

# Hamford Primary Academy

Elm Tree Avenue, Walton on the Naze, Essex CO14 8TE

## Inspection dates

22–23 January 2019

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- The school has recently undergone restructuring to the leadership team and governance, resulting in a much-needed refocusing. However, new systems are at a very early stage. It is too early to measure their impact.
- Teaching quality is not consistent across the school. Pupils are not challenged enough in their work and do not fully understand what they have been taught. The attainment and progress of pupils in reading, writing and mathematics are too low.
- Leaders recently focused the curriculum on raising the standards in English and mathematics. Standards in other subjects across the curriculum are much weaker. There are limited opportunities for reading and writing in the wider curriculum.
- Disadvantaged pupils currently achieve standards well below their peers, although most have made good recent progress.
- In the early years, the outside area is not used effectively. Areas inside the classroom do not enhance children's understanding of the topics being studied. Writing standards in the early years are not as high as they should be.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are now making progress, but parents and carers are not yet involved enough in their children's education.
- Safeguarding is effective. However, current records of concerns do not include historical information to help identify patterns.
- Attendance has improved, although the level of persistent absence is still too high.

### The school has the following strengths

- The new leadership team has been in place for just over a term, but in that time has brought a renewed vigour, enthusiasm and much higher expectations of both staff and pupils. There are clear plans in place to improve the school.
- Recently, pupils have made more progress in English and mathematics across the school.
- Pupils in the specialist autism provision are well supported to make good progress in their education.

## Full report

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

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
  - developing leaders' roles at all levels
  - further engaging parents in how to support their children's learning
  - ensuring that leaders and those responsible for governance systematically measure the impact of planned initiatives, while considering staff workload
  - ensuring that the pupil premium funding enables all disadvantaged pupils to start to catch up with their peers.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning and, consequently, outcomes by:
  - ensuring that teaching across the school is of a sufficiently high standard for the needs of all pupils to be met
  - extending the use of reading and writing and, where appropriate, mathematics across the curriculum.
- Improve the quality of pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
  - raising attendance and reducing the level of persistent absence
  - ensuring that links between historic safeguarding records and the current system are made clearer.
- Improve teaching and outcomes in the early years by:
  - making full use of all opportunities for learning, both inside and outside, when children are choosing what to do in their play
  - improving the standard of children's writing.

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

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Since the last inspection, there have been many changes to the leadership of the school. School leaders and those responsible for governance did not maintain the quality of education. Attainment and progress dropped to unacceptable levels across the school.
- The new leadership team has been in post since September. In the last term, they have brought in enthusiasm, a passion for primary education and higher expectations of what pupils can achieve. They have a clear idea of the school's current strengths and weaknesses.
- Detailed, yet achievable, plans are in place on how to improve the school. However, these have been in place for less than a term and, consequently, there have been limited opportunities to measure the long-term impact of initiatives and whether they will create sustained improvement. Staff report in Ofsted's staff survey that workload can be an issue due to the many changes experienced over the years.
- Many members of the leadership team are new to their posts – some within the last two years – but many middle leaders took up their posts in the last few months. They are enthusiastic and have clear plans about what needs to be done. Senior leaders have started a comprehensive programme of professional development through staff meetings. Those who are early in their career feel well supported. However, there is currently little capacity within the school to give middle leaders time to work with other colleagues in class and so their impact so far has been limited.
- Multi-academy trust (MAT) leaders work regularly with new middle leaders and with teachers on developing their skills. MAT senior leaders are committed to supporting leaders and teachers to become highly effective in their roles.
- Leaders have overhauled the school's assessment system and now use standardised tests set by the MAT to assess pupils' attainment and identify gaps that need filling. Teachers say that they are more aware of pupils' prior attainment and individual needs.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is also new to post. She has made positive changes to the training of teaching assistants. She has started an increased focus on what support pupils receive, both in class and during interventions. However, the impact of this work is not yet clear. The progress of some pupils with SEND is not as good as it could be. The SENCo has identified that parents should be more involved with the planning for their children's education and how to support them, but this is not yet in place.
- Leaders have introduced enhanced provision for pupils with emotional and behavioural needs. This has had a positive impact on reducing the number of exclusions, although the long-term plans for pupils receiving this support to fully rejoin their normal classes are not yet clear.
- The new principal identified that the previous plans for the use of the pupil premium funding were not fit for purpose. New plans are in place and being implemented but it is too early to measure their impact. A small cohort of disadvantaged pupils in key

stage 1 are not making the progress they should with the support of this funding.

- The use of the physical education (PE) and sport funding is effective. Provision of specialist coaching encourages high-quality skills development. The majority of pupils access either lunchtime sports activities or after-school clubs.
- Before the inspection, the school website was not compliant with legislation. The minor changes needed were made before the end of the inspection.

## Governance

- Under the previous model of governance, since reviewed, the school did not make progress with raising standards.
- The MAT has recently reorganised its governance arrangements at both national and local levels. For the school, this has resulted in a much more rigorous system of both challenge and support.
- The chair of the local governing board is contracted by the MAT. The MAT uses governors who are all professionally involved in the trust or in education. This body conducts termly monitoring exercises of the school's operation. As a school with currently low standards, school leaders have regular face-to-face meetings with trust leaders. The MAT and governors are more aware than in the past of how the school is doing and prioritise central resources to support it as needed.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All appropriate checks are made on adults who are regularly in the school. The systems for recording these are checked by external auditors.
- The school's chosen systems for recording concerns are completed at an appropriate level by all staff. Any concerns about pupils are dealt with quickly and appropriately.
- Staff are well trained. They are clear about recent changes to safeguarding legislation and know what signs to look out for to keep pupils safe.
- The school moved to the current system of recording safeguarding concerns just over a year ago. There are no records of historic concerns or referrals in the new system and leaders should ensure that these are put in place immediately to identify any patterns over the long term.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- Over the last term, there has been an increased focus on high expectations. It is evident from pupils' books that some were coasting and, although they produced the work they were asked to, this was not always challenging them. Some pupils have made rapid progress in the quality and standard of work produced.
- Despite this recent progress, many pupils are not yet at the standard that they should be in English and mathematics. This is a result of inconsistent teaching across the school. Where leaders have identified that teachers need additional support to be able

to lead learning effectively, they have put this in place. It is too early to see the impact of this work.

- In English, teachers work as teams, planning sequences of learning. The grammar and punctuation parts of these lessons are not linked well to the writing work so pupils do not necessarily apply the skills they have developed.
- Phonics is taught in a consistent way across the school and most pupils from Year 2 upwards can decode effectively. Younger pupils who are still learning their sounds practise writing them daily in small groups led by an adult.
- There are times when pupils' presentation skills are not as good as they could be. In some classes, good posture for writing is not well supported by classroom organisation, including the resources and space provided.
- In mathematics, teachers follow a cycle of demonstration, practice, extension and asking pupils to prove or explain their thinking. Teachers have raised their expectations and pupils' books indicate that more of their work is now closer to the appropriate standard for each year group. However, some pupils say that they are not always challenged enough, and it is obvious from pupils' books in some classes that work is too easy.
- The wider curriculum is based around topics such as 'Muck, Mess and Mixtures.' Some clear links – particularly between science and English – are apparent, but the quality of pupils' work in the wider curriculum is well below that in English and mathematics. Leaders are aware of this. Some stronger teaching was seen in developing pupils' art skills, with drawing and painting based on both topic work and the work of famous artists.
- Support staff work closely with the teaching staff to help pupils with SEND access classroom work. A small team, which has been recently set up, works under the direction of the SENCo to support pupils with specific emotional and behavioural difficulties. Initial indications are that this has been successful in reducing the level of exclusions.
- The school is the site for a specialist resource base for pupils with autism spectrum disorder. These pupils are well supported in developing their social, emotional and educational skills. They take part in whole-school activities such as assembly, and some pupils join mainstream classes for parts of the school day.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Requires improvement**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils enjoy school. Most work hard in their lessons. However, pupils do not show sufficient pride in their work, to improve the quality and presentation.
- Most pupils feel safe in school. They know who to go to if they have any concerns. Most parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey – Parent View – agree that their children feel safe.

- Leaders have created a clear focus on developing fundamental British values – such as respect – in pupils. They know the school motto of ‘Happy, helpful, honest’ and can explain what this means. Displays throughout the school emphasise these three points. However, pupils are not always able to understand how these values might be applied in different scenarios, for example in an assembly when asked what values were shared between different religions.
- Pupils are respectful of each other and towards adults. They understand and accept any differences between themselves and their peers.
- Pupils are encouraged to be active and healthy. The school holds the enhanced healthy school accreditation. Pupils run a ‘golden mile’ around the playground daily. They take part in games at lunchtimes and all children from the early years upwards access specialist PE teaching. Science teaching in Years 5 and 6 has clear links to being healthy, with pupils measuring their heartbeat after different types of exercise.
- The breakfast club provided by the school is a welcoming early morning environment for those who attend. Pupils play in mixed-age groups and have warm relationships with the staff in charge.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- In the past, a high number of incidents involving physical aggression and/or bullying were recorded. The number of these incidents has rapidly decreased since the introduction of a new behaviour policy.
- Pupils can gain ‘Percy’ points for good behaviour, attitudes and effort and most are keen to do so. Pupils are clear about the consequences of poor behaviour.
- The small number of pupils that still present high-level disruptive or reckless behaviour are well managed and do not disrupt the learning in classrooms. All classroom staff have had training in positive behaviour management and leaders are aware of the need for staff who deal with the most challenging behaviour to have higher-level training.
- Pupils’ conduct in lessons is generally positive, although there are too many pupils who do not pay full attention to their teachers. Some behaviours for learning – particularly in the younger years – need developing to stop pupils shouting out over others or being very slow to get started on activities.
- In the past, attendance was very poor. This was particularly so for disadvantaged pupils, with over half of this group being persistently absent in the last academic year. Attendance rates have risen, and the level of persistent absence has significantly dropped, but this remains a key area for leaders to work on with families.
- There are a number of pupils on part-time timetables following a series of fixed-term exclusions. There are clear plans in place for these pupils to increase their timetables weekly. Some receive support in the new provision for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

**Outcomes for pupils**

**Requires improvement**

- In the past, outcomes have not been good enough. Recently, standards and the progress made by pupils have started to improve, but there is still much work to be done for all pupils to catch up and achieve what they are capable of.
- Progress made by pupils in reading and mathematics from the end of key stage 1 to the end of key stage 2 has been well below the national average for two years and was well below average for writing in 2018. The attainment of pupils in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 has been well below the national averages for the past three years.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 1 has been well below the national average for the past two years. The proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 has increased but is still below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils achieving a good level of development by the end of the early years increased to be in line with the national average in 2018. However, the proportion of children currently writing at a standard on track to meet the writing standard at the end of Reception is not high enough.
- Very few pupils achieved at greater depth in key stage 1 or the higher standard at key stage 2 in writing or mathematics in 2018. Slightly more pupils met this standard in reading at both key stages 1 and 2, but the proportions were still below the national averages.
- Leaders have identified that there is a gap between girls' and boys' achievement in some pupil groups. The overall gap is now diminishing.
- Pupils are now making better progress from their individual starting points. Across all year groups in reading, writing and mathematics, the proportion of pupils that the school assesses to be on track for the expected level for their age has risen in the last six months. This progress is evident in pupils' books across the school.
- The quality and quantity of pupils' work have also improved in the last six months, as seen in books during the inspection.
- Most pupils with SEND have made progress academically from their individual starting points. Teachers are clear that several pupils have also made strong progress in their emotional and social development. However, leaders acknowledge that pupils with SEND could make stronger progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils have previously achieved standards well below those of their peers. Most of these pupils in key stage 2 are now beginning to catch up, although, for many, there is a need for accelerated progress if this is to happen by the end of their time in the school. There is a small cohort of disadvantaged pupils in key stage 1 who are not making enough progress. Provision for these pupils should be a key focus of the external review of pupil premium funding.

## Early years provision

## Requires improvement

- The early years is led by an interim leader who – alongside most other leaders – is new to post. She is developing her leadership of the early years with support from a MAT leader.
- Staff are welcoming to the children, greeting them and their families at the gate each morning. They have a warm relationship with the children in their care.
- There are opportunities for children to practise number knowledge and demonstrate understanding in the activities that they choose, for example using number tiles to make patterns. This could be developed further in encouraging children to write numbers and record their findings in this play.
- Children are at an early stage of working together and, although they sometimes play in groups, at other times they will choose to play independently alongside each other. The classrooms provide a variety of learning spaces, although some areas – for example that for role play – could be further developed to link to topics studied and to encourage vocabulary development.
- The early years provision at the school has an attractive and well-resourced outside area. This is not used consistently well. During the inspection, it was not always available during times when children could choose what to do and, when it was, staff did not always make the best use of the resources in place. When it was used well, children were seen to engage in purposeful play, such as weighing and comparing different animals on scales, with adults asking questions to develop understanding.
- Children have specific group times each day with an adult to practise mathematics and phonics. This is well matched to the needs of each individual child and all children practise writing their sounds daily. Children's writing skills are not as developed as they could be – given this focus on reading – with very few regularly practising writing the basic sentences of which they are capable. Children's writing is often done on the carpet and this can make it harder for some to write letters as well as they could.
- Children in the early years are safe and safeguarding and welfare practices are of the same standard as elsewhere in the school.

## School details

Unique reference number	138072
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10058695

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	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	333
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Jack Boyer
Principal	Chris Joy
Telephone number	01255 673 415
Website	<a href="http://www.hamfordprimaryacademy.org">www.hamfordprimaryacademy.org</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:contactus@hamfordprimaryacademy.org">contactus@hamfordprimaryacademy.org</a>
Date of previous inspection	25 March 2014

## Information about this school

- This school is part of the Academies Enterprise Trust.
- Under the direction of trustees, a local governing board oversees the work of the school and another within the trust. The chair of this governing board is contracted by the MAT to provide specialist advice and support to school leaders.
- The school has a specialist resource base – The Ark – for pupils who have autism spectrum disorder. This is funded by Essex local authority. This provides support for eight pupils at a time, from age four to 11.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed learning in every class. Some of these observations were undertaken alongside members of the senior leadership team.
- A wide range of pupils' books were looked at by the inspection team.
- Inspectors met with representatives from the MAT. They met with senior and subject leaders. The 31 responses to Ofsted's staff survey were considered.
- A group of pupils met with an inspector. Inspectors also spoke to pupils informally in lessons and at playtimes. Inspectors heard pupils read.
- The inspection team scrutinised the school's website and a range of documents, including assessment information, the school's development plan and the school's self-evaluation.
- The 46 responses to Parent View were considered. The inspection team also spoke to some parents before school.

## Inspection team

Tessa Holledge, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Stephen Cloke	Ofsted Inspector
James Richards	Ofsted Inspector

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