

Hamford Primary Academy

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

Inspection dates

25–26 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage because teachers plan learning well and make good use of the inside and outdoor areas.
- Between Years 1 and 6, pupils make good progress from their starting points. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is average and rising because of good teaching.
- Staff carefully check pupils' progress and provide extra help for those who may be falling behind.
- Pupils' behaviour is good in and around the school. They are cared for well and say they enjoy their learning, like their teachers and feel safe. Parents and carers also say that their children are safe at school.
- Pupils are very well-mannered and courteous. They are proud of their school and of the work they do to help others, including their fundraising for various charities.
- Leaders, including governors, have had a positive effect on improving teaching and achievement. The school is well placed to improve further.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always ensure activities are pitched at the right level for pupils of above-average ability or check learning frequently enough during lessons.
- Achievement in mathematics is not as strong as in English because pupils are not consistently told how to improve their work and are not given enough problem-solving tasks.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 22 lessons, taught by 11 teachers. One of these lessons was observed jointly with the principal.
- Samples of pupils’ written work were analysed. Inspectors listened to some pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 reading.
- Meetings were held with school staff, a group of pupils, governors and a regional director from the Academies Enterprise Trust.
- Inspectors took account of the 52 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), 26 questionnaires completed by staff and a letter from a parent. They also spoke to several parents informally at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors looked at a range of evidence including: the work in pupils’ books; monitoring records; the school’s own data on pupils’ progress; records of governing body meetings; and policies, procedures and records relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Richard Blackmore, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Ian Hart

Additional Inspector

Jennifer Carpenter

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a slightly larger than the average-sized primary school.
- There are 10 classes; eight are mixed-age classes.
- The school became an academy in April 2012 and is sponsored by the Academies Enterprise Trust.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is higher than the national average. The pupils premium is additional funding allocated to the school for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children looked after by the local authority or those with families in the armed services.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is slightly below average.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by making sure that:
 - lessons are always pitched at the right level for pupils of above-average ability
 - pupils' learning in lessons is checked often enough to ensure all pupils are making consistently good or better progress.
- Raise achievement in mathematics by ensuring that:
 - marking in mathematics consistently tells pupils how to improve their work
 - pupils are given more problem-solving tasks that encourage them to use and apply their skills.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Different groups of pupils making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school. This is because pupils have good attitudes to work and they are usually challenged in lessons. This includes disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, who are supported well.
- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities below those typical for their age. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage because teachers provide a range of interesting activities that motivate and interest pupils, particularly within the 'learning jungle'.
- The 2013 national test results showed that pupils left Year 6 a term behind the national average. This was because their progress was too slow. Pupils are now making much faster progress, especially in reading and writing. Inspection evidence, including analysis of pupils' work and the school's own detailed and accurate assessment records, shows that progress is now good. Pupils in the current Year 6 demonstrated much improved skills in lessons and in their written work, and their attainment is now average.
- The progress the pupils make in Key Stage 2 has continued to accelerate since the monitoring visit by Her Majesty's Inspector in June 2013. Pupils are now making good progress and are increasingly making up for their past underachievement.
- Pupils did not do quite as well in the phonics (letters and the sounds they make) screening check in Year 1 in 2013, as they did in 2012. As a result leaders have ensured there is a rigorous focus on pupils' understanding of phonics.
- Pupils' progress in reading and writing has accelerated markedly since September 2013 building on the improvements in results at the end of Year 2, last year. These improvements are the result of good teaching of early reading skills and more precise checking of pupils' understanding of the meaning of new words.
- Progress in mathematics is not as strong as in reading and writing because there are too few opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills through solving problems. Leaders are aware of this and supporting staff well to ensure pupils apply these skills regularly and in different subjects.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. This is because their needs are identified early and they are provided with one-to-one or small group teaching to help them catch up. Their progress is checked closely and further support provided if necessary.
- The most-able pupils throughout the school have made rapid progress over the past year because specific activities have been arranged to stimulate faster progress among this group of pupils. However, there are times when their progress slightly slows during lessons because tasks are too easy.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium achieve well. In the 2013 national tests these pupils in Year 6 were over a term behind their classmates in reading and mathematics and two terms behind them in writing. This gap is closing quickly because the progress made by the pupils

receiving extra help is as fast as that of other pupils in school, and sometimes faster.

- The school uses the additional primary sport funding it receives to employ a specialist physical education teacher who is coaching pupils in different sporting activities and providing professional training in physical education for staff. This has led to a greater number of pupils taking part in team games and entering local sporting events against other schools, and a rise in pupils' physical skill levels.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is regularly good throughout the school, with some that is outstanding. Teachers have good subject knowledge, develop positive relationships with pupils in lessons and give them opportunities to discuss their ideas with each other and to work together in groups. Classroom routines are clear and this supports pupils' positive attitudes to learning.
- Teachers are held to account for the progress that pupils are making through regular meetings with the principal and senior leaders. The performance over time of every pupil is carefully checked, and any pupil with additional learning needs is supported effectively, ensuring that all pupils achieve well.
- Teachers and other adults create a positive climate for learning both in lessons and in the learning environment. Pupils are interested and engaged with learning and feel confident to do their best.
- Teachers redesign their questions quickly if pupils are not succeeding or finding questions too simple, to help them learn well. Skilled and versatile teaching assistants give extended support to pupils who need additional help to complete tasks. However, staff do not check often enough how well pupils are doing in some lessons to pick this up and do something about it and this limits the progress they make.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage skilfully blends activities which encourage children to tackle tasks on their own and build confidence with those led by adults. This promotes good progress. Adults provide a stimulating choice of indoor and outdoor activities that challenge children because they provide opportunities for children to apply literacy and numeracy skills.
- The teaching of reading and phonics is good. Focused phonics sessions make sure that pupils learn and use early reading skills well. Features of these sessions are teachers' subject knowledge, their clear instructions and their awareness of the need to keep lessons moving along quickly so interest is maintained.
- While teachers generally plan lessons in some detail, teaching is not always pitched at the right level. Sometimes tasks given to pupils, particularly to those of above-average ability, are too easy. This means that they spend time completing work they can already do.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly. However, marking is better in writing than in mathematics. This is because marking in mathematics does not consistently provide pupils with feedback about what they have to do to improve their understanding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are almost always fully absorbed in their learning. Pupils have positive attitudes to school and enjoy their lessons. They show good manners to staff and visitors, with pupils of different ages cooperating in lessons and playing well together in the playground. Occasionally, a few find it hard to attempt work that is challenging without encouragement and adult support.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils are aware of all forms of bullying and say that it is rare. Pupils know what to do if there is a problem and confidently say that it would be dealt with fairly and quickly.
- Pupils' behaviour is managed successfully and the school has effective systems in place to ensure pupils' safety. Teachers ensure that pupils understand what is expected of them and know where to seek help if they have any worries. As a result, pupils feel safe and happy in the school.
- Pupils are proud of their school and appreciate the opportunities they are provided with. They say that they are treated fairly and are allowed to have their say, for example, through the active and effective school council. They say that they are listened to and supported well by their teachers and teaching assistants.
- Attendance is average but improving quickly because pupils enjoy school and effective strategies are used to encourage good attendance and punctuality.

The leadership and management are good

- The inspirational and forward-thinking principal, supported by staff, knows the school well and sets high expectations for staff and pupils. The school's view of its own performance is highly accurate in identifying where achievement is best and where good teaching is taking place. Leaders are aware of where further improvements are needed and have implemented plans to continue to accelerate pupils' progress.
- Plans to improve the school have focused effectively on improving the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. This knowledgeable leadership team, including the school's subject leaders, has developed a rigorous system for sharing lesson observations and reviewing of pupils' books and this has resulted in improved classroom practice. The performance management system ensures that only those teachers who meet required standards move up the salary scale. The principal does not avoid difficult conversations about the quality of teaching if these are necessary.
- The leadership of teaching is good. Leaders continually provide opportunities for teachers to improve their skills so that pupils make good and rapidly improving progress. No opportunity is wasted. During the inspection teachers attended training before lessons began. The impact of this training was immediately evident in their teaching. Recent training has improved the quality of the teaching of phonics across the school. This is speeding up pupils' progress in both reading and writing.
- Effective safeguarding systems meet statutory requirements and policies are scrupulously applied, with governors taking an active role in training for safer recruitment. Leaders promote equal opportunities and are assiduous in tackling any discrimination that may arise.
- The curriculum meets the needs and interests of pupils, and supports their spiritual, moral,

social and cultural development very well. This development is promoted well through interesting lessons, classroom environments and displays. Pupils work well together in practical activities and discussion. They learn to listen to each other and respect each other's suggestions.

- The academy sponsor has provided good support for the school, including checks on the quality of teaching and help with self-evaluation. It has helped school leaders understand the issues facing the school and to implement successful strategies to make swift improvements.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors offer good support and challenge, working closely with the principal to develop the school, improve achievement and strengthen the quality of education. The governing body has a good understanding of the quality of teaching and school's performance from reviewing the school's own and published data. This means that it is able to ensure that school funds are directed where they are needed most. The governing body has a good knowledge of how the pupil premium funding is allocated, including additional staffing and enrichment activities to benefit those pupils for whom it is intended. Governors know that this is having a positive impact on pupils' progress. The governing body ensures that the management of staff is carried out effectively and only good performance is rewarded. It is well informed about the performance of teachers and makes sure that the quality of teaching continues to improve. Governors make regular visits to classes and regularly challenge teachers to show them how much progress pupils have made since their last visit. They regularly seek pupils' views of the school.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	138072
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	399907

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	299
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kathy Roebuck
Principal	Benedick Ashmore-Short
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01255 673415
Fax number	01255 851070
Email address	admin@hamfordprimaryacademy.org

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