

Cromwell Academy

Parkway, Hinchingsbrooke Park, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire PE29 6JA

Inspection dates

9–10 May 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders and governors have not worked together as productively as they should to maintain and improve pupils' outcomes. The school's overall performance is in decline and is no longer good.
- The headteacher does not provide the governing body with sufficient information about the progress pupils make so governors can effectively hold leaders to account.
- Parents have mixed views about the quality of leadership. The majority of parents consider that the school is not well led and managed.
- The attendance of disadvantaged pupils has been significantly below average for two years. It remains low.
- Governors have not checked the spending of pupil premium well enough.
- Most-able pupils do not make as much progress as they should in key stage 2. For the previous two years the progress most-able pupils made in mathematics was below the national average.
- Children make variable progress in the early years. In 2016, the proportion of those who achieved a good level of development was below the national average.
- Disadvantaged pupils are not making rapid progress in their learning. Leaders do not make effective use of the pupil premium.
- Teachers do not use their assessment information precisely enough to plan learning that accelerates the progress pupils make.
- The proportion of Year 1 pupils who reached the standard in the phonics screening check was below the national average in 2016.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils are polite and well mannered. They conduct themselves well in class and at playtimes.
- Teachers are proud to work at the school. Many parents commented positively about how happy their children are and the effectiveness of teachers' work.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is provided for well.
- The breakfast and after-school clubs provide a safe and secure environment.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well cared for and their individual needs are catered for appropriately.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - governors holding school leaders rigorously to account for the standard of education and the progress pupils make in all key stages
 - governors ensuring that robust checks and balances are in place to hold school leaders to account for the effective use of resources
 - school leaders and governors restoring the confidence of parents in the leadership of the school
 - school leaders and governors developing effective working relations that focus on improving outcomes for pupils.
- Raise pupils' achievement by:
 - improving the progress disadvantaged pupils make in mathematics so more reach the required standard by the end of key stage 2
 - accelerating the progress the most able pupils make, particularly in mathematics, so more pupils reach the higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined by the end of key stage 2
 - ensuring that the proportion of pupils who reach the required standard in the phonics screening check at Year 1 is at least in line with the national average
 - ensuring that more children consistently achieve a good level of development in Reception so achievement is above the national average.
- Improve teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - teachers using assessment information precisely to accelerate the progress middle-ability and most-able pupils make.
- Improve pupils' personal development and behaviour further by:
 - working with parents effectively to raise the attendance of disadvantaged pupils so it is in line with the national average.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection of the predecessor school, the headteacher and governors have not maintained the good standard of education. The leaders' view of the school's overall performance is over-generous and the school's improvement plans are not sharply focused on increasing the progress different groups of pupils make.
- The headteacher has not provided the governing body with sufficiently accurate information about the progress pupils make in all areas of the school. Leaders and governors have not worked together as productively as they should to maintain and improve pupils' outcomes. Not enough pupils reached standards of which they were clearly capable in early years, phonics and by the end of key stage 2, in 2016.
- Leaders routinely monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Although they carry out a wide range of activities, their evaluation focuses more on adults' actions, rather than on the progress pupils make. Pupils complete a great deal of work and do so well, but they do not make the precise and accelerated progress they should.
- There have been significant changes of staff since the school became an academy in 2014. Many parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View) recognise that their children make inconsistent progress and are concerned. The majority of respondents expressed concerns about the quality of leadership and management at the school, particularly that of the headteacher. Governors recognise this issue and are starting to address parental concerns. The impact of their work is too soon to assess.
- Leaders' use of additional funds, such as the pupil premium, is not skilful enough. Leaders have not precisely identified the barriers for learning that disadvantaged pupils have. They do not provide a clear rationale for how the funds are used to increase the attendance of disadvantaged pupils, which has been significantly below the national average for two years and remains low.
- Staff are positive and proud to work at the school. Those who responded to the staff questionnaire, or were spoken to during the inspection, spoke highly of the professional development and support they receive, particularly from the deputy headteacher. Performance management is in place and staff appreciate the involvement they have when setting targets.
- The leadership of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is increasingly effective. The coordinator keeps effective records of these pupils' achievement and monitors their individual progress well. Consequently, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those who have education, health and care plans, are well cared for and receive precise support. Additional funds are effectively used to train support staff to deal skilfully with pupils' individual needs.
- Leaders ensure that the curriculum is varied and provides opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in many subjects. The many, high-quality displays around the school show a wealth of artwork and science investigations that the pupils experience. The work in pupils' books demonstrates they have had less opportunity to develop their

geography skills this year. Pupils spoken to confirmed this.

- School leaders use the sports premium well to provide a good range of physical activities. Pupils have trained coaches to take their lessons and additional clubs to participate in after school. However, leaders have not analysed the impact of this additional coaching and how many pupils take up the after-school clubs.
- The school provides a breakfast and after-school club each day (Kids' club). Leadership is strong and well-trained adults ensure that pupils are safe and well cared for. All necessary documentation is in place.
- Leaders provide for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education well. Around the school, pupils are encouraged to reflect on the school motto, 'committed to achieve'. Pupils receive rewards and house points when they demonstrate the values the school promotes. Pupils are friendly, respectful and work hard in lessons.
- School leaders broker additional external support from the local authority. Recently, teachers have received relevant training from a mathematics specialist. The impact of this support can be seen in pupils' books where they now have opportunity to reason and explain their understanding in greater detail.

Governance of the school

- Governors acknowledge that they have not held the headteacher to account well enough for the standard of education provided. They have accepted the limited information they are given about pupil outcomes without checking its accuracy, or if it is sufficiently detailed.
- There have been frequent changes in governors and chairs of governors since the school became an academy in 2014. The checks and balances for the effective use of resources are not rigorous enough. As a result, the ways that governors hold the school to account are unclear. Governors are not able to fully demonstrate value for money or how decisions are made, particularly with pupil premium funding.
- Minutes of governors' meetings demonstrate that the headteacher does not provide governors with the full educational performance of the school. The working relationship between the headteacher and governing body has not been as effective as it should be. Consequently, governors do not have a robust understanding of the progress pupils make and how this compares with others nationally.
- Governors regularly visit to check that pupils are kept safe and processes are in place and work well. They are effective in ensuring that pupils are well cared for.
- Recently appointed governors have the necessary skills and expertise to carry out their roles and there is capacity to improve. All governors are committed and dedicated to improving the school and restoring the faith of the parent community. The well-respected and new chair of governors has established clear roles and responsibilities so governance can become more effective.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

- All statutory requirements are currently in place. Staff are appropriately trained and receive updates regularly from the family worker, who is responsible for the leadership of child protection. Governors ensure that all necessary checks are completed when new members of staff are recruited.
- Although the official record of employment checks was not compliant at the start of the inspection, issues were easily rectified over the course of the inspection as the school had all the necessary documentation in place.
- All staff are well trained in identifying and reporting concerns appropriately. The designated leader for child protection works with external agencies when necessary. Child protection records are well maintained and action is followed up where necessary and in a timely manner.
- Staff are trained appropriately in other aspects such as first aid. Evidence from first-aid books and risk assessments illustrates that staff take adequate safety precautions and deal appropriately when accidents occur.
- Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe. Parents had mixed views about how well leaders keep their children safe and well cared for. Those spoken to during the inspection were positive and believed their children were safe. Inspectors found no well-founded concerns regarding the way that staff care for pupils or with the physical environment at the time of the inspection.
- Pupils are provided with suitable guidance in assemblies and in lessons on keeping safe when using online technology. They spoke confidently about the procedures in school and how they report concerns.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teachers do not make enough use of their assessment information to plan learning that accelerates the progress pupils make. Consequently, groups of pupils, such as the disadvantaged and the most able, do not make as much progress as they should, particularly in mathematics.
- Staffing turbulence has had an effect on the quality of teaching pupils experience. Several staff are very new to the school and in these classes progress is not yet good. Consequently, pupils' progress slows as adults become familiar with the high standards that pupils at Cromwell Academy could achieve.
- Pupils' mathematics books show that teachers provide different levels of challenge for pupils to complete in lessons. Pupils relish the opportunity to demonstrate their numerical skills and explain their methods. However, teachers do not swiftly adjust the learning during lessons. As a result, middle-ability pupils do not move to activities that demand greater skill rapidly enough so they can make the progress of which they are clearly capable.
- The school has a clear marking and feedback policy, with regular time provided for pupils to improve their work. However, teachers do not consistently apply this. Pupils often complete further activities of the same difficulty rather than being provided with tasks that improve their progress that require them to use and apply their knowledge and skills in a range of different ways.

- Staff have recently received additional training to strengthen their mathematical understanding and delivery of the curriculum. The teaching of mathematics is improving with an increased focus on pupils explaining their mathematical choices when working with problems.
- Teachers have strong classroom routines and explain activities clearly so that lessons flow well and pupils settle to work swiftly. Pupils' workbooks demonstrate that teachers provide interesting learning activities that are appropriate for their age, particularly in English.
- Year 6 pupils read suitably challenging texts and choose to extend their own enjoyment of books. In key stage 2, although pupils make strong progress, even more have the ability to reach the higher standard in reading.
- The teaching of phonics varies. At times, adults do not articulate their sounds phonetically well enough for young pupils to make rapid progress. Through more precise monitoring, more pupils in Year 1 are on track to reach the required standard in their phonics screening check.
- Pupils write well in English across key stage 2. This is because teachers provide interesting topics for pupils that stimulate their thinking. Pupils are given precise checklists so they can demonstrate their understanding and apply their skills. Consequently, pupils know what they need to achieve and how to improve their work.
- The few teaching assistants that work at the school are used effectively to support pupils on a one-to-one basis or in small groups.
- In subjects other than English and mathematics, pupils generally carry out the same activities, irrespective of ability. As a result, pupils' progress is mixed. Where pupils apply their writing skills in other subjects, this is not consistently of the same high quality as in their English lessons. Subjects such as geography are not taught regularly enough.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy school and older pupils particularly enjoy the additional responsibilities on offer to develop their leadership skills.
- Pupils understand the different forms of bullying and have a secure appreciation of how distressing bullying can be. Although a significant minority of parents believe bullying to be an issue, pupils spoken to were adamant that bullying does not occur at Cromwell Academy. Pupils could identify an adult with whom they would be happy to share concerns and were confident that issues would be taken seriously.
- The 'Kids' club' provides a warm and welcoming environment for pupils to prepare for the school day or play with their friends after school. Adults place the highest priority on pupils' safety and well-being. The youngest and oldest pupils enjoy each other's company and make strong friendships.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or an education, health

and care plan are provided with a high level of care and support. Consequently, these pupils currently make good progress personally and academically.

- Pupils take a pride in the work they produce. They take care with their presentation, ensuring that their handwriting in English and mathematical work is precise. When adults' expectations are not as consistently high in other subjects, then pupils do not present their work as well as they could.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are polite and well-mannered, and respond well to the wealth of praise they receive for their efforts.
- Pupils conduct themselves suitably during the school day. They move around the school safely and correctly. Breaktimes and lunchtimes are friendly social occasions. Pupils use the expansive playing field well to devise games. They play energetically and appropriately for their age.
- When their teacher requests attention, pupils respond well and swiftly. In lessons, most pupils are motivated and keen to do their best. Teachers have established routines and consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Consequently, pupils learn and cooperate effectively together.
- Parents have mixed views about how well leaders ensure that pupils behave well. However, staff commented that they were supported by leaders effectively to ensure good standards of pupils' behaviour. Records of any poor behaviour incidents and those of a racist nature are extremely low. Incidents are reported and recorded appropriately.
- Overall pupils' attendance is in line with the national average. However, attendance for disadvantaged pupils was significantly below average for the previous two years. Inspection evidence demonstrates this is still the case.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2015 and 2016, pupils made significantly less progress in mathematics by the end of key stage 2 from their starting points than other pupils nationally. In 2016, the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard or above in mathematics was below the national average, particularly for the most able pupils. Currently, pupils' work in books demonstrates that attainment is improving and pupils' results in mathematics are set to rise this year.
- In 2016, the proportion of key stage 2 pupils who reached the required standard in reading was broadly in line with the national average. However, boys did not achieve as well as girls in reading. School data information shows that currently pupils, including boys, have made better progress in reading. Older pupils who read to inspectors were able to answer questions about their choices of texts confidently.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who made good progress in 2016 was below other pupils nationally, in reading, writing and mathematics. One in five pupils reached the expected standard in all three subjects and none reached the higher standard. While leaders are tracking and monitoring pupils' achievement, disadvantaged pupils

currently on roll are not yet making accelerated progress so they catch up and are suitably prepared for secondary school.

- Key stage 2 pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities made significantly less progress from their starting points than others nationally in writing and mathematics in 2016. This year, leaders have identified pupils' needs more accurately and are improving the progress individuals make as a result.
- In key stage 1 in 2016, the progress pupils made from leaving Reception varied and was lower for less-able pupils in reading and in mathematics. Those who were most able leaving Reception continued to achieve well and the proportion who reached greater depth was in line with the national average in reading and above in writing and mathematics.
- Standards in phonics fell sharply in 2016 and the proportion of pupils who reached the required standard was below the national average. This did not represent good progress for these pupils from Reception, especially those who were disadvantaged. The quality of teaching in phonics is mixed and not enough pupils receive the precise teaching needed to reach the nationally expected standard.
- Pupils' achievement in subjects such as science varies. In 2016, the proportion of pupils who reached the national standard was below average at key stage 1 and in line at key stage 2. This did not represent good progress as more pupils were capable of achieving well. Currently, older pupils' books demonstrate that they are developing the right knowledge, understanding and skills through a wide range of scientific activities and investigations.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Children start Reception with individual skills and abilities that are at least typical for their age. In 2016, the proportion of children who left achieving a good level of development was below the national average and did not represent good progress for these children. They were not as well prepared for Year 1 as they should have been.
- School leaders do not report on the achievement of the children in early years to governors well enough. There is not a sharp focus on the correct areas for improvement so that each child on roll can make as much progress as possible.
- Currently, due to staffing changes, there is no early years leadership. All staff working in early years have very recently joined. It is too early to assess the consistency and impact of their work on the progress the children are making.
- Children's learning journeys and additional workbooks illustrate that children cover a broad range of activities over the year. However, school evidence is not sufficient to demonstrate improved outcomes in all areas of the curriculum. Children's writing shows progress, with most writing a sentence using their sounds to help with spelling.
- From children's work and observing them learning and playing, there is little difference in the achievement of boys and girls. However, learning is not planned precisely enough so the most able children, of whom there are many, can exceed the expectations for their age, particularly in mathematics.
- While the teaching of reading is appropriate for the age of the children, it is not as

effective as it could be. This is due to adults not articulating sounds precisely enough nor ensuring that the most able children are provided with further challenge.

- Children behave well. They enjoy good friendships and get along well together and with the new adults in their class. They are very articulate and enjoy explaining their learning.
- Children are happy and safe. They have settled well into school life, know and follow routines well. One boy enthusiastically explained, 'it is now tidy-up time and I have to go and do my jobs'.
- Parents of children in Reception who spoke with inspectors were positive about how well their children had settled. The liaison books are checked and communications with parents are effective. Parents' involvement in their children's learning is well displayed on the class 'proud cloud'.

School details

Unique reference number	141297
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10025490

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	182
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Laing
Headteacher	Stephanie Baldwin
Telephone number	01480 437830
Website	www.cromwellacademy.com
Email address	office@cromwellacademy.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about how the most able pupils achieved at the end of key stage 2 in 2016, or the barriers for learning for disadvantaged pupils, the rationale for spending the additional funding and when it is next reviewed on its website.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about pupils' achievement and the rationale for spending the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and the barriers for learning.
- The school is a smaller-than-average primary school. Currently, the numbers on roll are falling.
- The school converted to an academy in 2014.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and eligible for pupil premium is below

average.

- The proportion of pupils from multi-ethnic groups is in line with the national average, but the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than the national average. Pupils who are supported by an education, health and care plan is higher than that found nationally.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school runs its own breakfast and after-school clubs that were considered in this inspection.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors gathered a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching, learning and assessment over time. This included observations of parts of lessons in all classes, taught by class teachers and teaching assistants.
- The inspection team held meetings with governors, a representative of the local authority and school staff, including senior and middle leaders. An email was considered from the chair of governors.
- Inspectors examined pupils' written work across a wide range of subjects, looked at examples of work on display and considered the school's latest information about teaching and pupils' achievement in all subjects.
- The teaching of phonics was observed. Inspectors listened to a number of pupils read from Year 1 and Year 6.
- Inspectors examined a range of documentation around child protection and scrutinised the recruitment checks made by school leaders when employing staff.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including governors' minutes of meetings, performance management, and plans for future improvement and the school's evaluation of its own performance.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils across all year groups about their learning both formally and informally.
- The inspector took account of 80 responses to the online parental questionnaire, Parent View, and 47 free-text responses from parents. Inspectors spoke informally with parents on the playground and on the telephone to parents who requested.
- The views of 15 staff were evaluated from their responses to the online questionnaire.
- No pupils responded to the online pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

Simon Harbrow

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