

Cuckoo Hall Academy

Cuckoo Hall Lane, Edmonton, N9 8DR

Inspection dates 26–27 June 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.

- Pupils achieve well and make good progress from their different starting points, improving their knowledge and understanding. Children make rapid and sustained progress in Nursery and Reception classes and are prepared particularly well for Year 1.
- Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those supported through additional funding make good progress. Teachers explain tasks clearly to pupils so that they quickly understand what to do.
- Attendance is high. Pupils behave well. They feel safe in school, are considerate of one another and very welcoming to visitors.
- Parents and carers appreciate the strengths of the academy, particularly how happy their children are and how well they are looked after.
- Leaders and managers have high expectations of staff and high aspirations for pupils. They have introduced rigorous systems for checking on pupils' academic progress this year. These are proving very successful in targeting support where needed. The academy is improving rapidly.
- Staff work successfully with other schools in the academy trust and share expertise. Governance is effective. Governors understand their roles and check pupils' achievement regularly.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Some of the most able pupils do not always make rapid progress when teachers do not set them work that is difficult enough.
- A minority of pupils are not encouraged sufficiently to make improvements to their work following teachers' feedback and marking.
- Some administrative errors in safeguarding procedures require correction.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 33 part-lessons, many jointly with senior leaders.
- They listened to pupils reading and scrutinised samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation relating to the school, including policies, records relating to safeguarding, the academy's self-evaluation and its improvement plan. They also looked at information on pupils' progress and attainment, and records of monitoring of teaching and learning.
- Inspectors held discussions with a range of leaders, members of the governing body, a number of parents and carers, and with pupils.
- The inspection team took account of informal discussions with parents and 287 parents' questionnaires which included written comments as well as the Ofsted online survey (Parent View).
- Inspectors considered 76 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Peter McGregor, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Pervina Saunders	Additional Inspector
Evelyn Davies	Additional Inspector
Robin Gaff	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The academy is much larger than the average sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for additional funding known as the pupil premium, which is government funding to support the learning of looked after children and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average.
- Most pupils are from minority ethnic groups.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is well above that found nationally. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also well above the national average.
- The academy is part of a small multi-academy trust, the Cuckoo Hall Academies Trust (CHAT).
- The headteacher of Cuckoo Hall joined the academy in the autumn term of the current academic year.
- In the previous academic year, the academy did not meet the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Cuckoo Hall converted to become an academy in September 2010. When the predecessor school, Cuckoo Hall School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching from good to outstanding by:
 - setting work at the right level for the more able pupils when taught in the various ability groups, so that their learning progresses more rapidly
 - ensuring that pupils respond to staff feedback and advice in order to improve their work.
- Governors and the headteacher must ensure that administrative errors in safeguarding procedures are corrected.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage is excellent. Children enter the Nursery and Reception classes with knowledge and skills well below that expected for their age. Through highly effective teaching and learning activities, they improve rapidly. Many of the children's language skills are low on entry because English is not the first language at home. Excellent phonics (the sounds that letters make) and other language teaching ensure that they are extremely well prepared for their Year 1 work.
- An above average proportion of pupils in Year 1 have passed the phonics screening check for the last three years. This year, the results of those eligible for additional funding were better than those of other pupils. Pupils' standards in Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics are above average and have been for some years as pupils build effectively on their earlier learning.
- In 2013, pupils' progress and attainment fell in Year 6 to below the government's floor standards. The proportions of pupils making or exceeding expected progress were too low with the result that their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was also lower than it should have been. This academic year, substantial progress has been made in improving teaching and learning and pupils' achievement is better.
- In 2013 in Year 6, pupils eligible for additional funding were five months behind the others in mathematics. They were seven months behind in reading and nine months behind in writing. The gap in 2013 narrowed in mathematics compared with 2012, but was slightly wider in reading and writing. Gaps in attainment have been considerably reduced this year due to good teaching and support.
- Pupils eligible for additional funding now make better progress in both key stages as a result of carefully targeted support. This support is based on rigorous and frequent assessments in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Those pupils for whom English is an additional language make the same good progress as others in their classes, as do those from minority ethnic groups
- Pupils enjoy reading and develop their skills effectively throughout the academy. Younger pupils use their knowledge of sounds that letters make confidently. Older pupils enjoy reading. They read with fluency and expression. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. Senior leaders check individuals' performance very carefully. Teachers give support to pupils who are not making the progress that they should to help their standards improve.
- A minority of the most able do not achieve as well as they could when teachers do not set them hard enough work.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching is good overall. It is not outstanding because it has not ensured pupils achieve well enough in reading, writing and mathematics over a three year period.
- Teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes is excellent. Interesting activities capture children's attention. Well-established routines successfully promote working relationships between children and the adults. Support for individual pupils boosts learning.
- Regular reading helps pupils to increase their knowledge of words. Pupils are encouraged to spell and use punctuation and grammar accurately in writing tasks. Pupils achieve well in mathematics because teachers engage their interest and build on their previous learning. They make good progress because teachers give them time to practise and apply what they have learned.
- Pupils talk enthusiastically about their learning, for example in science, art and history.
- Teaching assistants are well prepared and support pupils' learning effectively.

- A minority of the most able pupils make less academic progress than they could when teachers set them insufficiently difficult work. This is because teachers' expectations of the most able are not always high enough.
- Teachers mark work thoroughly. They make clear to pupils how they can improve. However, when too few pupils respond to their feedback, the effect of this guidance on raising achievement is reduced.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are polite and courteous. Working relationships between staff and pupils are strong. Staff make their expectations of behaviour consistently clear. When children join the Early Years Foundation Stage they learn what is and is not acceptable behaviour. Older pupils build on this successful start. They conduct themselves well in lessons and are enthusiastic to learn.
- Pupils are orderly and respectful. Very rarely there is some silliness as pupils move around the academy, but most pupils maintain their good behaviour at all times.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. Their attendance is well above the national average for primary schools. Staff make clear to the whole school community the importance of regular attendance. Pupils' high attendance is celebrated in newsletters. Punctuality has been a development point for the academy and is good. Pupils take pride in their appearance and in the environment. There is no litter around the academy and pupils' work on display shows attention to detail and a drive for high standards.
- Attitudes to learning are positive because lessons are interesting and enjoyable in a wide range of subjects. Pupils come prepared to learn, wanting to succeed, and they settle quickly to carry out what they are asked to do.
- The academy's work to keep the pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe and this view is supported by the vast majority of staff and parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire for parents and carers, and the academy's own survey of parents' and carers' views.
- Pupils report confidently that any form of bullying is very rare. They say occasionally pupils use unkind language. It is dealt with quickly and effectively, as the school's records show. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of keeping themselves safe, for example when using the internet.

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders are ambitious to drive further improvements. They have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They have led decisive action to tackle underperformance. When standards in English and mathematics in Year 6 fell in 2013, leaders identified priorities for action to bring about improvement this year. The school's leaders have introduced an effective system to check pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Where underachievement of individuals or groups is identified, targeted support is provided to help them catch up.
- Teaching is checked regularly by the senior leadership team. In the past, some checks on teaching did not identify precisely enough where improvements were needed.
- Training and support for teachers have a high priority and are appreciated by staff. Newly qualified teachers spoke enthusiastically about how they had improved their teaching skills as a result of the support they have been given. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes have an excellent programme of work tailored to their needs. This focuses successfully on developing their social, communication and other skills. Pupils enjoy interesting subject work in Years 1 to 6. An extensive range of after-school clubs provided by members of staff enhances their learning further.
- Senior leaders work in close partnership with leaders and managers in other schools within the

academy group. They share expertise and support each other.

- 'Circle time', personal, social and health education lessons, assemblies, playground friends and the school council all contribute to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Subject leadership is strong, as is the management of provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Roles are clearly understood and implemented well.
- The additional funding the academy receives for sports is used well. Specialist coaches help staff to develop pupils' skills so that they reach higher attainment. Pupils were confident to perform dance routines in assembly and demonstrated good skills.
- Staff are well trained in, and have a very good knowledge of, child protection and safeguarding issues. Some administrative safeguarding requirements have not always been as comprehensively documented as they should have been and leaders have not ensured that all requirements are met. However, during the inspection, substantial improvements were made to these procedures.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors share the senior leaders' determination to see the school succeed. They challenge the school's leaders to ensure that the education provided is highly effective. They know the academy well and how its performance compares with that of other schools. Governors know the quality of teaching and understand the link between teaching performance and pay. They are aware of the teaching issues that caused underachievement last year and of what leaders have done to address underperformance and set ambitious targets. They check the information the school gives them about pupils' progress. They know that substantial improvements have been made this year in the progress and attainment of older pupils. The governing body makes sure the academy has a balanced budget. Governors check that additional funding is spent appropriately. They attend training and are keen to keep up to date. Although they can demonstrate that pupils are not at risk, governors have not carried out their duty with sufficient diligence to ensure that administrative safeguarding requirements have been documented comprehensively.

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	136284
Local authority	Enfield
Inspection number	441105

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	895
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andry Efthymiou
Headteacher	Sharon Ahmet
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	020 8804 4126
Fax number	020 8804 2739
Email address	sahmet@chat-edu.org.uk

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