

Hazel Leys Academy

Gainsborough Road, Corby, Northamptonshire NN18 0QF

Inspection dates

5–6 June 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The school has made rapid improvements since opening as an academy. The principal is steadfast in her resolve to lead the school by focusing directly on the needs of the pupils. Her strategic approach is ably supported by a strong leadership team and the multi-academy trust.
- The staff team work well together and are all committed to helping to secure further improvements to pupils' learning.
- Pupils speak confidently about their school. They feel safe and are nurtured well to make progress, pastorally and academically. The staff know the pupils well and relationships between adults and pupils are strong.
- Outcomes for pupils have improved rapidly in recent years, at all key stages in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning helps ensure that the current progress made by pupils in all year groups is good.
- Children make a good start to their school lives in the early years provision. They benefit from a caring, spacious and stimulating learning environment.
- There is a broad and balanced curriculum across all subject areas. This is enhanced by a variety of extra-curricular activities.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are supported well and make good progress from their starting points.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who speak English as an additional language achieve well. They receive targeted support to help them make at least good progress.
- Pupils are encouraged to take on additional responsibilities. They are enthusiastic and diligent in fulfilling these duties. These help prepare pupils well for becoming positive citizens in modern Britain.
- Parents and carers are mostly supportive of the school. They recognise the improvements that have been made in recent years.
- Teachers overall challenge pupils to do their work to their best abilities and complete commendable work. However, on occasions, pupils are not moved on soon enough to more challenging work or helped sufficiently to improve their spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Although improving, the proportion of pupils who attain a higher level of understanding in their work is below that of schools nationally.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning, by:
 - ensuring that all pupils enjoy consistently effective teaching and learning, to build on the best practice found in the school
 - swiftly identifying when pupils are ready to move on to more challenging work, to help increase the rates of progress made during lessons
 - supporting pupils to focus consistently on the accurate use of basic literacy skills, to help raise spelling, punctuation and grammar standards throughout the school.
- Improve outcomes by ensuring that a greater proportion of pupils are working at a greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The principal was appointed shortly before the school became an academy. She shows much ambition for the school and demonstrates a clear vision for its future. The principal shows tenacity in keeping her focus on the needs of the pupils, which drives all her decision-making.
- School leaders know the school and its local community well. They have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and the areas that require further development.
- The strategic leaders work effectively with the middle leadership team. The middle leaders know their areas of responsibility well and play an active part in planning, monitoring and evaluating what is happening in school. This approach is helping these staff members to develop the experience and confidence to move on to increased responsibilities in the school.
- All of the staff are very positive about the school and the support they receive from leaders. Leaders focus staff development effectively, with individual and whole-school priorities being addressed. They are supporting staff to learn from each other and from the best practice evident in the school and across the multi-academy trust.
- The school has been strengthened by its membership of the Greenwood Academy Trust. The trust has established clear and thorough accountability systems, which have helped school leaders to secure much improvement since it opened as an academy. The senior education adviser visits very regularly and knows the school well. He provides a supportive, yet challenging, approach to all aspects of leadership and management. His work is enhanced by other trust colleagues who provide specialist advice and monitoring activities on a systematic basis.
- Leaders use the pupil premium allocation effectively. The funding is focused on supporting disadvantaged pupils in their lessons and pastorally. As a result, these pupils are now achieving well.
- The coordinator for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities has a clear oversight of the needs of these pupils and the provision they require. She works both closely and effectively with staff to ensure that these pupils receive consistently good support.
- The primary physical education (PE) and sport premium is being spent effectively. Pupils have opportunities to work with sports specialist coaches and to play and compete with other schools.
- The school has a broad and balanced curriculum. The work in pupils' books and displayed around the school demonstrates the wide range of activities across all subject areas. This includes many opportunities for pupils to apply their learning in a variety of contexts and to make links between different subjects when appropriate.
- The school has had recent success in achieving national recognition for the work that they do in helping pupils to consider their future careers and working lives. This is helping prepare pupils well for becoming positive citizens in modern Britain.
- Leaders endeavour to work effectively with parents and the local community. The

school plays an important part in the local area. For instance, pupils are currently working on an art project which will feature in a forthcoming festival in the town centre.

- While some minor inconsistencies remain in the quality of teaching and learning, leaders are working appropriately to diminish these. Senior leaders have identified that in some lessons pupils do not receive sufficiently challenging work to enable them to make even better progress.

Governance of the school

- Governance of the school is led by representatives from the multi-academy trust board. There is a clear structure to the governance, which helps ensure that all statutory expectations are met. A system of sub-committees has been established so that members' specific skills are utilised to provide a well-informed balance of challenge and support for the school.
- Governors receive detailed information from senior leaders on all aspects of school life. This includes a thorough analysis of pupil premium and PE and sport premium funding. As a result, governors demonstrate a secure understanding of the difference this additional funding is making to pupils' learning and progress.
- The governing body is supported by a local advisory council, which provides an additional link for local stakeholders, including parents and staff members.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils who inspectors met with told them that they feel safe at school. Staff keep the school site secure. The designated safeguarding leaders work closely with a wide range of external agencies, which helps benefit the welfare of pupils in and out of school, together with their families. The school fulfils their responsibilities with respect to the 'Prevent' duty. They give careful consideration to any national or more local concerns.
- The school maintains a thorough and comprehensive record of all documentation relating to safeguarding. Leaders and staff are supported well in carrying out their safeguarding duties by governors and a specialist manager from the academy trust, who visits and reviews the school's safeguarding arrangements regularly. Leaders ensure that all appropriate checks take place before adults work or volunteer in school.
- All staff members receive appropriate safeguarding training. Staff show a good understanding of the school's systems and their own responsibilities when reporting any concerns. The training is complemented by staff briefings on a weekly basis.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Leaders and teachers are committed to developing the quality of teaching and learning. They reflect well on the learning achieved and the progress that pupils make. As a result, teaching is effective and pupils make good progress over time.
- Leaders have established a coherent and appropriate assessment system, which is

understood by teachers and the trust advisers. Teachers and leaders review pupils' progress regularly, with prompt and timely support provided if any individual pupil starts to fall behind.

- Teachers demonstrate strong subject knowledge of the primary curriculum and plan a range of interesting and stimulating activities. Pupils enjoy their learning and are encouraged to reflect on, and evaluate, their work and that of their peers.
- Pupils' learning is strongest when the questioning by teachers and other adults helps to extend pupils' thinking skills and their understanding.
- Pupils are encouraged to take pride in their work. The work in pupils' books shows a consistently good standard of presentation. Teachers use the school's agreed approach to feedback consistently to help move pupils' learning forward. This is particularly apparent in the teaching of writing. A range of evidence was seen of pupils writing to a good standard in different genres and in different subjects across the wider curriculum.
- Additional adults work well in lessons, or when providing focused support to individual pupils or small groups. They work closely with class teachers and make a positive contribution to pupils' learning, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and those who are in the earlier stages of learning English.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are supported well, during lessons and in one-to-one or small group sessions. These pupils speak confidently about their work and are generally making good progress from their starting points.
- The teaching of phonics is effective. Inspectors saw how pupils' early reading skills are developed well. Staff's good teaching of phonics helps pupils prepare for more challenging reading tasks. Pupils also develop good skills to infer meaning from texts.
- Pupils read regularly at home and at school. They talk with enthusiasm about their class novels, which they read together and then complete a variety of related work. For instance, during the inspection Year 3 pupils were enjoying a drama activity, acting out a scene from their book, while Year 5 pupils were focusing their writing on the feelings and emotions of a character from their novel, and in Year 6 pupils were writing impressive monologues, from the perspective of a book character.
- Pupils take pride in completing regular homework tasks, planned across the curriculum. Parents commented positively about the homework club provided after school, which is well attended.
- Teachers mostly demonstrate high expectations of the pupils during lessons. However, this is not consistent. Learning is occasionally held back when pupils are being given work that is not sufficiently challenging, when staff ask pupils to repeat tasks unnecessarily, or give them work that is too difficult. Leaders are working effectively to redress these inconsistencies.
- The progress of pupils is sometimes hampered by teachers not reviewing pupils' basic literacy skills carefully enough. This results in that some misconceptions, spelling errors or simple grammatical mistakes not being addressed immediately.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school has developed a caring and nurturing environment. Staff take care to meet the differing needs of each pupil. They have a wealth of evidence which shows the support and guidance given to individuals. As a result, pupils feel happy and well supported. Pupils know what to do if they have any concerns at school. Pupils speak confidently about the process whereby they post notes to the learning mentor, which can be used to voice worries or to celebrate successes.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are warm and friendly. Pupils show respect for each other and are considerate of others' views.
- Pupils feel safe and know how to keep safe from a variety of risks, in school and in the wider world. From the youngest years onwards, pupils are supported to take sensible risks to help explore their learning environment. They show awareness of anti-bullying initiatives and receive regular guidance on how to use the internet safely. Pupils understand that they must tell an adult they trust if they receive a message or picture that worries them.
- Pupils are encouraged to take on areas of responsibility in each class, and across wider school life. These include monitor duties in classes; corridor monitors, who help to keep pupils' movement at break and lunchtimes calm and orderly; sports leaders and a very active school council. Pupils take these responsibilities very seriously and complete them with pride and diligence. There is an effective system for pupils to be able to voice their ideas and opinions to the school council and to the local advisory council.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is considered carefully by all staff. Leaders ensure that pupils learn about different faiths, cultures and local and national traditions. Pupils can speak about the range of activities undertaken and show understanding of the customs found in different countries. The school hall celebrates a rich variety of work that pupils have completed in relation to different world religions.
- A small number of parents responded to the Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, so a detailed analysis was not possible. However, parents who spoke to the inspectors informally were almost all positive about the care and guidance that their children receive. A typical parental view was, 'My experience with the school is 10/10.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Generally, pupils behave positively in lessons and conduct themselves well at playtimes and throughout the school day. They take pride in their school and their work. Pupils wear their uniform with pride, most especially those pupils in upper key stage 2 who rise to the privilege of wearing a tie.
- The school takes a proactive approach to improving the attendance of pupils and to reducing the persistent absence of a minority. The high priority given to tackling these issues is proving effective and attendance is now close to national averages. The proportion of pupils who are currently persistently absent from school is now below the

national average. Nevertheless, leaders are determined in their resolve to continue to work with parents to help ensure that they value the importance of their children's education even more.

- Some low-level disruption or inattention is apparent from a small number of pupils in some lessons. This is not typical and is dealt with effectively by staff.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Attainment has risen in key stage 1 over the last three years. In 2016, the proportions who attained the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics were below those typically seen in other schools nationally. Last year, these proportions rose considerably. The proportions of pupils attaining the expected standard were above the national average in all three subjects. The proportions attaining a greater depth of understanding also improved. However, these proportions remained a little below the national average. This year, teachers have assessed the proportions of pupils in Year 2 who have attained the expected standard across different subjects to be close to, or above, the current national averages.
- Attainment for pupils in key stage 2 improved last year. In 2016, less than one in three pupils attained the combined expected standard, and none attained the higher score. Last year, the proportions who attained the combined expected standard rose to almost a half of pupils, though this remained below the national average. Teachers have judged the proportions of pupils in the current Year 6 cohort who have attained both the expected standard and that of greater depth to be broadly in line with the national average.
- The progress that pupils overall in key stage 2 have made in the previous two academic years has been average in both writing and mathematics. Pupils' progress was well below the national average in 2016, and below average last year. Current school assessment information shows that almost all current pupils have made at least good progress from their starting points, in reading, writing and mathematics. Workbooks that inspectors scrutinised during the inspection confirm that pupils' overall progress, in a wide variety of subjects including English and mathematics, is good.
- The proportion of pupils in Year 1 achieving the expected standard in phonics was above the national average in both 2016 and 2017. This year it is at least in line with the current national average.
- Pupils of all ages read widely and often, showing fluency and comprehension. This reflects the high profile now being given to reading. As a result, the progress that pupils are making with their reading is showing considerable improvements when compared to previous years.
- The progress that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make from their starting points is good. The small numbers of these pupils in each year group make any trends or comparisons problematic to identify. The specific needs of each pupil are focused on well to help them move on quickly.
- Disadvantaged pupils, and those who are learning English as an additional language, are making progress overall which is at least good. They are knowing and remembering more because the curriculum meets their needs.

- Opportunities to provide the highest levels of challenge are not consistently taken, when pupils are ready to move on with their reading, writing or mathematics learning. Consequently, some pupils do not reach the greater depth of understanding that they are capable of.

Early years provision

Good

- The leadership and management of early years is good. The leader shows extensive knowledge of the provision, the children and national expectations. She works well with the other adults in the early years team, all of whom work with enthusiasm and insight. As a result, the children thrive in the early years and are well prepared for their move to key stage 1.
- Children enter the school at levels generally below those typically found in children of the same age. The proportion of children who achieve a good level of development has risen consistently in recent years and is now very close to the current national average. The very large majority of children make good progress during their time in early years.
- Children who have SEN and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language, are supported well in the early years. Their individual needs are quickly identified and addressed successfully. Consequently, almost all of these children make rapid progress from their starting points.
- There is a consistent approach to learning between the Nursery and Reception classes, with some joint activities taking place and the use of a shared outdoor area fully integrated. Transition between the classes and on to key stage 1 is effective, so the children quickly settle to the next stages of their learning. For instance, the Reception children were enjoying a trip to the town library during the inspection, so the opportunity was taken for the oldest Nursery children to spend the morning in their next classroom to help prepare them for the new school year.
- The early years environment is bright, spacious and welcoming. Children enjoy a wide variety of resources, with an effective balance made between activities being led by adults and those initiated by the children. The learning is active and purposeful, with clear links being made between the different areas of learning. The outdoor learning environment is exciting and makes children want to find out as much as possible. Leaders have plans to develop this area even further in the next academic year.
- The early years team has established strong liaison with parents. Each family receives a home visit prior to their child starting in both the Nursery and Reception classes. Parents speak warmly of the provision and contribute to their children's learning in a variety of ways, including providing photographs and notes for children's workbooks, volunteering in class or attending stay and play sessions.
- Staff take good care of the children and keep them safe at all times. The children cooperate well with adults and other children. Their behaviour is good.
- Adults do not always introduce a greater level of challenge to activities, when appropriate. This means that few children exceed the early learning goals.

School details

Unique reference number	141982
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10048106

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	250
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Mike Hamlin
Principal	Inga Bain
Telephone number	01536 202681
Website	www.hazelleysacademy.org
Email address	admin@hazelleysacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Hazel Leys Academy opened as an academy in September 2015. It is slightly smaller than the average-sized primary school. Pupils are taught in single-year-group classes, from Reception to Year 6. In addition, there is a Nursery for children from three years old.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage, with a quarter of pupils being from Any Other White background. The remaining minority of pupils originate from six other ethnic groups.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is much greater than that typically found in other schools nationally.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is higher than nationally.
- In 2017, the school met the government's current floor standards, which are the

minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, teaching and learning were observed in every class. This included carrying out joint observations with the deputy principal.
- Inspectors listened to pupils reading and talked with them about their learning and about their school.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of work in pupils' books.
- Meetings were held with members of the strategic leadership team, middle and subject leaders, the inclusion manager, representatives from the multi-academy trust, the governing body and the local advisory council.
- Inspectors took into account the nine responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and spoke with parents at the start of the school day. They also considered recent pupil and parent surveys carried out by the school.
- Seventeen responses to Ofsted's staff survey were considered, together with 18 responses to a pupil survey initiated by Ofsted.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including: the school's self-evaluation summary; the school development plan; the school improvement plan; records of leaders' monitoring and reports on the quality of teaching and learning; assessment information; minutes of governance meetings; and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Following the inspection days on 5 and 6 June 2018, Senior Her Majesty's Inspectors identified that some additional inspection evidence was required to confirm the inspection judgements. Roary Pownall and Deborah Mosley, Her Majesty's Inspectors, visited the school on 26 June 2018 to collect additional evidence.

Inspection team

Yvonne Watts, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Caroline Evans	Ofsted Inspector
Roary Pownall	Her Majesty's Inspector
Deborah Mosley	Her Majesty's Inspector

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