

# Inspection of Hamford Primary Academy

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

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Inspection dates: 15 and 16 November 2022

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Requires improvement

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

Pupils enjoy school life at Hamford Primary Academy. The school is a calm, safe and orderly place for pupils to learn and be with their friends. Children in early years settle in quickly when they join the school. They learn school routines and how to be kind to one another.

On the whole, pupils behave well. Adults teach pupils to respect each other's differences. Pupils know that some of their peers need extra support with their behaviour and 'this is okay'. There are people and places for pupils to go to if they are worried. Pupils trust adults to help resolve friendship issues or bullying. Pupils say that bullying is dealt with much better than it was in the past.

Pupils value the unique rewards for good attendance and behaviour, such as winning an opportunity to look after 'Harriet' the school hamster. Pupils compete to win a book in the 'reading raffle'. All pupils access a range of exciting school clubs and trips, for instance a trip to London to see the crown jewels. Pupils are proud of how they can help improve the school through being part of the school council or the 'junior leadership team'. They can, for example, choose new books for each classroom's 'book corner'.

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

Leaders, with support from the trust and school staff, have improved the school for the benefit of the pupils. Leaders have reinvigorated the school curriculum. They have thought carefully about what they want pupils to know. All pupils, including those in 'The Ark', access an ambitious curriculum which covers a broad range of subjects.

Curriculum plans lay knowledge out in a logical order. All plans start in early years and help children and pupils to get better in each subject over time. For example, teachers teach children in early years how to explore number and shape. This helps to prepare children for their mathematics lessons when they get to Year 1. By the time pupils reach older year groups, many are confident mathematicians.

While the majority of the curriculum is well planned, there are some areas that need further work. In these subjects, the curriculum is at an earlier stage of development. Leaders have refined the plans for these subjects to bring them up to the same high standard as the rest of the curriculum. The order in which topics are sequenced has improved, but more work needs to be done to ensure the plans have the right detail to support pupils' learning. Currently, pupils do not learn as well in these subjects as they do in other areas of the curriculum.

Assessment and checks in class closely link to the knowledge taught by teachers. As a result, teachers quickly spot gaps in what pupils know or if a pupil has fallen behind. They help these pupils to catch up.

Teachers plan engaging tasks that help pupils to learn. Occasionally, these tasks are not adapted enough to meet pupils' needs. This is because some teachers have not been trained in how to work with the most recent curriculum plans. As a result, some pupils struggle to understand and remember what is being taught.

Leaders ensure that pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are accurately identified. Staff are clear about what emotional, behavioural or curriculum help these pupils need. This means that, across the school, particularly in 'The Ark', pupils with SEND are well supported.

Pupils enjoy reading. The reading curriculum helps them to become confident, fluent readers. Leaders have chosen a range of engaging books which help pupils to learn about different cultures and genres. Children in early years quickly learn their letters and sounds so they are ready to learn to read. If a pupil falls behind with their reading, well-trained adults help them to catch up.

Leaders' high expectations of behaviour are mirrored by most pupils. Lessons are not disrupted as often as they were. Staff support the small number of pupils who find behaviour tricky to get their behaviour back on track.

There is an effective personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme. The PSHE programme teaches pupils about topics such as diversity, relationships and how to keep safe. Pupils have a good understanding, for example, of different cultures and religions.

Leaders' approach to improving attendance is working. More pupils are attending school much more regularly. A small number of pupils, including those with SEND, however, are still regularly absent. These pupils are not benefiting from the school's improved curriculum as well as they should be.

School and trust leaders, through the school's 'open classroom' initiative, are re-engaging with parents. This initiative helps parents to see the positive changes in the school. Leaders' plans identify what further work is needed to make the school even better.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding pupils is a priority for all staff. Staff know how to spot if a pupil is at risk of harm. There is a culture of 'it could happen here'. Staff record concerns about pupils, including their behaviour, promptly and accurately. Leaders respond quickly to these concerns. They maintain detailed safeguarding records. Leaders regularly monitor vulnerable pupils and ensure that they get the support they need from a range of appropriate agencies.

There are appropriate processes and procedures in place for dealing with concerns about adults.

Pupils are well taught about risks to themselves. They know, for example, how to keep safe online.

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

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

- A small number of curriculum plans still need further work to organise knowledge in a logical order. While leaders have started to make changes, this work is very recent. As a result, pupils do not recall knowledge as easily in these areas. Leaders should ensure all curriculum plans are well sequenced and implemented consistently across the school.
- Some teachers do not use the improved curriculum plans effectively. As a result, they sometimes choose activities that do not help pupils to understand and remember new knowledge. In these instances, pupils find learning more difficult. Leaders should ensure all teachers have the right training to enable them to teach all subjects consistently well.
- A small number of pupils, including those with SEND, are still persistently absent from school. They are missing out on their school experience. Leaders need to work more closely with parents to ensure all pupils, including those with SEND, attend school regularly.

## **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.

## **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>	138072
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10241104
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	356
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	David Hall
<b>Headteacher</b>	Teresa Cooper
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.hamfordprimaryacademy.org">www.hamfordprimaryacademy.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	22 and 23 January 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The head of school was appointed in June 2022.
- The school has an executive principal who oversees the school in partnership with the head of school.
- The local governing body was replaced with an academy council in September 2022.
- The school manages a specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND. This caters for up to eight pupils with autistic spectrum disorder. This is called 'The Ark'.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provision.
- The school runs a breakfast club.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: geography, history, mathematics, reading and science. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers and pupils about learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also considered the curriculum in other areas, for example religious education.
- The lead inspector met with representatives from the trust and the academy council.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in class, on the playground and in non-structured times, such as when they were in the canteen.
- Inspectors met with a range of leaders, including the school's special educational needs coordinator, the leader of 'The Ark' provision, and the leader of the early years provision.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation across both days of inspection. This included the school's behaviour records, bullying logs and attendance data.
- Inspectors considered the 77 responses made by parents to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including 76 free-text responses. Inspectors spoke to a range of parents in person and on the telephone. Inspectors considered letters and e-mail correspondence from parents and the school's own surveys of parents' views.
- To inspect safeguarding, the lead inspector met with the school's safeguarding leaders. Inspectors also looked closely at safeguarding systems, processes and records. They spoke with pupils, staff, academy councillors and trust staff about safeguarding.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil survey. Inspectors spoke to a range of pupils in different year groups across both days of inspection. Inspectors also considered the school's own surveys of pupils.
- Inspectors considered the 45 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff.

## **Inspection team**

Damian Loneragan, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Stephen Cloke	Ofsted Inspector
Nicola Shadbolt	Ofsted Inspector

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