

Inspection of Cromwell Academy

Parkway, Hinchingsbrooke Park, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, PE29 6JA

Inspection dates: 27 May, and 29 and 30 June 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
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?

Cromwell Primary is a friendly school where everyone is welcomed and valued. Pupils come from many different ethnic backgrounds. They talk openly about their differences, helping pupils to learn from and about each other. Pupils enjoy learning in a calm and purposeful atmosphere. Pupils who spoke to us said that they feel that they would not change anything about the school, as they are very happy with it.

The 'Cromwell Way' is threaded throughout all aspects of school life. Pupils readily recall the five 'Rs': respect, responsibility, reflect, resilience and relationships. They understand what each word means for their learning and their behaviour. Pupils behave well. They concentrate during lessons and listen carefully.

Staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils respond well to this challenge. Pupils are keen to learn and take pride in what they do.

Pupils told us that bullying is rare in their school. If they had any concerns, they would talk to adults who will quickly resolve any problems. Pupils enjoy positive relationships with one another, helping to forge a strong sense of community and belonging.

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

Leaders and staff have worked hard to improve the school. Working together, they have carefully considered what pupils need to know and how the curriculum is taught.

A well-planned and ambitious curriculum is now in place. Subject leaders benefit from the support of other subject specialists within the multi-academy trust. This has helped subject leaders to identify the key knowledge pupils need to know. Pupils are encouraged to make choices about their learning through reflection and discussion. For example, in religious education older pupils debate big questions about the meaning of life and use their knowledge of different religions to inform their own views and opinions.

Where teachers have had longer to implement new subject plans, leaders have a secure understanding of the impact on pupils' learning. In mathematics, for example, teachers ensure that pupils use their knowledge successfully and apply what they know to solving different problems. However, a few subject plans have only recently been introduced. Leaders have not yet had sufficient time to check how well teachers deliver their plans in these subjects.

Leaders are determined that pupils become fluent and confident readers by the time they leave the school. Phonics teaching starts as soon as children join the Reception class. They learn their sounds systematically. The books they read are carefully selected to help them practise the sounds that they know.

New approaches for teaching reading to older pupils have been introduced. High-quality texts are used to develop pupils' inference and retrieval skills. Pupils are encouraged to read widely and are rewarded for reading frequently. Pupils use the reading areas in their classrooms and enjoy the stories that teachers read regularly to them.

Teachers know their pupils well. When pupils find something difficult, they are given timely and effective extra help. Pupils are provided with effective individual support when needed.

Teachers adapt their plans for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) when needed to ensure that these pupils achieve well. The special educational needs coordinator (SENDCo) works alongside teachers to identify how best to support pupils with SEND. Checks are made to ensure that work is closely matched to the individual needs of the pupils.

Children settle quickly when they join the early years class. Positive relationships with adults develop children's confidence and independence effectively. Opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their curiosity and learn how to play and work together. However, some activities are not used as well as they could be to help children think more about what they are learning.

Normally, the curriculum provides a range of first-hand experiences and visits to enhance pupils' learning. During this period, teachers have identified different ways to provide pupils with a range of experiences such as online virtual tours of places of worship. Leaders are working hard to restart activities such as re-establishing the school and eco councils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe, including when they are using different types of technology and when they are online. They know to talk to trusted adults if they have a concern or are worried about anything.

Staff are well trained in keeping pupils safe. They know what action to take if they identify any issues. Records show that staff are vigilant and will pass on any concerns to leaders. Leaders are relentless in getting pupils and families the support they need, including through their work with external agencies.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some subject plans, such as for physical education (PE), have only recently been introduced. Leaders have not had the opportunity to evaluate how effectively these plans are used. Leaders should ensure that the use of all subject plans is

evaluated to make sure the curriculum enables pupils to achieve consistently well across all subjects.

- Adults in the early years do not always use curriculum plans as well as leaders intend. Some activities do not extend children's learning sufficiently well. Leaders should ensure that adults are well trained and have the knowledge to implement all aspects of the early years curriculum effectively.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for published performance information about the school [here](#).

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

Unique reference number	141297
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10184167
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	195
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Richard Laing
Headteacher	Hannah Connor-James
Website	www.cromwellacademy.com
Date of previous inspection	18 March 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school, and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, other leaders, teachers and pupils. Inspectors spoke with governors, including the chair of governors, the chief executive officer from the ACES Multi-Academy Trust and the school's chosen challenge partner.
- Inspectors considered a range of school documents, including the school improvement plan and the school self-evaluation document.
- In order to consider the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors checked the school's single central record of pre-appointment checks; met the school's designated safeguarding leads; spoke with staff and pupils; and checked the school's child protection records.

- Inspectors considered 44 responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and 14 responses to Ofsted’s staff survey.
- Inspectors did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science and PE. Inspectors met with the leaders of these subjects, reviewed the subject planning documents, visited lessons, looked at pupils’ work, spoke with pupils about their work, spoke to teachers, and listened to pupils read.

Inspection team

Steve Mellors, lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Isabel Davis

Her Majesty’s Inspector

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