

Hardingstone Academy

Martins Lane, Hardingstone, Northampton, Northamptonshire NN4 6DJ

Inspection dates

13–14 September 2016

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| Overall effectiveness | Good |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Good |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Good |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Good |
| Outcomes for pupils | Good |
| Early years provision | Good |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The principal, staff, governors and members of the Academy Improvement and Performance Board are committed to making sure that all pupils achieve their full potential.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are now good. Through rigorous checking, the principal, along with her leadership team, ensures that pupils receive teaching that results in good learning.
- Children in the Reception classes make good progress in relation to their starting points because adults plan activities that are accurately matched to their interests and needs. The proportion of children who reach a good level of development is usually above the national average.
- Pupils make good progress in Years 1 to 6. Teachers support pupils effectively and regularly track the progress they make. Pupils achieve well.
- In Year 6, most pupils reach or exceed the expected national average in reading, writing and mathematics. The most able pupils in Year 6 achieve a deeper understanding in their learning in reading and writing.
- Behaviour is good and, at times, better. Pupils are keen learners, who develop good relationships with each other and the adults who help them.
- Pupils say incidents of bullying are rare. They are confident that adults will keep them safe. Pupils demonstrate a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe.
- The well-planned curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Older pupils speak maturely about how much they enjoy learning and coming to school. They demonstrate a good understanding of equality and diversity.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, so that:
 - in all classes, the most able pupils are challenged sufficiently in mathematics and their learning is extended
 - in all classes, lower-attaining pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are given activities that enable them to make good progress in English and mathematics.
- Ensure that all adults check that, on hot, sunny days, all pupils, including those in early years, are protected from the sun.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- This is an improving school. The principal sets high expectations for everyone, including herself. She and her management team have developed a comprehensive system that tracks pupils' academic performance and shows how individuals and groups are performing. Regular 'pupil progress meetings', where teachers are held to account, are well focused on checking that pupils do not fall behind.
- Leaders, governors and the academy improvement and performance board (AIPB) have set out a clear vision to ensure that pupils achieve their full potential. The principal and her leaders have united staff, pupils and parents around the school's core values.
- Self-evaluation is accurate and attainment and progress are accelerating, as a result of leaders setting high expectations relating to the pupils' outcomes.
- Staff, parents and pupils acknowledge recent positive changes that have taken place, particularly in relation to the leadership of the school and the focus on learning and progress.
- Teaching and learning have improved because of close monitoring and evaluation by all leaders. The principal has successfully challenged and supported all staff to improve their practice and has not been afraid to challenge underperformance.
- There is a well-established cycle for staff professional development. This is linked to the management of the performance of the staff and is having a positive impact on teaching and pupils' learning. Leaders have established good links with external agencies to support pupils' academic, social and emotional needs, particularly in relation to teachers' continued professional development.
- Senior and middle leaders are effective in their roles. They are improving their leadership roles by becoming more involved in analysing and using performance information to increase pupil outcomes.
- The wide and varied curriculum links well with the personal, social and health education programme and enables them to achieve well. Older pupils speak knowledgeably about the need to eat healthily and take regular exercise. They especially like the many extra-curricular activities and the specialist teaching that they receive in art and physical education.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively within the personal, social and health education programme and through the promotion of British values. The well-planned programme for assemblies and displays around the school help pupils to develop their understanding of the school's core values, which underpin all areas of the school's work.
- Planning for the promotion of equality and diversity is thorough. Older pupils spoke with much empathy and respect for others and said that their school was like one big family. They demonstrated a good understanding of democracy, linking it to the recent European Union vote and, similarly, when they vote for school councillors. Pupils spoke maturely about the core values on which the school focuses and the importance of respecting the diverse views and religious beliefs of others.
- Leaders promote equality of opportunity effectively by assessing individual needs

carefully and arranging appropriate interventions. Pupils are adamant that they are treated equally. However, not all groups in the school achieve equally well.

- Leaders use the additional physical education and sport funding effectively to provide a wide range of sporting activities that pupils spoke about enthusiastically. Specialist coaches support the teaching of physical education and this benefits both pupils and teachers.
- All staff, governors and the AIPB are aware of the needs of the disadvantaged pupils and carefully assess how well these pupils are doing. Disadvantaged pupils are targeted for enrichment activities which have an impact on their social and academic development. As a result, most disadvantaged pupils make good progress.

Governance of the school

- Governors and the AIPB work well together as a team and are knowledgeable about additional funding such as the physical education and sport funding and the pupil premium, how it is spent and the impact it has on pupils' educational and social needs. They spoke of the importance of challenging staff to ensure that the funding is spent wisely and that it benefits identified pupils. Governors challenge staff to ensure that funding has been used appropriately to support pupils.
- Governors and the AIPB are knowledgeable about systems and structures within the school. They, along with the principal and her team, are well involved in raising attainment and achievement because they are involved in all aspects of school improvement. Governors have supported and challenged the principal to ensure that pay awards for teachers are made appropriately.
- Governors and members of the AIPB discuss data regularly and challenge the principal regarding improvements. Governors understand how performance information is presented because it has been analysed in order to make it more accessible to the governing body.
- The principal, the governors and the AIPB have gained the confidence of the parents. Parents are extremely supportive of the work of the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Governors work closely with staff and parents to keep pupils safe. Parents raised no concerns regarding the safety of their children. All adults are familiar with safeguarding regulations and the need to keep pupils safe is given high priority. Governors ensure that the correct procedures are followed to vet all adults who have contact with, or who work with, the pupils.
- Governors ensure that all policies, including those related to safeguarding, are updated regularly and placed on the website for parents to access. Staff read and sign them to acknowledge they have familiarised themselves with all documents.
- Governors and school leaders ensure that all adults receive up-to-date safeguarding training, for example in relation to child protection and e-safety.
- Occasionally, teachers and assistants do not focus enough on sun safety when pupils take part in activities outside during hot days.
- Health and safety checks are completed by governors and school leaders to ensure that the site is safe and secure.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Thorough systems to check on the quality of teaching have resulted in pupils learning well, particularly in English and mathematics. Progress meetings take place regularly and the achievement of individual pupils is checked on carefully.
- Teachers and leaders are fully involved in ensuring that all pupil groups make at least good progress over time. However, at times, activities are not planned effectively to enable the most able pupils to extend their mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding.
- Teachers generally have secure subject knowledge and usually have high expectations for their pupils. Pupils' mathematics and English books show clearly the good learning that takes place over time. In addition, these books show that teachers have high expectations regarding presentation and the completion of activities. The guidance given to the pupils is usually supportive and informative and enables pupils to improve their learning.
- Relationships between pupils and teachers are strong. This results in pupils responding enthusiastically in almost all lessons and developing positive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils told inspectors that they liked learning in all subjects and that learning was fun. Older pupils stated that they especially like learning in art and physical education.
- Pupils have very good opportunities to develop their knowledge of the work and techniques of different artists. For example, in an art lesson in Year 4, pupils learned about the work of the French artist Matisse. Learning was expertly planned, with music playing, pictures to focus on and a map to show France and the United Kingdom. Resources clearly allowed pupils to understand the work of Matisse and then to develop artwork in his style. Pupils listened attentively and were fascinated by the teacher's excellent subject knowledge and the activities she planned. This lesson promoted pupils' cultural development extremely well.
- Assessment information is collected and usually used to plan activities that match pupils' needs, allowing them to make good gains in their learning. Occasionally, teachers do not match activities accurately enough to pupils' abilities. This then affects the learning of some pupils, which includes one or two disadvantaged pupils and some who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Older pupils stated that, at times, the activities they are given in mathematics are not challenging enough. Observations showed that, in one or two classes, a few pupils had difficulties understanding some of the activities they were given.
- Parents are pleased with how well their children were learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils stated that the best thing about this school is that everyone respects each other and they work together as one big family.
- Pupils have many opportunities to take part in activities which promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils speak passionately about how important

it is to learn and abide by the school's core values, which are friendship, respect, honesty, kindness, perseverance, excellence and courage. These values are reinforced in the well-planned assemblies and the personal, social and health education programme.

- From an early age, teachers give all pupils clear guidance on how to respect adults and each other. Occasionally, one or two pupils do not always maintain this respect.
- Pupils in all classes, including the Reception Year, learn about the importance of eating healthily. Older pupils spoke knowledgeably about the effect of exercise on their hearts.
- The many sporting events that pupils take part in enable them to develop skills and knowledge in various sports. Action to encourage some reluctant pupils to take part in physical activities has been particularly successful.
- Pupils spoken with say that they feel safe in school and speak in detail about dangers they might come across, such as when using electricity and the internet.
- Pupils from the school council developed a child-friendly version of the anti-bullying policy and presented it to all pupils during an assembly. Later, pupils did a presentation about playground equipment and how to use it safely, which allowed them to become involved with school safeguarding policy development. Observations in the playground showed no issues related to safety.
- The most-recent pupils' questionnaire, which the school completed early in 2016, showed that almost all pupils feel safe in school. Parents generally think that the school is a safe place for their children.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Information collected, discussions with staff and pupils, and observations confirm that behaviour is good in all year groups. In the dining hall, pupils' behaviour was impeccable. Pupils were observed thoroughly enjoying their lunches, speaking politely and respectfully to visitors. They enjoy the school lunches and said that they are now made only from fresh produce.
- Adults generally have high expectations for the pupils' behaviour. Pupils know how to behave and are usually polite and kind to one another and to the adults who help them. However, a very small number of pupils are not always respectful to adults.
- Attendance is broadly average and the monitoring of individuals and pupil groups is thorough.
- Pupils are confident that the adults in school keep them safe. They say that bullying is rare and any issues are dealt with quickly by their teachers. Pupils are clear about the different types of bullying that they may come across.
- The school keeps records of incidents of behaviour that is not good. There are few incidents recorded and these have been dealt with effectively.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- School performance information, in the 2015/16 academic year, shows that pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 was higher than the national figure in reading, writing, mathematics and English grammar, punctuation and spelling. A few pupils reached a greater depth of understanding in reading and writing. In relation to their starting points, this demonstrates good progress.

- In 2015/16, school performance information shows that the number of pupils, including those identified as disadvantaged, who reached the national figure in the Year 1 phonics screening assessment was above the national figure. This was an improvement on the previous year.
- The work in current pupils' books, over time, shows that pupils make good progress in English and mathematics.
- School performance information shows that most pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities generally achieve well because of appropriate intervention activities and close monitoring of the provision that they receive.
- Occasionally, not all pupils are supported effectively in their classes.
- Most disadvantaged pupils make good progress because funding is used effectively to support their academic and social needs. In addition, their progress is checked on carefully, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In reading and writing, the most able pupils are supported effectively and achieve a deeper understanding in their learning. However, in mathematics, pupils do not always achieve a greater depth of understanding because they are not always challenged consistently during lessons. Pupils themselves identified that, in mathematics lessons, at times, they could be challenged more.
- Pupils achieve well in physical education because they have many opportunities to develop their skills, both in school and when they take part in sporting activities with other local schools.
- School performance information shows that few pupils read below age-related levels. Pupils of different abilities, in Years 2 and 6, read confidently using their knowledge of letters and sounds appropriately when they came across words they were unsure of. Most-able readers read with good expression and much confidence.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, both academically and socially.

Early years provision

Good

- Children start school with attainment that is typical for their ages. Observations, along with information provided by the school, show that children make good progress. The proportion that reach a good level of development is typically above the national average.
- Children separate from their parents happily and enter school confidently. They then choose from a well-selected range of activities that match their ages and stages of development. Parents said that their children settle into school routines quickly.
- The school has developed good partnerships with parents. Parents who spoke with inspectors were pleased with the provision that their children receive. They were particularly pleased with information that they received during the induction programme.
- Teaching and learning are good. Teachers and assistants use assessment data to plan activities that are closely matched to children's needs and interests. Skilful interactions between adults and children allow children to reinforce skills and knowledge and to make good gains in their learning.
- In a lesson observed, children used their knowledge of letters and sounds as they

wrote postcards. The staff contributed well to learning as they guided them through the task. Other children learned well as they filled buckets with sand. Good adult interaction enabled children to extend their vocabulary by using words such as 'nearly full'.

- There are good opportunities for children to develop their writing skills. For example, the early years profile books are a joy to look at. They clearly show the good progress children make in all areas of learning, especially in writing.
- The adults ensure that children learn how to use equipment, such as computers, safely and that they understand the rules, such as not to run in the classroom and to be aware of others when using the climbing frame.
- Children showed good independence and control as they rode bicycles around the outdoor area. They demonstrated a good understanding of safety by carefully avoiding obstacles in their way.
- The early years is led and managed well. The adults working with the children have a good understanding of how these young children learn. They analyse performance information carefully and track the progress of all pupil groups. In relation to children's starting points, progress is good.
- School performance information shows that the proportion of children who reach a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year is usually above the national figure.
- From their different starting points, disadvantaged children and those children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities usually make good progress.
- Although school documentation shows awareness of sun safety, adults working with the children are not always as vigilant as they should be in protecting children from the sun.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 140370 |
| Local authority | Northamptonshire |
| Inspection number | 10019538 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Academy |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 227 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body and the academy improvement and performance board |
| Chair | Angie Milne |
| Principal | Zoe McIntyre |
| Telephone number | 01604761250 |
| Website | www.hardingstoneacademy.northants.sch.uk |
| Email address | head@hardingstone.northants-ecl.gov.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school became an academy in 2014. It is a member of the EMLC Academy Trust.
- The school complies with DfE guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Approximately three quarters of the pupils are from White British families. The remainder originate from a range of different ethnic groups.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium is below average.
- Only a few pupils speak English as an additional language or are in the early stages of learning English.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in 17 parts of lessons taught by 11 teachers. The principal observed nine lessons with the lead inspector.
- Many of the school's documents were looked at by the inspectors, including its self-evaluation and school improvement planning, safeguarding documents, pupils' previous and current work in Years 1 to 6 and, in Reception, the children's profiles.
- Discussions were held with the principal, the assistant principal, senior and middle managers, governors, pupils, a few parents and three members of the AIPB. Both inspectors listened to pupils reading.
- The views of the parents were considered by analysing 47 responses to Parent View, the online Ofsted survey.

Inspection team

Nina Bee, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Jane Moore

Ofsted Inspector

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