

# Inspection of a good school: Hamstreet Primary Academy

Hamstreet, Ashford, Kent TN26 2EA

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Inspection dates:

22 and 23 February 2022

## **Outcome**

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Hamstreet Primary Academy is a nurturing school. Pupils feel safe. They say it is a caring place where staff treat 'every child as if they were their favourite'.

Pupils show a mature understanding of the school's values: 'positive, respectful, outstanding, understanding and determined (PROUD)'. Leaders make sure that any unkindness is dealt with quickly. Pupils celebrate each other's differences and get on well. They trust staff to help them if they have any worries. Leaders provide interesting opportunities for pupils to explore their interests or take on roles of responsibility. For instance, pupils visit France, go camping, learn how to play a musical instrument, join the school council or become a playground champion.

On the whole, pupils behave well. Most pupils understand and follow the school's rules. Disruptive behaviour is not commonplace, but it does happen. Leaders are supporting pupils who need help to regulate their behaviour.

Leaders' work to develop an interesting and well-sequenced curriculum has been successful but there remains more to do. Staff work with great commitment to help pupils in their learning; however, they would benefit from further training. This is to help pupils do better when learning to read and in some other subjects.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

Pupils, including children in early years, study a broad range of subjects. Leaders have done much work to put in place a carefully crafted curriculum. They are continuing to ensure that the essential knowledge that pupils need to learn is identified in some subjects. Leaders are developing further strategies so teachers can check how well pupils are doing in these subjects.

The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) has increased over the last year. Leaders are beginning to identify and provide for these pupils' individual needs. Trust leaders are considering how expertise within the trust is used to benefit pupils with SEND. Currently, some teachers and support staff lack the skills to skilfully support pupils with complex needs.

Teachers, including adults in early years, set tasks that challenge pupils to recall previous learning and help them make links in their work. In mathematics, teachers provide pupils with useful resources and equipment that help them. Children in early years explore number well, through counting one more or one less. However, in some of the other subjects, teachers do not regularly adjust the curriculum to meet pupils' needs. Not all subject leaders, including those who are new to their roles, have a clear enough oversight of how well pupils are achieving. These leaders must continue to receive sufficient training or support to help them perform their roles.

Pupils do not learn to read as well as they should. Leaders know that the school needs a more systematic approach to the teaching of phonics. Many of the books pupils read are not matched precisely to the sounds they learn. Teachers and support staff, many of whom are doing their best to support the weakest readers, have not had the training needed to help pupils make the progress they should.

Overall, classrooms are calm and purposeful. However, there are occasions when pupils lose concentration in lessons. This is when teachers do not focus clearly enough on what they want pupils to learn.

Leaders provide pupils with opportunities to develop as well-rounded individuals. Pupils look forward to 'master academy' afternoons, where they can learn to cook, participate in drama lessons or go to the forest school. In order to bring their learning to life, pupils go on interesting trips to places of historical interest. For instance, children in early years recently visited Bodiam Castle to learn about kings and queens. Pupils find out about different cultures and religions. They are encouraged to consider differing viewpoints so they can make informed opinions. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

To a certain extent, COVID-19 restrictions have not helped trust leaders successfully embed the recent changes to the management of the school. Staff morale is low. Teachers do not feel valued or supported. A high proportion of those who responded to the staff survey or spoke to the inspector during the inspection said that they would welcome more approachable and considerate leadership. This is so that they can undertake their roles effectively for the benefit of all pupils. Many parents, too, raised concerns about the quality of education, particularly parents of pupils with SEND. Currently, trust leaders' roles are not adequately defined. This means that trustees do not rigorously hold them to account. Although trust leaders, including trustees, show an understanding of what needs to improve, they now need to act quickly and decisively to do it.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The culture in the school is one of care. Most parents and staff feel that pupils are kept safe. Staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities and know how to report any concerns they may have. Leaders ensure that the statutory checks are made on all adults who work at the school. Leaders are swift to make referrals to outside agencies to ensure that pupils and their families receive the support they need.

The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to gain the knowledge and understanding to keep themselves safe when online.

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

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not yet fully identified the essential knowledge they want pupils to learn in subjects other than English and mathematics. Leaders need to implement quickly the necessary changes to the curriculum to enable pupils to learn and remember more.
- The school does not use a systematic approach to the teaching of phonics. This results in some pupils not learning to read as well or as quickly as they should. Leaders need to ensure that:
  - a systematic, synthetic phonics programme is used to teach early reading
  - all relevant teaching and support staff are provided with appropriate training to deliver the school's phonics programme as intended
  - the books that pupils read help them practise the sounds they learn in lessons
  - they check that staff follow the agreed sequence and methodology for the teaching of phonics and that pupils are making strong progress.
- Staff are not receiving the right support and training to help them build their expertise quickly and securely. This means that they are not as effective as they could be. Trust leaders should ensure that staff at all levels, including those who are new to teaching, receive appropriate professional development and support. This includes:
  - developing subject leaders' expertise so they are able to lead and monitor their areas of responsibility effectively
  - ensuring that staff have the required skills and knowledge they need to successfully support pupils with SEND.
- Leaders and trustees of ACE Learning Multi-Academy Trust have not successfully conveyed a clear vision for the school to all stakeholders. As a result, staff morale is low and many parents express concerns about the quality of education. Trust leaders should ensure they communicate their vision, clearly define trust leadership roles and execute an effective strategy to improve the school.

## Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Hamstreet Primary School, to be good in May 2013.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	140323
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	10211406
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	279
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Gail Spragg
<b>Headteacher</b>	Helen Glancy (Head of School)
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.ham-street.org.uk/">www.ham-street.org.uk/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	3 December 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is one of two schools in the ACE (Aspire, Create, Excel) Learning Multi-Academy Trust.
- In 2021, the trustees restructured the management of the school. A chief executive officer and an executive director were appointed to the trust. A head of school was appointed in January 2021. A special educational needs coordinator, who works across the two schools in the trust, was appointed in September 2021.
- The board of trustees is supported by a local advisory board.
- At the time of the inspection, the head of school was absent due to illness.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the deputy headteacher, phase leaders, staff and pupils.

- The inspector met with the chief executive officer and executive director of ACE Learning Multi-Academy Trust. The inspector met with two trustees, including the chair of trustees.
- A telephone conversation was held between the inspector and an educational consultant who is supporting the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also listened to some pupils read.
- As part of the inspection of safeguarding, the inspector reviewed the school's safeguarding arrangements. The inspector looked at relevant documents and staff recruitment checks.
- In order to gather the views of parents, the inspector considered 82 responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey and 81 free-text comments. The inspector also considered 25 responses to Ofsted's confidential staff survey and considered staff's views during the inspection.

### **Inspection team**

Frances Nation, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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