

# Inspection of Cromwell Academy

Parkway, Hinchingsbrooke Park, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire PE29 6JA

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Inspection dates: 11–12 September 2019

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Good**

Early years provision

**Requires improvement**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils at Cromwell Academy arrive at school happy and ready to learn. This includes children new to Reception, who adjust quickly to new routines. Pupils are polite and show respect to adults and each other. They take pride in their appearance and in their school work.

Pupils learn in a safe, welcoming environment with plenty of quality equipment to help them learn. Pupils take care of their school and the equipment and keep classrooms tidy. They told us that they enjoy school, love reading and value their learning. All staff expect pupils to behave well at all times. Therefore, breaktimes are sociable and calm, and learning in lessons is rarely disrupted. Bullying is rare, but pupils know what to do if they have concerns and are confident that it will be dealt with appropriately.

Building pupils' confidence and independence is at the core of learning. Teachers encourage pupils to take risks and to 'have a go', for example when attempting a new skill in physical education (PE), or solving a problem in mathematics. Pupils become resilient learners.

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

The headteacher and senior leaders have made many significant improvements over the last year. However, the school's current curriculum does not yet provide pupils with a good quality of education. Teaching does not systematically build up pupils' knowledge in different subjects.

In her first year, the headteacher sensibly focused on improving pupils' reading, writing and mathematics. She has invested wisely in essential training for the staff. This has helped pupils to learn better, for example how to solve mathematical problems. Teachers are also now far more able to help pupils learn the essential skills needed to understand what they read. Consequently, standards are rising and more pupils achieve well in reading and mathematics at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.

In reading and mathematics, teachers generally plan well for what they want the pupils to learn. In other subjects, teachers' plans do not build on what pupils have learned previously. Pupils' learning is a bit haphazard. Too often, planning sets out the topics to cover in different subjects, without enough precision about what pupils need to know or do better. In history for example, pupils cannot remember when specific historical events happened. They cannot recall important details about topics that they have been taught in the past.

The teaching of phonics is a strength. Most pupils can read well by the time they leave Year 1. Pupils who find reading difficult are very well supported to catch up.

There is still more work to do to improve pupils' writing. Even so, there has been considerable improvement over the last year. Teachers make sure that there is strong focus on extending pupils' vocabulary. Pupils are currently writing more and using a range of grammar in their work. Pupils present their work neatly and are joining their handwriting by the time they leave Year 1.

The school gives health and fitness a high priority. Pupils enjoy a wide range of sports. They have a good understanding about why exercise is important. Most pupils are very physically active.

Pupils learn about a wide range of faiths and can debate and discuss issues around equality and diversity with maturity. They recognise that it is 'okay' to be different.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) complete their work alongside their peers where possible. Extra support helps the pupils achieve as well as they can.

Teachers plan time to help pupils who are disadvantaged catch up in English and mathematics. In some instances, the time spent catching up overruns. This means that these pupils miss valuable learning in other subjects.

Teachers find out as much as they can about the children before they start in Reception class. Early on, they identify children who may need extra help to catch up. Staff also identify those who have skills above those typical for their age, so that they are stretched in their learning.

The trust provides valuable support to the school. It provides subject-specific training to help teachers improve their subject knowledge. This has been noticeably successful in mathematics and PE.

Governors are ambitious for all pupils. They provide challenge and support to the headteacher. They have made significant gains in working with parents and carers and improving communication with them. Governors check on the well-being of staff. Staff are very supportive of leaders and are proud to work at the school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Pupils know routines well and are sensible as they move around the school building. Pupils say they feel safe, and parents agree that their children are looked after well. Most pupils attend well, and staff work successfully with families to improve attendance. Staff know their pupils and families well. They are vigilant and report any concerns immediately. School leaders work successfully with agencies so that pupils and families get the support they need. Governors ensure that safeguarding pupils is high on their agenda and check the school's safeguarding processes regularly.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders' overarching curriculum plans are not detailed in any subjects. They do not consider what teachers want pupils to learn and by when. Plans focus on end of key stage test results rather than building on pupils' previous learning. Leaders need to ensure that the plans consider what pupils already know and are sequenced logically across lessons and year groups.
- Although teachers have good subject knowledge, they do not have a clear enough understanding about how to plan for all pupils so that they gain a deeper understanding of the subjects they are studying. Leaders need to ensure that teachers have appropriate training so that teachers can deliver a curriculum that helps all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, to know more and remember more.
- Leaders are relying too heavily on tests to find out what pupils know, including for phonics and reading. Teachers have started to check pupils' knowledge more regularly during lessons and are using this information to plan lessons. This practice does not yet link to leaders' plans nor is it embedded across the school.
- Although phonics is taught well, and pupils' achievement in reading is improving, it is not given a high enough priority within leaders' current plans so that more pupils achieve well. Plans do not focus enough on identifying what pupils need so that they can become confident and enthusiastic readers by the time they leave primary school.

## 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're 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.

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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	141297
<b>Local authority</b>	Cambridgeshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10110216
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	182
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Richard Laing
<b>Headteacher</b>	Hannah Connor-James
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.cromwellacademy.com">www.cromwellacademy.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	9–10 May 2017

## Information about this school

- The headteacher has been in place since September 2018. There have been significant changes in the teaching structure over the last year and since the previous inspection.
- The school has a Reception class and one class per year group.
- The proportions of pupils with SEND and those pupils who are disadvantaged are below the national averages.
- The school joined the Aces Academies Trust in 2018.

## Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- During the inspection, the inspection team met with the headteacher, the chief executive officer of the trust, the local governing body, the deputy headteacher and the special educational needs coordinator. Inspectors met with teachers from all year groups and several groups of pupils to talk about their learning across the curriculum.
- Reading, writing, mathematics and PE were considered as part of the inspection.

Inspectors spoke to leaders of these subjects, visited lessons, spoke with pupils and teachers and carried out work scrutinies to understand the quality of education.

- Inspectors held meetings with the designated safeguarding leader and midday supervisors, held meetings with pupils, spoke to staff and the local governing body to check safeguarding. Inspectors also checked the school's processes for checking the suitability of adults who work with pupils and who visit the school.

### **Inspection team**

Cindy Impey, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Paula Masters

Ofsted Inspector

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