

Quarry Hill Academy

Bradleigh Avenue, Grays, Essex RM17 5UT

Inspection dates	22–23 June 2016
Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires Improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. Together with an extremely strong leadership team he has brought about significant improvements since the previous inspection.
- Senior leaders and governors have high expectations of pupils. This is shared by a highly skilled team of staff. They plan challenging work that allows all pupils to progress exceptionally well.
- By the end of Year 6 the progress for all groups of pupils in reading, writing and mathematics is significantly above average.
- Pupils' written work is of a very high standard. There are many opportunities for pupils to write at length and in detail across a range of subjects.
- Attainment in phonics (the link between letters and sounds) is significantly above average.
- By the end of year 6, the progress disadvantaged pupils make is better than other pupils nationally.
- Pupils enjoy school and love learning. Pupils show high levels of respect towards adults and one another. It is a happy school in which pupils feel extremely safe.
- Attendance has significantly improved and is above average.
- The curriculum is very well planned. It promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well.
- Early years provision is good. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development is increasing rapidly. However, not all teachers are using assessments to set activities that challenge children enough or develop their understanding of the wider world.
- Parents are involved in the initial assessment of their child when they enter nursery. However, this is not the case on entry to Reception where opportunities to visit and talk to teachers are limited.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve provision in the early years to outstanding, by:
 - ensuring that all teachers use precise assessment information to provide appropriately challenging learning activities for all children
 - providing more activities that enable children to learn about the wider world
 - giving parents more opportunities to be involved in the initial assessment of their children on entry to Reception.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- The headteacher has created a culture of success. This culture reflects the school motto 'We aim high, fly high'. As a result, pupils learn in a caring, happy environment and make excellent progress.
- The headteacher has quickly established a team of staff who work exceptionally well together and who share senior leaders' high expectations. All staff agree that the school has improved since the previous inspection. They are proud to work in the school.
- Senior leaders have ensured that staff are highly skilled and that teaching is of the highest quality. This has been achieved by using a range of information to judge the quality of teaching. When aspects of teaching that require improvement are identified, staff are provided with individualised high-quality training and support in order to improve their practice. Staff value the training they receive and as a result teaching has led to outstanding achievement.
- Leaders ensure that all pupils achieve at the highest level. They meticulously monitor the progress of pupils and quickly identify those who are falling behind. Support for these pupils is quickly put in place and they rapidly catch up with their learning.
- The quality of subject leadership has also improved. Subject leaders ensure that the curriculum is interesting and provides the opportunity to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding. They carefully monitor pupils' progress and work in exercise books, and visit lessons to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, outcomes for pupils have rapidly improved across all subject areas. Senior leaders hold subject leaders firmly to account for the standards within their subject.
- The pupil premium funding has been used very well to ensure that disadvantaged pupils are making exceptional progress. Additional teachers have been employed to support pupils both in the classroom and in small groups. In addition, the money is used to provide speech and language therapists, train staff and to employ a family support worker. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils has improved from below to above average.
- Very effective use is made of the primary physical education and sports grant. Sports coaches provide an excellent range of activities for pupils. The funding provides the opportunity for pupils to enter into local competitions against other schools, take part in a very wide range of after school activities and Year 6 pupils who are members of the 'sport crew' plan and run activities for younger pupils. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their sports lessons and the number who attend after-school activities is high.
- The curriculum is very well planned. It ensures that pupils make excellent progress in both English and mathematics. However, it goes beyond this as it provides pupils with interesting and stimulating topics which develop their knowledge in a range of subjects. Work in history, geography, religious education and science is of a high standard. Teachers ensure that topics are interesting and provide opportunities for pupils to develop their confidence in using mathematical and writing skills.
- Interwoven through the school's curriculum are opportunities to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils enjoy the music, art and technology lessons which provide the opportunity to develop their creativeness. The curriculum is supplemented with a range of high-quality visits and trips; for example: the Tower of London, Thameside Theatre, the zoo and the school council's visit to Parliament. The school holds special curriculum days, such as the celebration of National Cultural Diversity Day where pupils enjoyed a variety of talks and opportunities to learn traditional dances and create artwork.
- The school has benefited from being part of the Catalyst multi-academy trust as they have been able to use the expertise of other schools to support developments in teaching, ensure the assessment of pupils' work is accurate and improve middle leaders through training. The school also supports other schools in the trust and local authority to improve their teaching and in the initial training of teachers.
- Parents are highly supportive of the school and almost all who spoke to inspectors acknowledged the recent improvements in the school. Comments such as 'the school is going from strength to strength' and 'fantastic leadership' are typical comments.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governance is highly effective. Governors possess a wide range of skills and experiences. The chair of governors ensures that these are used to full effect and that governors receive up-to-date training in order to fulfil their role. There are robust systems in place to monitor the quality of their work.
 - Governors are very knowledgeable about the progress of all groups of pupils and how the school is performing in relation to other schools. This is because they receive detailed and accurate information from senior leaders.
 - They ask challenging questions when performance is not strong. Governors closely monitor the spending

and the impact of the pupil premium and sports and physical education funding on pupil outcomes.

- Governors oversee staff pay awards and ensure that all pay rises are linked to pupils' performance. The performance management of the headteacher is robust.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Senior leaders and governors ensure that all safeguarding procedures are robust. All staff are appropriately checked prior to appointment, including volunteers and governors. Teaching and support staff are trained according to the latest guidance and are vigilant. They know what to do should they have any concerns. Safeguarding concerns are followed through thoroughly.
- The identity of all visitors is carefully checked at reception. Visitors are provided with information on safeguarding and are expected to follow the guidance. Policies and procedures are reviewed annually and are kept up to date. Governors undertake a termly review of safeguarding procedures within the school, along with safety checks. The safeguarding of children in the early years is well managed and fully meets the early years' welfare requirements.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding

- The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Work in pupils' books and the school's progress information show that teaching over time is outstanding. This is because teachers have very high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. Pupils are very enthusiastic about their learning and want to achieve their best. One group of pupils told inspectors: 'You learn something new for certain in this school. Every day you get challenged.'
- Teachers plan interesting activities that capture the pupils' imagination as well as build upon their previous learning. For example, teachers made a film clip of a plane crashing into the school quad to support an English topic.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work exceptionally well together. They form a productive partnership. Teachers plan well for the needs of pupils who require additional support and ensure that teaching assistants are fully briefed. Teaching assistants are well trained and highly skilled at meeting the needs of the pupils they work with.
- Teachers use deep and probing questions to test pupils' knowledge and understanding. They check the progress of pupils throughout the lesson and provide support for pupils who are finding the work challenging. Pupils who demonstrate a good understanding of the work are swiftly moved on to more demanding tasks.
- Teachers consistently follow the school's marking policy. Pupils understand what they have achieved and how they can improve their work as a result of the feedback they receive. Pupils are keen to make the necessary corrections to their work. Pupils are provided with the opportunity to reflect on their learning and that of other pupils. They enjoy assessing their own work and that of their classmates.
- Reading is well taught as teachers have excellent knowledge of phonics and ensure that pupils understand how to use letters and sounds to read unfamiliar words. Lower ability readers use a range of strategies to help them read unfamiliar words and the most able pupils are very fluent readers who read confidently and expressively.
- Classrooms provide bright and stimulating learning environments. Pupils use the additional information on the displays well to help them progress with their work. Displays in classrooms and around the school also celebrate the excellent work produced by pupils.
- Pupils are set appropriate homework which consolidates the basic skills required in reading, writing and mathematics. It is appropriate to the age and ability of the pupils.
- The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the inspection and school survey or who spoke to inspectors believe their child is well taught and making good progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The school is characterised by happy pupils who play and work well together. All of the pupils who spoke to inspectors or completed the school's questionnaire said they loved being in school. Comments such as, 'coming to school brings a smile to my face', 'amazing teachers', 'no one is left out' and 'If you are sad, other children cheer you up' are typical pupil views.

- Pupils understand the core values of responsibility, honesty, compassion and justice because they are threaded through the work of the school. Pupils say they explore these values because 'they make us better people' and they will help them when they are older.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations. Pupils' understanding of e-safety is detailed and pupils in Year 1 can describe what to do if they have any concerns when using social media or the internet. Pupils also learn how to keep themselves safe outside of school.
- The school keeps accurate records related to bullying and racism. These records show that these incidents are rare. Pupils have every confidence that adults will deal appropriately with any incidents should they arise.
- Relationships between pupils and adults in the playground are very positive. Supervision is vigilant and qualified first aid staff are on hand if a pupil needs them. Adults often lead games, especially for the younger pupils. Pupils really enjoy these activities.
- Pupils respond well to the range of responsibilities offered to them. For example, Year 6 pupils take their responsibility as play leaders and corridor crew very seriously. They say they enjoy helping the younger children and keeping them safe.
- Staff relentlessly follow up pupil absence to ensure that pupils are safe. As a result, the attendance for all pupils continues to improve and it is now above average. Pupils and staff who have achieved full attendance wear their badges with pride.
- There is a strong culture of care within the school. The school works highly effectively with external agencies and the school's own family support worker supports the broader needs of pupils and their families. As a result, these pupils are thriving in school.
- Pupils are encouraged to reflect upon the views of others and events that are happening in the world. Weekly 'big question' assemblies provide pupils with the opportunities to reflect on events and the views of others.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' behaviour around the school is impeccable. They mix well together in the playground – sharing and taking turns when using the play equipment. They are polite and respectful towards one another and adults.
- In lessons, pupils say it is exceptionally rare for their learning to be disrupted by poor behaviour. The school's records confirm that the number of behaviour incidents logged has declined considerably since the previous inspection.
- Pupils have extremely positive attitudes towards their learning. They listen carefully to their teachers and show high levels of concentration when working. Work in pupils' books is very well presented. Pupils take pride in their work and make every effort to present it neatly.

Outcomes for pupils

are outstanding

- When compared to all pupils nationally, the proportion of pupils leaving Year 6 in 2015 who exceeded the expected level of progress was above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils meeting the higher levels of attainment in reading and writing was average. For mathematics it was well above average. These results represent a significant improvement on the previous year when results were below average.
- The work of pupils currently in the school, the school's reliable progress data and progress seen in lessons indicate that pupils are making excellent progress across a range of subjects. This is consistent across the school.
- Pupils currently in Year 6 are attaining at least as well as those in 2015 and often better.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the required standard in the Year 1 phonics check is above average. By the end of Year 1, almost all pupils reach that standard.
- Current pupils, regardless of their ability, produce written work of an exceptionally high quality. The quality of written work in other subjects is as high as it is in English. Pupils pay particular attention to their use of spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Outcomes in mathematics have improved rapidly since the previous inspection. Work in pupils' books shows evidence of rapid progress. This is because pupils are given the opportunity to develop mathematical reasoning and apply their learning in order to solve problems.

- Pupils are making excellent progress in science because they have plenty of opportunities to carry out investigations. They are able to predict what might happen before the investigation and by the time they reach Years 4 and 5, they write detailed evaluations of their findings.
- The special educational needs coordinator rigorously tracks the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teaching assistants are highly trained and effective in supporting pupils' learning. Consequently, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language soon settle into the school and they are supported very well. As their language skills develop they make excellent progress by the time they reach Year 6.
- Disadvantaged pupils make outstanding progress. In 2015 the proportion of disadvantaged pupils making more than expected progress was well above other pupils nationally. Disadvantaged pupils currently in the school continue to make rapid progress and the attainment gap between them and their classmates is closing in all year groups.
- The most able pupils continue to do well. They are provided with challenging work, and current assessment information, supported by work seen in books, indicates that a high proportion of pupils are working above the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics in both key stages. Most able pupils in Year 6 have the opportunity to take part in activities run by the national The Brilliant Club. Recently, pupils had to write a thesis which was marked by university professors. All the pupils passed and attended a graduation ceremony to collect their certificates.
- Pupils leave Year 6 exceptionally well prepared for secondary school, both academically and socially.

Early years provision

is good

- Children usually enter the Nursery with skills that are below those typical for their age. As a result of accurate assessment and excellent teaching they rapidly catch up. They are well prepared for Reception.
- Children entering Reception come from a number of different nurseries, including the school's own Nursery. When they enter Reception a large proportion of children have skills that are below those typical for their age. They make good progress throughout the Reception Year and the proportion of children leaving Reception in 2015 having achieved a good level of development was above average. Progress information for children currently in Reception suggests it will be above average again this year. Children are well prepared for key stage 1.
- The early years' environment is stimulating and provides an assortment of equipment and resources to support children's learning and development. The outside area provides equipment that allows children to develop their physical skills and learn how to take risks safely.
- Teaching is good, and occasionally outstanding, because teachers provide activities which capture the imagination of the children which makes them interested in learning. For example, in Reception a group of children were being police men and women looking for evidence to catch the grumpy ladybird. Children talked enthusiastically to the inspector about the clues they were looking for and why it was difficult to find the ladybird.
- Children behave well and show care and consideration for one another. They work and play well together – sharing and taking turns. Children listen to adults and follow instructions well. Routines for clearing up are well established. Relationships between adults and children are very positive.
- The children are confident and enjoy learning. They are keen to talk about their work and to find out about visitors. The children were very proud of the work they showed the inspectors and some were able to explain how their work has improved since the start of the year.
- Nursery children rapidly learn about initial phonics sounds. This is because phonics is taught extremely well. Adults have good knowledge of sounds and ensure that children pronounce them accurately. Children develop a love of reading and take home books to read each evening.
- Good phonics teaching continues into Reception with children enjoying the varied learning activities. Many children start to use their phonics to spell and read simple words.
- The leadership of the early years is strong. The leader has identified the strengths and weaknesses within the area. She has correctly identified the priorities for this year and the action taken has led to improvements. For example, the priority has been to maintain a good level of development above that nationally for all groups of children. The gaps between boys and girls in the school are closing. Disadvantaged children and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are also making good progress.

- Parents have confidence in the early years setting. Typical comments include, 'My child is happy and making good progress' and 'My child in Reception is able to read very well.'
- Sometimes teachers prepare activities that are not sufficiently challenging for children, especially the most able, to enable them to make rapid progress. Nevertheless, teachers' assessments of children's skill on entry to both Nursery and Reception are detailed and accurate. Adults keep records of what children can and cannot do well and use these to plan learning activities.
- Children's understanding of the wider world is not as strong as their understanding of other areas of learning such as the expressive arts. This is because teachers do not prepare enough learning activities for children to explore this area in sufficient depth.
- A larger number of children attend Reception than Nursery and they come from a wide range of providers. The school's liaison with these providers and other agencies is good. However, parents only have one opportunity to discuss transition arrangements with teachers which limits their opportunity to contribute to their child's assessment.

School details

Unique reference number	139576
Local authority	Thurrock
Inspection number	10011875

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	540
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Keith Williams
Headteacher	Tony Parfett
Telephone number	01375 373729
Website	www.quarryhillacademy.org.uk
Email address	admin@qha.thurrock.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	18–19 June 2015

Information about this school

- Quarry Hill Academy is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Less than half of the pupils are from White British backgrounds. The remainder are from a variety of different minority ethnic groups, the largest proportion being of African heritage or 'Any other White background'.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and therefore supported through the pupil premium is well above average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average.
- The early years consists of children in the Nursery and Reception classes. Children attend the Nursery part time, either in the morning or afternoon. All children attend the Reception full time.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school meets requirements for the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in each class. They visited 17 lessons, accompanied by senior leaders for three of them, to observe learning, and to talk to pupils about their work.
- Inspectors looked closely at pupils' work in each class across a range of subjects. They were accompanied by senior leaders on two occasions. Inspectors also made a number of short visits to lessons.
- The inspectors listened to two groups of pupils read and visited three class assemblies.
- The inspectors met formally with two groups of pupils from each key stage to discuss their experience of life in the school. Inspectors also spoke to pupils informally at break and lunchtime. They took into account the 293 responses to the school's pupil questionnaire.
- The inspectors checked the school documentation on safeguarding, behaviour, attendance and the quality of teaching. They also looked at the school's analysis of its own work, its improvement plan, information about pupils' progress and performance management.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, early years leader, special educational needs coordinator and subject leaders. Discussions were also held with four members of the governing body. The lead inspector spoke by telephone to a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors took into account and considered the 12 responses to the online Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, and the 284 responses to the school's own questionnaire. The inspectors also spoke to a number of parents informally at the start and end of the school day.
- The views expressed in the questionnaire returned by 33 members of the school staff were also considered.

Inspection team

Caroline Pardy, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Andrew	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Ginzler-Andrew	Ofsted Inspector

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