

Cuckoo Hall Academy

Cuckoo Hall Lane, Edmonton, London N9 8DR

Inspection dates

12–13 July 2017

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- The school has not maintained a good standard of education since the previous inspection. Unstable leadership over time has led to inadequate teaching, learning and assessment. As a result, standards have declined and pupils' outcomes are inadequate.
- Assessment systems do not support teachers to identify the right starting points for pupils' work. Pupils of different abilities, including those who are disadvantaged, have made inconsistent or little progress this year.
- The school's 'stage not age' approach to the curriculum does not meet pupils' needs. Pupils make inadequate progress across key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are not identified accurately and are not effectively planned for.
- Teaching assistants have not received adequate training or guidance to help them to have a good impact on the progress that pupils make.
- Most of the leaders in the school have an inaccurate view of the quality of teaching. They have not demonstrated the capacity to move the school forward.
- The local governing board has not been successful in recruiting or retaining sufficient numbers of skilled governors to challenge and support the work of the school effectively.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the early years is variable. The quality of children's work does not match the positive outcomes reported at the end of the Reception Year.
- Parents have mixed views about the effectiveness of most aspects of the school's work

The school has the following strengths

- The acting headteacher has created a positive climate in this school, which is beginning to have an impact on the quality of teaching. She has been very well supported by members of the trust and by the chief executive officer, all of whom have an accurate understanding of the challenges facing the school.
- In 2016, outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening check and at the end of the early years foundation stage were in line with, or slightly above, the national average.
- Pupils are happy, polite and welcoming. They behave well and are kept safe at school.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - leaders at all levels make accurate judgments about the quality of teaching, learning and assessment
 - the assessment system supports teachers in planning to meet pupils' needs and in helping them to make strong, sustained progress
 - the curriculum is reviewed to make sure that it helps pupils to make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics
 - skilled governors are recruited and retained to improve the impact of the local governing board
 - governors rigorously monitor the impact of the pupil premium spending on the progress that disadvantaged pupils make
 - teaching assistants are helped to improve their skills and subject knowledge, in order to maximise their impact on pupils' progress
 - provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities supports them to make good progress from accurately assessed starting points
 - the learning environment and the quality of teaching in the early years are improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

An external review of governance is recommended in order to ascertain how well this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- The school community has endured unstable senior leadership since the previous inspection. There has also been a great deal of staff turnover. As a result, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment over time has declined and pupils' achievement has suffered.
- Leaders have successfully recruited teachers who are keen to improve their skills. However, recent changes that have been put in place by leaders to improve the quality of teaching are yet to make a significant difference. Collectively, leaders at all levels do not have an accurate picture of the quality of teaching across the school. As a result, there has been little improvement to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Staff appraisal has not brought about rapid improvements to teaching. Leaders' capacity to move the school forward swiftly is weak.
- The school's assessment system relies on a narrow range of information. As a result, leaders do not have an accurate or incisive view of the progress being made by pupils across the school. The system does not help teachers understand where pupils are in their learning, or in planning effectively to move learning on.
- Leaders have implemented a 'stage not age' curriculum which places pupils from different year groups or key stages in ability groups for reading, writing and mathematics. The school's approach to the curriculum is not working because the progress that pupils of all abilities make is too variable. Much of it is weak across key stage 2.
- The school provides a range of after-school clubs to enhance the curriculum. These include art, sports and information technology. However, some parents feel that the charging policy does not allow equality of opportunity for all pupils to access these clubs.
- Leaders' communication about the changes to the homework policy this year left some parents very confused and concerned about their perceived lack of homework. Some parents feel that their children are disadvantaged by not having access to the internet at home. Parents express very mixed views about the school's effectiveness.
- Additional funding to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has not been spent well. Provision for these pupils across the school is inadequate.
- Leaders and governors have not effectively targeted or monitored the impact of the pupil premium funding. The school's assessment information suggests that differences in the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils are starting to diminish. However, pupils' books show that disadvantaged pupils make the same inconsistent progress as other pupils. The targeted group work led by teaching assistants does not meet the needs of disadvantaged or non-disadvantaged pupils. It does not help them to make sustained progress over time.
- Leaders have spent sports premium funding appropriately on training for teachers, resources for pupils and securing enthusiastic sports coaches. This has benefited the

pupils socially and emotionally, and has also supported their physical development.

- The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. The curriculum gives pupils a range of opportunities to explore cultures and religions that are different from their own. Pupils exemplify the British values of tolerance and respect, and are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The recently appointed acting headteacher has brought positivity to the school's workforce. Staff report that they feel supported and valued. They are all clear that the acting headteacher has made the school a much more positive place to work than it was in the recent past. As a result, expectations of staff and the climate for learning in the school are starting to improve.

Governance of the school

- The local governing board has recently lost some members, and has yet to recruit and retain a full team of highly skilled governors. While governors are committed to the school, they are not effective in challenging leaders and holding the school to account. They have not been effective in ensuring that the school has maintained a good standard of education since the previous inspection.
- Governors are currently being given appropriate guidance and support from the trust to improve their skills.
- The local governing board has limited knowledge of how pupil premium funding is spent, and has no understanding of the impact the funding has had on disadvantaged pupils' achievement.
- The new chief executive officer and members of the trust have supported the school through a period of great instability. They have nurtured the acting headteacher and have helped her to bring greater stability to the school. They welcome and respond positively to challenge, and understand what needs to be done to improve the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and members of the trust have ensured that there is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Checks made on newly recruited staff are thorough. Records relating to safeguarding are organised and rigorous.
- Staff receive appropriate safeguarding training. They are clear about the referral system if they are worried about a pupil. All staff use the system consistently and well, and they are highly committed to keeping children safe.
- Staff are vigilant and aware of how to spot the signs of radicalisation, extremism or female genital mutilation. New staff are swiftly trained and are given good guidance with regard to safeguarding.
- Leaders ensure that appropriate advice and support are secured for pupils who are at risk. The school have clear policies for involving parents.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- The quality of teaching is inadequate because it is inconsistent and leads to variable, often weak progress. The assessment system does not help teachers to understand what pupils know or what they can do. Therefore, planning and teaching fails to meet pupils' needs because it is not based on accurate or up-to-date information. The assessment system relies too heavily on test outcomes and, consequently, teachers are becoming de-skilled in assessing pupils' progress.
- Teachers are not confident in identifying and dealing with pupils' misconceptions during lessons. They are not skilled in assessing pupils' progress during lessons or over time. Feedback given to pupils is imprecise and does not subsequently help them to make progress.
- Teachers' ability to support pupils' progress is hampered by their lack of incisive knowledge about the individual pupils in their own classes. Pupils are taught English and mathematics in ability groups across year groups and key stages. This makes it very difficult for class teachers to know what pupils have achieved when in their ability groups. This hinders teachers' ability to then help pupils apply their developing reading, writing and mathematics skills when they return to their age group classes.
- The needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are not assessed accurately. Therefore, teaching does not meet their needs. Some pupils are taught by adults who care for them very well but show little understanding of how to support their academic needs or their special educational needs.
- Additional adults are deployed to teach groups of pupils of varying sizes across the school. They are not consistently secure in their subject knowledge of how to teach reading, writing and mathematics. The planning they are given does not adequately prepare them to teach. Occasionally, some adults display a negative, confrontational attitude towards pupils. This has an impact on the progress that they make.
- Leaders have supported teachers in developing the teaching of writing over the past year. As a result, pupils write for a range of interesting purposes and audiences. Some pupils across the school are writing at length and have made strong, sustained progress across the year. This is particularly true of the current Year 6. However, this improvement is not evident or consistent in all year groups.
- Phase leaders at the end of key stage 2 are developing an increasingly accurate view of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. They have supported teachers in improving the teaching of mathematics and this has led to some very early signs of improvement in pupils' progress in some year groups, particularly in Year 6. However, there are very few opportunities for pupils to develop reasoning skills in several year groups, particularly in Year 5.
- Pupils are resilient and have a positive attitude to learning, even when teaching is weak. They try to do their best and want to be successful learners. Despite this, teaching does not provide them with opportunities to learn from their mistakes and make strong sustained progress over time.
- Teachers in Year 1 have ensured that most pupils achieve the expected standard in the phonics screening check. However, the teaching of reading across the school does not effectively build on these skills. As a result, pupils' attainment in reading at the end of key stage 2 is well below the national average.

- Teachers ensure that pupils enjoy a range of subjects in addition to English and mathematics. Pupils talk confidently about the topics and subjects they enjoy, such as art, singing and sports.
- Teachers care about their pupils and are committed to improving their skills. They believe that the trust and the acting headteacher want to help them to do the very best that they can for pupils. They say that performance management helps them to develop their skills and is not designed to 'catch them out'.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils have a very positive attitude to their work and their school. They try hard and want to do well. They try to be successful in their learning even when teaching does not meet their needs.
- Pupils show a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe online. They feel valued in school and appear to be happy young British citizens who care for each other.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and well-cared-for at school and they know whom to go to if they have worries or concerns.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils' behaviour in the playground, in lessons and as they move around the building is good. They are polite and respectful to staff and to each other. They are friendly and welcoming to visitors.
- Pupils attend well and are committed to learning. Attendance is above the national average. No groups of pupils who are currently in the school are hampered by persistently poor attendance.
- Pupils behave well even when teaching fails to meet their needs. Low-level disruption in lessons is rare.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Pupils who leave the school at the end of key stage 2 are not prepared well for the next stage of their education. In 2016, Year 6 pupils who left the school, including those who were disadvantaged, made progress across key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics which was well below the national average. Progress in reading and mathematics was in the bottom 10% of all pupils nationally. Pupils, including those who were disadvantaged, achieved standards that were well below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Provisional information about the standards Year 6 pupils achieved this year indicates that there has been a slight improvement in their attainment in mathematics. However,

overall attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is likely to be well below the national average. Information shows that the attainment of disadvantaged pupils has improved in mathematics and reading but has very slightly declined in writing.

- Provisional data for 2017 indicates that the proportion of the most able pupils achieving a higher standard in reading at the end of Year 6 has declined, but has increased very slightly in mathematics and writing.
- Leaders' information about current pupils' progress does not give a complete or accurate picture. Progress seen in books does not match up to the assessment information presented by leaders.
- Pupils' books show that progress is variable and sometimes weak in writing and mathematics. There are pockets of stronger progress evident in key stage 1 and particularly in Year 6. However, this is not consistent. Books show that disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, make the same variable progress across the school as their classmates. They are not making the sustained progress needed to ensure that differences between their achievement and that of other pupils nationally are diminished. The pupil premium funding has not been used effectively to help disadvantaged pupils across the school catch up with all pupils nationally.
- The most able pupils are not consistently set tasks that challenge them or help them to achieve the highest standards possible. When they try to challenge themselves, teachers' feedback does not support them. For example, a key stage 2 pupil was told to 'stop making up your own sums'.
- In 2016, pupils who left key stage 1 achieved standards that were above the national average in writing, and in line with the national average in reading and mathematics. A higher proportion of pupils achieved greater depth in their learning than did so nationally. Disadvantaged pupils did less well in reading and mathematics than other pupils nationally. The school's information about the attainment of current Year 2 pupils indicates that standards have risen in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The proportion of the most able pupils who achieved greater depth in reading and writing has increased at the end of key stage 1, but has declined slightly in mathematics. Differences between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and others are diminishing in this year group.
- The proportion of early years children achieving a good level of development was above the national average in 2016. This was also true of the disadvantaged children in the cohort. Provisional information indicates that the proportion of children achieving a good overall level of development in 2017 has declined very slightly.
- The proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2016 was above the national average and has improved further this year.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the early years is variable. As a result, the progress children make from their varying starting points also varies. Teaching assistants are often responsible for teaching key early literacy or number skills to large groups of children. They are not given sufficient training or guidance to teach these groups effectively.
- The learning environment reflects all areas of learning. However, role play areas designed to entice children into learning are uninspiring. Some of them are untidy, uninviting and do not motivate children to apply their developing skills or knowledge. Water and sand trays are not presented in a way that motivates children to use them. They do not reflect the themes or topics identified in teachers' plans.
- 'Learning journeys' chart children's progress across the early years in an interesting and lively way. However, the progress identified in the journals does not reflect the poor quality of work or the weaker progress seen in other books. For example, books show that children who struggle with basic letter and number formation are often left to repeat poor skills for long periods, receiving no guidance or support to develop their skills.
- Leaders report that children enter the early years with knowledge and skills well below those seen typically for the age range. However, children's work suggests that this is not the case in all areas of learning. Assessment systems do not provide an accurate view of the progress that current early years children are making.
- In previous years, a higher than average number of children have achieved a good overall level of development when they leave the early years. However, this attainment has not been sustained in the work or progress that children who are currently in the early years are making.
- Children behave well and are kept safe in the early years. They are happy and play well together. Most relationships between adults and children are good. However, adults can occasionally be unnecessarily harsh or critical in their behaviour management. When this was brought to senior leaders' attention during the inspection, it was dealt with swiftly.
- Parents have disparate views about the early years provision. They have differing opinions about the quality of communication with teachers and leaders and about the quality of teaching.
- Leaders responsible for the early years are overgenerous in their evaluation of teaching. They focus solely on the strengths and do not ensure that monitoring helps adults to have absolute clarity in knowing how to improve their teaching skills.

School details

Unique reference number	136284
Local authority	Enfield
Inspection number	10031862

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.

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	929
Appropriate authority	Cuckoo Hall Academies Trust
Chief Executive Officer	Mr Marino Charalambous
Acting Headteacher	Ms Florinda Shamolli
Telephone number	020 8804 4126
Website	www.chat-edu.org.uk
Email address	office@chat-edu.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	26–27 June 2014

Information about this school

- Cuckoo Hall Academy is a much larger than average-sized primary school.
- The school is part of the Cuckoo Hall Academies Trust (CHAT).
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the sports premium funding and the evaluation of the spending of the pupil premium funding.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish because the school does not publish the recommended information regarding its use of the pupil premium and sports premium funding.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding is higher than average.
- The largest group of pupils are of Any Other White background. The next largest group

are of Black African heritage.

- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is higher than average.
- The school does not meet the current government floor standards.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all year groups at least twice. Observations were undertaken with the acting headteacher, the assistant headteacher, the inclusion manager, and phase and subject leaders.
- Inspectors met with two members of the local governing board and with members of the academy trust.
- Meetings were held with pupils to discuss their learning and their views on the school. Pupils took inspectors on a 'curriculum tour' of the school.
- All leaders met with inspectors to discuss their roles and the impact of their work.
- Inspectors met with a group of staff to hear their views on working at the school.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and talked to pupils in the lunch hall, in lessons and as they moved around the building.
- Inspectors examined a range of school documents including information on pupils' progress across the school improvement plans curriculum plans, attendance records and checks on the quality of teaching. They also examined school records relating to safety, safeguarding and behaviour.
- Inspectors scrutinised books to see what progress pupils make across a range of subjects.
- Inspectors took account of 26 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and of information gathered from discussions with parents during the inspection. They also took account of the school's own recent parent survey.

Inspection team

Ruth Dollner, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jonathan Newby	Ofsted Inspector
Simon Webb	Ofsted Inspector
Sara Morgan	Her Majesty's Inspector
David Lloyd	Ofsted Inspector
Shaun Dodds	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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