

Hamilton Academy

Priory Avenue, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire HP13 6SG

Inspection dates

31 October – 1 November 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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher and deputy headteachers have successfully improved the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school. Consequently, pupils make good progress in all areas of the curriculum at key stage 1 and in mathematics and reading at key stage 2.
- Governors have a strong understanding of the effectiveness of the school. Their work complements the school's improvement priorities.
- Safeguarding is a strength of the school. Leaders and staff ensure the physical and emotional well-being of all pupils. As a result, pupils are happy and enjoy learning.
- Pupils enjoy reading in all areas of the curriculum. Pupils read a broad range of high-quality texts and articulate their ideas about books very well.
- Pupils develop strong mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding. They are able to apply their understanding to a range of problems.
- Pupils study a broad, balanced and creative curriculum. Pupils develop into kind, tolerant and polite citizens.
- Provision in the early years is particularly strong. Staff have high expectations of children and provide a very good breadth of opportunities to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding of the world around them.
- Pupils develop strong skills in physical education (PE). Pupils learn how to live healthy lives very well.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities make good progress in most areas of the curriculum.
- The teaching of phonics is effective. As a result, the proportion of pupils reaching the national standard in the phonics screening check has been consistently in line with the national average for the last few years.
- Although disadvantaged pupils are making better progress across the curriculum than in the past, it is not strong enough to ensure that they attain at least in line with other pupils nationally.
- Pupils do not make strong progress or attain well in writing at key stage 2.
- Attendance for disadvantaged pupils is below the national average. A few pupils are persistently absent. This has an adverse impact on their achievement.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to raise levels of achievement in writing at key stage 2 by:
 - making explicit the links between reading and writing
 - ensuring that pupils consider the audience, purpose and text type when they are writing
 - ensuring that pupils know what they need to do to improve their writing.
- Improve support for disadvantaged pupils in key stage 1 and key stage 2 so that:
 - they develop stronger literacy skills, knowledge and understanding to help them access the curriculum more successfully
 - they make strong progress to attain at least in line with other pupils nationally in all areas of the curriculum.
- Continue to ensure that all pupils, parents and carers understand the link between attendance and academic achievement.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- In collaboration with his leadership team, the headteacher has led sustained improvements to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in most areas of the curriculum. Consequently, pupils' achievements at key stage 1 and key stage 2 have improved markedly.
- Leaders have led sustained improvements in reading through the study of high-quality texts and regular whole-class reading. Consequently, pupils enjoy reading and can articulate their understanding of texts well.
- Leadership of mathematics is particularly strong. Leaders have ensured that teachers and teaching staff provide strong guidance to pupils to improve their fluency and reasoning skills.
- Through regular monitoring and reviews of the quality of teaching and learning, leaders have an accurate view of the strengths and areas for improvement of teaching. Leaders provide effective support to meet the needs of teachers and teaching staff. Consequently, the quality of teaching is good.
- Subject leaders are enthusiastic about the development of their respective subjects within the curriculum. They provide specialist support to staff to ensure that pupils develop knowledge, skills and understanding in a breadth of subjects.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and creative. Leaders have ensured that pupils develop a strong understanding of the cultural and social opportunities of High Wycombe. Throughout the curriculum, pupils have opportunities to visit both urban and rural places of cultural and historic importance to strengthen their understanding and appreciation of British history and geography. For example, pupils in Year 6 visit Keep Hill Woods to develop their understanding of map reading in a forest setting.
- The leadership of early years is a strength of the school. Leaders have created a highly effective curriculum that immerses children in imaginative worlds within which they develop their language and social skills very well. As a result, children are very well prepared for the Year 1 curriculum.
- Leaders ensure that pupils develop spiritually, socially, morally and culturally throughout the curriculum. Pupils study a range of faiths and cultures and celebrate the traditions of many of their peers, such as Christmas, Diwali and Eid. Throughout the curriculum, pupils develop a strong appreciation and understanding of the cultural diversity of the school.
- Leaders have embedded very effective behaviour systems throughout the school. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary both in and out of the classroom. There is a harmonious learning environment.
- Leaders have a good understanding of the needs of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. This enables them to ensure that teachers support pupils well. Consequently, these pupils make good progress from their starting points and have equitable access to the curriculum.
- Leaders evaluate the impact of the PE and sport premium well. Through specialist PE

teaching, pupils make strong progress in a range of sports and exercises. Pupils also develop a strong understanding of the link between physical health, emotional well-being and healthy eating.

- The overwhelming majority of parents who spoke to inspectors or who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, are happy with the quality of education and care that their children receive at the school.
- Leaders evaluate the impact of pupil premium funding well. As a consequence, disadvantaged pupils make better progress in some areas of the curriculum than occurred in the past. In particular, most disadvantaged children reach a good level of development in the early years. However, leaders do not ensure that they make strong progress across all areas of the curriculum so that they attain at least in line with other pupils nationally at key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- Although leaders have ensured that pupils make strong progress in reading, they have not secured the same outcomes for pupils in writing.

Governance of the school

- Governance of the school is effective. Governors are committed to the development of the school. Through useful visits they gather relevant information to support their understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Governors raise pertinent questions about the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Governors' work follows the priorities established in the school improvement plan. Consequently, governors provide challenge and support in equal measure.
- Although governors scrutinise the funding for disadvantaged pupils, they do not ask demanding questions about how they apply their skills in all areas of the curriculum.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders are tenacious about ensuring the physical and emotional safety of pupils. They are highly alert to changes in pupils' behaviour and act swiftly and appropriately to provide the support required. Leaders provide support that often goes beyond their statutory duty.
- Leaders have created an ethos within the school whereby pupils feel safe and well cared for. Pupils told inspectors that they know who to go to if they have a problem and that they are confident that an adult will resolve any issues they may encounter.
- Appropriate checks are made on staff. All staff receive regular safeguarding training. As a consequence, staff are acutely aware of how to protect the pupils in their care.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Pupils and staff have very positive relationships, which create a harmonious climate for learning. Pupils are enthusiastic about the subjects they study.
- Staff work successfully as a team. For example, meetings about pupils' progress

involve a team of staff to identify pupils who may be struggling to access parts of the curriculum and to provide effective support where needed.

- Teachers' subject knowledge is strong in many areas of the curriculum, such as reading, mathematics, history and geography. In addition, specialist teachers of music and computing ensure that pupils develop strong knowledge, understanding and skills in these subjects in preparation for specialist study at secondary school.
- The profile of reading is high. Pupils enjoy reading a range of high-quality texts and are able to articulate their ideas with clear understanding. For example, pupils in Year 3 read 'Ug: Boy Genius of the Stone Age' with great enthusiasm and made explicit links with their study of history and geography.
- The teaching of phonics is strong. Pupils at key stage 1 read to inspectors with fluency and expression. Teachers make clear links between sounds and letters on the page, enabling pupils to develop strong decoding skills.
- The teaching of mathematics is a strength of the school. Teachers develop pupils' skills in mathematical reasoning and fluency well. Teachers also extend pupils' mathematical vocabulary. Pupils' books demonstrate that teachers routinely provide additional challenge to extend and consolidate pupils' understanding.
- Teachers give pupils frequent opportunities to discuss and debate their ideas. For example, in a Year 2 class pupils discussed in depth their understanding of the Hindu story of Sita and Rama. Consequently, pupils rewrote the story with clear understanding of the themes and characters.
- Teaching assistants provide effective support to meet the needs of most pupils, including pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Teaching and learning in writing is variable. Pupils develop strong grammatical knowledge but do not consistently apply this to their writing in all areas of the curriculum. Pupils do not consider the audience, purpose and text type when writing in all year groups. Consequently, pupils sometimes do not make informed language choices to improve their writing.
- Teachers do not provide effective support to disadvantaged pupils consistently well across the curriculum. Teachers do not address the weak literacy skills of some disadvantaged pupils consistently in all subject areas so that they can make good progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils support each other both in lessons and around the school. For example, Year 5 pupils support Year 1 pupils. Inspectors observed pupils helping each other to understand tasks and questions in a range of lessons.
- Pupils are highly inclusive. They respect other cultures and faiths. Throughout the curriculum, pupils develop critical knowledge, skills and understanding about a breadth of cultures and faiths. For example, one pupil told an inspector, 'I know everything

about Diwali. Our skin colours may be different but we all get on in this school.'

- Pupils feel valued and have opportunities to express their ideas freely throughout the curriculum. Pupils experience democracy, tolerance and free speech through the process of campaigning for election to the school council.
- Pupils are proud of their school and their achievements. Pupils' careful work in their books demonstrates this.
- Through the curriculum, pupils develop a strong pride in their local area. For example, pupils visit Hughenden Manor in Year 2 and Year 6 to explore the Victorian period and the impact of the Second World War respectively. Pupils also develop an appreciation of the rural landscape that surrounds High Wycombe through visits to the woods.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are kind, welcoming and respectful towards each other and adults. Pupils arrive punctually to class and are eager to learn.
- Pupils can define bullying accurately. Pupils state clearly that bullying is very rare, and staff intervene swiftly and effectively if it occurs.
- Although leaders have established a range of incentives and pursued legal routes, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils is consistently below the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils make good progress in mathematics at key stage 1 and key stage 2. This is because they develop strong fluency and reasoning skills and know what to do to strengthen their knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Pupils make good progress in reading and attain well at key stage 1 and key stage 2. Pupils read a wide range of high-quality texts and develop a strong understanding of how writers use language to shape ideas and characters. Pupils attained above the national average at the expected standard in 2018 at key stage 1 and key stage 2 in national tests. Pupils also attained above the national average at key stage 1 and key stage 2 at greater depth and the higher standards respectively.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make progress that is consistently above other that of pupils nationally in reading and mathematics at key stage 1 and key stage 2. Pupils are immersed in the curriculum with additional language support and consequently make strong progress.
- Pupils make strong progress in their phonics skills, enabling them to access the curriculum successfully. The proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in the phonics screening check has been consistently in line with the national average for the last few years.
- Pupils make rapid progress in PE due to specialist teaching that focuses on the skills required for a range of sports. Pupils respond well to the well-structured curriculum.
- Disadvantaged pupils made improved progress in reading and mathematics in 2018 at

key stage 1 and key stage 2. However, pupils have not made good enough progress to enable them to attain at least in line with other pupils nationally in all areas of the curriculum.

- Pupils at key stage 2 do not make the same amount of progress in writing as they do in reading and mathematics. Teachers do not consistently make explicit the links between the high-quality texts pupils study and their approaches to writing. Consequently, the quality of pupils' writing varies across the year groups.

Early years provision

Good

- The quality of provision in the early years setting is a strength of the school. The leader and her staff structure the curriculum to meet the needs of children very well. For example, activities are skilfully organised to ensure that children develop their language skills.
- Leaders and teachers help children to make rapid progress from low starting points in their learning. When children start the Nursery Class, most demonstrate skills and knowledge below what is typical for their age, particularly in communication and language. Through a well-structured curriculum and good teaching, children consistently reach a good level of development. In 2018, the proportion of disadvantaged children who reached a good level of development was above the national average.
- Through the curriculum, children are immersed in imaginative worlds where they develop strong language skills and understanding of the world they inhabit. For example, children discuss the world of work using computer keyboards and family life using dolls and other resources.
- Children form very strong bonds with adults and this helps them to feel safe and well cared for. Consequently, children develop swift and effective understanding of the importance of kindness and politeness in social situations.
- Teachers have successfully focused on the children's physical development. For example, children practise the way in which they grip pencils in Reception and apply this skill to writing in a range of mediums.
- Teachers read stories regularly to children and children have access to a range of texts with which they practise their early phonics skills. Children are highly enthusiastic about stories and listen very attentively.
- Leaders and staff ensure that children have access to a breadth of cultural experiences to extend their understanding of the world they live in. For example, an inspector observed children discussing with their teacher a planned visit to the local woods and the possible impact of autumn on the trees and animals.
- Children's work demonstrates that they make good progress in the acquisition and development of key skills, knowledge and understanding across Nursery and Reception. Leaders ensure that transition between Nursery and Reception and Year 1 is well structured and highly effective. Consequently, children are very well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Staff ensure that the early years provision meets all welfare requirements.

Safeguarding is effective.

School details

Unique reference number	137964
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10053287

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	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	639
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Paul Basham
Headteacher	Stephen Nunn
Telephone number	01494 522231
Website	www.hamiltonacademy.org.uk
Email address	hamilton1@bucksgfl.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	10–11 June 2015

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average primary school. It operates on two sites. The Priory Road site caters for children in Nursery and Reception and pupils in Years 3 and 4. The Hampden Road site caters for pupils in Years 1, 2, 5 and 6. The school gained academy status in April 2012.
- The proportion of White British pupils is well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below the national average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium funding is in line with the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of lessons, many jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors also made short visits to lessons and looked at pupils' books.
- Inspectors spoke with a range of pupils from various year groups. Discussions with school staff, including senior leaders, middle leaders and four governors, were held.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of school documents including the school's self-evaluation, information on pupils' outcomes and records relating to monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment, and behaviour and safeguarding of pupils.
- Inspectors took account of 64 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View alongside 61 text responses and 55 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Susan Aykin, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Janis Rogers	Ofsted Inspector
Graham Marshall	Ofsted Inspector
Shazia Akram	Her Majesty's Inspector

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