

Hamilton Academy

Priory Avenue, High Wycombe, HP13 6SG

Inspection dates 10–11 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
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.

- Pupils make good progress across the school. All groups of pupils, including different ethnic groups and disadvantaged pupils, make good progress.
- Teaching is consistently good. Teachers plan activities which interest pupils and engage them in learning. Classroom displays support learning effectively and celebrate pupils' work.
- Pupils behave well in lessons, before and after school and at breaks and lunchtimes. Routines are well established and pupils behave well moving to different lessons or between activities in lessons.
- Pupils from a wide range of backgrounds work well together and play harmoniously.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in the school. There are few incidents of poor behaviour in the school. Pupils report that staff help them to sort out problems or concerns.
- The early years provision is good. Children develop their skills well in a bright, welcoming environment and staff support them effectively so they are well prepared for Year 1.
- Leaders, managers and governors have ensured that teaching and achievement have improved so that they are now good.
- The headteacher, well supported by other leaders, has focused on raising achievement quickly and successfully.
- The role of middle leaders has developed well. These leaders help to ensure consistency across the school through working closely with staff to develop and improve teaching.
- Plans for improvement identify accurate priorities and are regularly monitored.
- Governance has improved since the previous inspection. Governors challenge leaders robustly and give them good support in making improvements in the school. This increased challenge has supported improvements.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always systematically and effectively check learning thoroughly in lessons and adapt activities so pupils make more rapid progress.
- Marking does not always give pupils enough information on how to improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils learning in 26 lessons or parts of lessons. These were across both sites, covering all year groups except Year 5 who were out of school, on a trip, during the inspection.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work in classes and also in more detail at books from Years 2, 5, 6 and the early years.
- The inspection team took account of the 88 responses to the online Parent View survey completed in the last 365 days, as well as communication from, and discussions with, parents during the inspection. The views of staff from 48 staff questionnaires were also considered.
- Inspectors observed two assemblies, heard pupils read and met with staff, a representative from the local authority and four governors, including the Chair.
- The inspection team looked at a range of documentation including those relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance, the school's own evaluation of its performance and plans for the future and information about how well pupils are progressing.

Inspection team

Susan Williams, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Michael Elson	Additional Inspector
Fatiha Maitland	Additional Inspector
Caroline Oliver	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. It became an academy school before the previous inspection. It is based on two sites with Years 1, 2, 5 and 6 pupils on one site. The early years and Years 3 and 4 pupils are on the other. There are plans to move the early years and Key Stage 1 pupils onto one site and Key Stage 2 pupils onto the other in 2016.
- There is one class in the Nursery where children attend part time and three classes in Reception where children attend full time.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium, which is additional funding for children in care or pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- Pupils come from a wide range of ethnic groups with the two main groups being Pakistani and White British. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is higher than average.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The headteacher took up his post in January 2015 after one term as the acting headteacher. A member of staff has been promoted to the post of deputy headteacher from September 2015.
- A very few pupils are taught in alternative provision by Woodlands Pupil Referral Unit for behavioural issues.
- The school has been supported by an outstanding school, Chepping View School.
- The governing body has doubled its membership since the previous inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching further by ensuring that:
 - teachers mark consistently so that pupils know how to improve their work
 - teachers systematically and effectively check pupils' learning throughout the lesson and adapt activities where necessary to ensure that pupils make the best possible progress.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, well supported by his leadership team, has focused on improving teaching so that it is now consistently good across the school and pupils achieve well. Standards of good behaviour have been maintained. The school has improved significantly in the last year under his excellent leadership.
- Staff are positive about the leadership of the school. Those spoken to commented on the support they have received and which they value. Performance management of teachers' work is robust and linked to teachers' accountability for the good progress of pupils. Teachers are aware that pay awards are linked to the achievement of their pupils. Staff are supported to improve their teaching through appropriate further training. This has been successful as weak teaching has been eradicated and teaching is now consistently good. Teachers new to the profession have been well supported so their pupils also achieve well.
- Middle leaders are passionate about their work. Year leaders and phase leaders work effectively with teachers in their year groups to ensure consistency of practice and that teaching continually improves. Subject leadership has improved considerably following the school's last monitoring visit by inspectors. Subject leaders can now clearly demonstrate the impact of their work in improving the quality of teaching and the rates of pupils' progress.
- The school's evaluation of its work and plans for improvement have accurate priorities. As a result, it has been successful in raising achievement rapidly. Additional priorities are added where necessary throughout the year. Plans are monitored carefully to make sure they have a positive impact on improvement. Leaders are aware, for example, of occasional remaining inconsistencies in teaching and have detailed plans to remedy these.
- The range of subjects which pupils study is broad and balanced. There is an emphasis on English and mathematics and these subjects are effectively built into the pupils' learning in different subject areas. This supports pupils well in making good progress in literacy and numeracy. There are specialists in physical education, music and languages. Subjects are taught through cross-curricular themes such as 'The Romans' where, for instance, pupils develop writing skills as they write a play script, learn history and develop their art. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted. They learn to respect different backgrounds and celebrate diversity. Pupils write regular letters to a school in Ghana they are linked with.. They are encouraged to share their own experiences in assembly and showed a high degree of sensitivity and pride listening to the story of how one pupil overcame issues with his sight.
- British values are well promoted by the teaching and discussion of aspects of democracy, tolerance and respect built into assembly themes. Pupils are well prepared for their life in modern Britain. Equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination is not tolerated. The school is effective in fostering good relations.
- Pupils make good progress in their physical development. The primary physical education and sports funding is used effectively. This has been used to increase participation in increasingly popular clubs. There are a wide range of clubs including karate, fencing, street dance and football. A specialist teacher teaches gym and dance from Reception to Year 6 and supports the development of pupils learning about healthy lifestyles linked to their science curriculum.
- Parents are happy with how their children are progressing. A number spoke about the improvements in the school this year and in particular about how much better their children were doing. Parents were very positive about how the school cares for their children.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively and this has been a focus for improvement this year. Funding is used for additional teaching staff and small group support for pupils. This has helped to improve achievement for these pupils this year and to start to narrow the gap in their attainment compared to other pupils.
- Safeguarding meets statutory requirements and is effective. It is monitored regularly by governors. The school works closely with external agencies to safeguard pupils. The school carefully monitors the attendance, behaviour and progress of pupils attending alternative provision.
- The local authority has provided effective support, particularly in the last year. An adviser has visited regularly to support the headteacher and to focus on priority areas including, for example, the achievement of pupils eligible for the pupil premium. The local authority has held regular monitoring meetings to review the school's performance. This work has supported the school to rapidly improve provision. An outstanding school has successfully supported the headteacher in his efforts to improve teaching within the school.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governance has been strengthened since the last inspection through the addition of new members and is now effective. Governors receive regular training from the local authority. They have a good understanding of published data and know how well the school is performing compared to others and which aspects need further improvement. They receive updates on pupils' current progress from the headteacher and challenge where performance is less strong. Additional priorities were added to the development plan this year to focus on the areas identified as needing more rapid improvement. Governors rigorously monitor these priorities. They have a clear knowledge, for example, about how pupil premium funding is spent and the priorities for improving outcomes for these pupils this year.
- Governors oversee the management of the performance of the headteacher. They know about the quality of teaching in the school and ensure that this is at least good. They robustly monitor pay awards for staff and ensure that any underperformance is quickly tackled. Governors ensure that the school meets current statutory safeguarding regulations.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils' attitudes are routinely positive across all areas of the school. Pupils conduct themselves well before and after school, at breaks and lunchtimes, when moving between lessons and in classrooms. Their good behaviour supports their good progress.
- Pupils' work in books and in displays shows the pride they take in their work. They look after their books and keep classrooms and other areas of the school tidy.
- Pupils are polite, for instance they hold doors open for adults and for each other. Routines are well established and support good behaviour in all areas of the school from early years to Year 6. Pupils move around the school sensibly and are careful on stairs, when walking in corridors and when leaving school at the end of the day.
- Pupils from a wide range of backgrounds mix together and play harmoniously. This prepares pupils well for moving to secondary school and for their future lives.
- Pupils say that occasional bullying does occur but it is sorted out quickly. They know about different types of bullying including name calling and physical bullying through sensitive, regular teaching.
- The school works closely with the alternative provision when pupils are educated off site to ensure consistency of routines and good behaviour.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say that they feel safe in the school and are confident that concerns will be addressed. They know how to keep themselves safe out of school and on the internet because they are taught how to keep away from inappropriate sites and to keep personal information secure.
- Safeguarding procedures are thorough. The school works well with local agencies to ensure the safety of pupils.
- The school works closely with community groups and local agencies to support pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. The school has been successful in supporting these pupils to settle in school and to do well.
- The focus on attendance this year and more rigorous following up of absence have been successful in improving attendance and reducing persistent absence.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved and is consistently good, with some that is outstanding. This has supported pupils' improved achievement. There are positive, supportive relationships between teachers and pupils that help pupils' learning. Pupils work well on their own and with each other.
- Teachers make learning interesting for pupils. Evidence in books confirms that pupils enjoy their learning and this leads to their good progress.
- Classroom environments are bright and colourful and care has been taken that these support learning. For instance, the pupils' vocabulary is enhanced by displays highlighting words for pupils to use of aspects of mathematics.
- Pupils' phonics (letters and their sounds) skills are developed thoroughly. This is made interesting with

singing, activities and with computers. Misconceptions are picked up quickly and pupils are encouraged to think about their targets to improve their work. As a result, pupils make good progress throughout the school in reading.

- Writing has improved. Pupils have opportunities to write in a wide range of styles and genres. Regular extended writing has been introduced which has meant that pupils can develop their skills in longer pieces.
- Mathematics is well taught and pupils' skills are developed well. Opportunities to enhance the learning in real-life situations are taken, for example Year 5 pupils using the outside wildlife area working out how many garden chafers, a type of beetle, cover a grassed area in school. Year 6 pupils were fascinated by applying their mathematics skills to working out household budgets for adults with different jobs on a range of salaries.
- Marking has improved recently although this is not yet consistent across the school. Most teachers provide helpful comments to show the pupils how to improve their work and which pupils understand and respond to. This does not happen in all classes, however, to ensure all pupils make the best progress of which they are capable.
- Although pupils make good progress, on occasions teachers do not check learning thoroughly and adapt activities when pupils are ready to do more or when learning could be deepened and progress made more rapid.
- Parents are positive about how teaching has improved and recognise the improvements that have been made.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Progress has improved rapidly this academic year and pupils now make good progress across the school. All different groups of pupils including Pakistani and White British pupils make good progress. Good support is provided for pupils who speak English as an additional language and this helps these pupils to make good progress. Teachers develop language in classes and some support is provided for individuals and groups to help develop language skills and reading.
- Attainment at both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is broadly average. The proportion of pupils reaching Level 4 in mathematics and reading was lower than in writing in 2014. The school expects this to improve this year. Work in pupils' books supports this view.
- The most-able pupils did better than other pupils nationally in the national tests in Year 6 last year in mathematics and reading. The school has focused on improving writing so these pupils now make good progress and writing skills are well developed.
- The proportion of pupils who reached the standard for the phonics screening check in 2014 was broadly average. Pupils develop their phonic skills effectively and are able to use these to help them read difficult words and to support them with their spelling.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive extra help. This has been more focused this year on the individual needs and abilities of pupils. The progress of these pupils is improving quickly with many now making good progress.
- Pupils educated off site have well-targeted and successful specialist help to support improvements in their achievement.
- Disadvantaged pupils did not do as well as others nationally in 2014. They were approximately 14 months behind others nationally in reading, four months in writing and 11 months in mathematics. Gaps narrowed in writing, but widened in reading and mathematics. Compared with other pupils in the school they were approximately 10 months behind in reading, six months in writing and 14 months in mathematics. Progress was slower for these pupils than other pupils nationally.
- The focused work to improve the progress of these pupils this year has been very successful. Progress by disadvantaged pupils is now good across the school and gaps are narrowing rapidly. For example, school tracking shows that the gaps halved between this group and others in Year 6 this year.

The early years provision is good

- Children make good progress in the early years in relation to their starting points. They enter Nursery with knowledge and skills overall below those typical for their age. In 2014, a greater proportion of children reached a good level of development by the time they left Reception in all aspects of their learning than found nationally. They were well prepared for Year 1.
- Children behave well and respond appropriately to questions and requests. Those children who come from

different cultural backgrounds play well and work together in harmony. Children feel safe and secure. They are confident to approach members of staff should a concern arise.

- Teaching is good. Children are provided with good opportunities to develop a range of skills and healthy eating habits. Children in Nursery enjoyed playing with sand and water to make 'quicksand'. They moved the quicksand between different containers, being careful not to spill any and thus developing different physical skills. They were able to confidently describe what they were doing and talk about the different sizes of spoons they were using, thus effectively developing their use of language.
- Staff work well together and have been successful in securing good progress for all children including disabled children, those who have special educational needs and those who are disadvantaged.
- Parents are pleased with the provision. They are kept well informed about their child's progress and their well-being.
- Leaders and managers are clear about the setting's strengths and areas for improvement. Leadership is good and has secured good outcomes for children. Relationships with children and staff are positive and learning flows with no interruption.
- The learning environment is bright and welcoming. A lot of care has been taken particularly in the outdoor areas to give children a wide range of activities and for opportunities to develop skills such as gardening with boxes of plants.

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	137964
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	462452

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	641
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Basham
Headteacher	Stephen Nunn
Date of previous school inspection	20–21 June 2013
Telephone number	01494 522231
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