achievement. Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and arrangements are effective. The budget is managed to support the school improvement plan.

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

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Their attitudes to learning are extremely positive as a result of the perseverance that is encouraged by the school's new 'habits of mind' system. This gives pupils strategies to overcome difficulties and the determination to complete tasks. As one pupil remarked, 'If you stick at something, you'll get better next time.'
- Pupils work constructively with each other in most lessons and typically conduct themselves very well around the school. This is because all staff set high expectations. Pupil advocates oversee excellent behaviour in corridors and in the playground.
- Pupils take great pride in their well-equipped and strikingly decorated school. They are very proud of the considerable responsibilities that they are given and they appreciate the way that pupil play leaders help the others to learn new skills and join in. Poised bilingual pupils act as 'cultural advocates' who play an important part in attracting parents from many language communities to school events such as parents' coffee mornings.
- Pupils understand what bullying means and they say that, although it does occasionally occur, staff can be relied upon to help them to overcome any disagreements very quickly. This is borne out by school records.
- Pupils say they enjoy attending breakfast club. Attendance rates have improved in every one of the past four years and all groups of pupils attend well and are punctual. This is because of effective checking and insistent following up of absences with parents. Exclusions have not been resorted to because the management of behaviour is effective.

### **Safety**

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils feel well looked after by the adults around them and say that they would be happy to approach any adult, confident that their concerns will be addressed quickly.
- Pupils have a very strong awareness of personal safety, including when using the internet, because it is explained well in lessons.
- Pupils take some responsibility for promoting safety and look after each other well outside classrooms. Peer mentors help the younger pupils by meeting and listening to them daily.
- The learning council was instrumental in suggesting and implementing a remarkably effective 'safe school zone'. Local traders have been approached to display their posters and if a pupil feels unsafe in the surrounding area, they are welcome to ask the shopkeeper to telephone the school and wait there until a member of staff comes to collect them.
- Of the parents who responded to Parent View, an overwhelming majority believe that the school provides a safe and caring environment. Pupils enjoy coming to this school and are very pleased with the activities that have been provided for them.

## **The quality of teaching** is outstanding

- Teachers plan interesting activities with appropriate levels of challenge for pupils of different abilities. They make very frequent checks on pupils' understanding and adjust subsequent plans and activities in the light of pupils' responses so that rapid progress is made.
- Teaching is very strong because excellent relationships are established quickly between all adults and pupils in the classroom. Consequently, pupils are eager to become involved in their lessons and are confident that requests for help will be met promptly. 'The school recognises your talent early and helps you to boost your best subject', observed one Year 4 pupil.
- Activities in mathematics are designed to stimulate pupils to make progress in solving problems. Adults work with different groups to encourage pupils to explain their answers in detail, thereby deepening their

understanding. Teachers have also begun to use a common marking practice for mathematics across the school to give guidance to pupils about how to improve their work.

- As a consequence, in Year 5, for example, pupils can quickly devise logical sequences of activities to solve problems, apply their knowledge accurately and explain their choice of methods with impressive clarity.
- Marking in English and mathematics books is of a high quality. Frequent and detailed marking is helping pupils to make demonstrable progress rapidly. Pupils use teachers' comments to help them to edit their work and to keep their own records of progress towards meeting their targets. Well-trained learning support assistants give good-quality support to pupils who need additional help to complete tasks.
- Pupils from the new specialist provision are well integrated in lessons with their peers. There are planned opportunities within activities for these pupils to develop fine motor skills and practise speaking with adults. This supports them in making rapid progress from their starting points.
- Reading is effectively encouraged across all year groups. Leaders have re-organised the resources in classrooms, bought high-quality texts, and time for reading is scheduled frequently for all classes. Pupils' progress in reading is recorded systematically because they are expected to answer detailed questions of appropriate difficulty in journals that are frequently reviewed by their teacher. The school is focusing on how to provide even more opportunities to help pupils to transfer these skills to work across the curriculum, for example, reading specialist vocabulary in science.
- Detailed and daily support is given in the linking of sounds to letters (phonics) for the increasingly small number of pupils who do not meet the national standard in the annual screening checks.

### The achievement of pupils

**is outstanding**

- Pupils make strong progress from their different starting points and achieve very well. The trend since the school became an academy shows attainment in mathematics and writing significantly above that typical for 11-year-olds nationally.
- Standards of reading for pupils capable of reaching the highest levels declined in 2013 at the end of Key Stage 2. Leaders acted decisively and reorganised the teaching of reading. Consequently, the invalidated information for 2014 showed that almost half the pupils in last year's Year 6 made better-than-expected progress in reading. Particular improvement is shown in the proportions attaining high Level 5 scores. This improvement is confirmed by the school's own records and in hearing a range of pupils reading.
- In 2014, Year 6 pupils made particularly good progress in mathematics, with half making better-than-expected progress, and this represents a sustained trend since 2012. The school's own progress information about writing also shows a rising trend since the school became an academy.
- The school's information about other year groups at Key Stage 2 also shows consistently strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The majority of pupils in the current Years 5 and 6 have met the school's ambitious targets and made better-than-expected progress by the end of 2014.
- The school's own information on pupils' achievement at Key Stage 1 also shows that for the past three years, increasing numbers are attaining well in all subjects. The numbers of pupils attaining above the expected level in Year 2 rose in 2014. In reading, writing and mathematics, pupils have outperformed the national average for 2013. Increased numbers of more able pupils also attained the higher level in reading, mathematics and writing.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are making the same good progress as their classmates. This is because they are supported well by staff who take their specific needs into consideration.
- The six pupils in the newly opened facility for specialist provision have settled in well and their books show that they are making strong progress from their different starting points.
- Pupils from different ethnic groups make equally good progress. Those for whom English is an additional language also achieve well. This is because focused training has been given to staff, who help them to develop their language skills rapidly.
- In 2014, the performance of the most able pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 was stronger than in previous years in reading and writing. This is also reflected in the most recent figures for Key Stage 2, when most pupils who attained Level 3 (the higher level for seven-year-olds) went on to reach high levels at 11 in reading and writing.
- The teaching of phonics is good in Year 1 and helps all pupils to develop their reading skills well. In 2014, a higher proportion of pupils met the required standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check than in 2013. Over the past three years, the school's scores have been continuously rising.
- Additional government funding to support disadvantaged pupils is used effectively to run small-group

activities in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2014, the gap between eligible pupils in Year 6 and their classmates had narrowed to less than three months in reading and mathematics, and less than six months in writing. By contrast, in 2013, disadvantaged pupils actually outperformed their peers in the school, and nationally in writing and also in mathematics. The most marked impact last year was in Year 1 and Year 3, where gaps in reading, writing and mathematics were negligible; this reflects particularly effective use of the grant in the younger years.

### The early years provision

is good

- Leadership and management of the early years provision over the school's two sites are good. The deputy headteacher appointed in January has spearheaded improvements in making accurate assessments of children's skills on joining Nursery and Reception. Parents are visited at home and given frequent suggestions to help their children to learn outside school hours. Children quickly get used to the routines established by staff, and are able to manage themselves safely in both indoor and outdoor settings
- Children join the Nursery classes with skill levels that are generally below those expected of three-year-olds. Similarly, children who join the Reception classes have skill levels that are below those typical of four-year-olds. As a result of good teaching, in 2014 an above-average proportion achieved a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year. This reflects a trend of good academic and personal progress over several years. Children are well prepared to begin Year 1.
- The Nursery and Reception classes provide a safe and secure environment for children. Staff are skilful in helping children make good progress through a wide range of interesting and stimulating activities. Teachers use questioning effectively to help children develop their language skills and confidence in description. However, leaders recognise the need to extend training to all adults in order to overcome the legacy of communication skills that are below the levels typical for their ages when they start in the Reception year, having attended settings other than the school. In addition, they recognise the need to train staff to make more frequent assessments of children's progress throughout their time in the early years.

## 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>	136413
<b>Local authority</b>	Waltham Forest
<b>Inspection number</b>	449398

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	943
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Roger Pryce
<b>Headteacher</b>	Executive headteacher: Steve Lancashire Heads of school: Anna Mackenzie (Hill site) and Matt O'Dowda (Park site)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
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