

Inspection of Hammond Academy

Cambrian Way, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire HP2 5TD

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 June 2023

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?

At Hammond Academy, pupils are happy. Being a 'Hammond learner' instils ambition and motivation in them. They know what they are learning and what they have learned to get to that point. Pupils are keen to do well.

There are many changes that have taken place in the school, which pupils recognise. They know that the calmer environment is a result of the new behaviour systems. These systems have reduced the level of disruption in their classes and therefore pupils can focus on their learning. Previously, disruption to lessons had an impact on pupils' progress.

Bullying is minimal. When it does happen, pupils are confident staff will deal with it.

At lunchtime, activities are well planned. There is a wide range of sports on offer for those who want an active lunchtime. For those pupils who want a quieter lunchtime, the pastoral team runs a lunch club, so all pupils can experience the lunchtime that suits them.

There are many leadership opportunities available to pupils. These include being sports leaders, HOPE ambassadors, house captains or part of the school council. By working with these leaders, pupils can have their say about aspects of school life.

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

Leaders have developed a broad and balanced curriculum. Most subject leaders have carefully thought through the order in which pupils need to learn different concepts and topics. Staff are ambitious for the pupils at the school. They carefully adapt lessons to meet individual pupil's needs, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teachers carefully and consistently assess pupils' understanding. They ensure that pupils do not move forward with their learning until they have a clear understanding of the taught concept. This enables all pupils to build on their learning progressively. In some subjects, what pupils need to learn and when are not as precisely planned as others. Pupils do not build as well on their prior knowledge in these subjects as they do in most.

Early reading is consistently taught well. This is due to the high-quality training that staff have received. If any pupils struggle to keep up with their phonics, a catch-up programme is in place. This enables pupils to catch up quickly. Pupils take home books that match the sounds that they have learned. Pupils read for pleasure and enjoy choosing from a wide range of texts that they can easily access in their classrooms and from the new library. Leaders place a strong emphasis on reading, which is demonstrated through the pupils' love of reading.

Leaders have ensured that in the early years, children are learning through a variety of activities. The children work together as a team and encourage each other to

explore and investigate their surroundings. This ensures that children engage and make progress with their learning.

A new behaviour policy is in place. There are clear expectations for pupils, with related consequences and rewards. Pupils know what the Hammond values of 'challenge, fearless, motivated, ambitious, curious and proud' mean. If they demonstrate one, they can gain a reward, such as attending a tea party with leaders. This has created a calm and orderly environment.

Staff teach pupils about rights and responsibilities from the early years. They do this by distributing jobs for pupils to do to ensure the smooth running of the classroom and school. Pupils learn about, and celebrate, different world religions. Leaders ensure that diversity is well understood and celebrated throughout the school.

Leaders ensure that pupils know how to take care of themselves. This includes their physical and mental well-being as well as being safe in the home and at school. The carefully chosen personal development programme, alongside physical education (PE) lessons, covers these aspects. Pupils are enthusiastic about being active and staying healthy.

A lot of effective work to improve provision has taken place in the school in a short time, by staff and leaders. Several parents do not understand why these changes have taken place and do not see the benefit. This means that some parents have unwarranted negative perceptions of the school.

Leaders, including the trust and Local Advisory Board (LAB), have considered staff workload and well-being throughout the changes. The trust and the LAB know the school well and respond and support it through challenging times.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding has a high priority in the school. Staff know and understand that it is everyone's responsibility to report any concerns that they might have to a designated safeguarding lead (DSL) quickly. Leaders respond to these concerns and are tenacious at making sure they get the right outcomes for the pupils.

Pupils feel safe in school. They know their voice is important. When pupils raised a concern about how they could find adults to talk to on the playground at lunchtime, they spoke to leaders. Leaders and pupils came up with a solution that worked for everyone. This enabled pupils to get the help they needed when they needed it.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the curriculum is not as precise as it should be to enable teachers to know what to teach and when. This means that pupils are not fully prepared for the next stage of their learning. Leaders need to ensure that all subjects are focused on securing the knowledge and skills to support pupils to learn the curriculum content well.
- Leaders have not kept parents informed well enough about the value of the changes they have made. This means that parents have a more negative view of the school than they should do. Leaders should make sure that they communicate effectively with parents regarding the changes they are making.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

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

Unique reference number	137238
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10255125
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	402
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Anju Jallport
Principal	Karen Cohen
Website	www.hammondacademy.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	26 and 27 November 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is part of the Aspire Academies Trust.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The headteacher has been in post since January 2023.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, history, PE and science. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and reviewed samples of work.

- Inspectors discussed the art and geography curriculums with subject leaders, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils from Years 1, 2 and 3 read to a familiar adult.
- The lead inspector met with a member of the LAB, the executive principal, the chief executive officer of Aspire Academies Trust and trustees.
- The inspectors held meetings with the DSLs responsible for the schools' safeguarding arrangements. Safeguarding records and pre-employment checks for staff were scrutinised. Inspectors spoke to pupils and checked staff members' knowledge of how to keep pupils safe from harm.
- Inspectors gathered the views of pupils by speaking to them during lessons, in the dining hall and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of staff, including non-teaching staff, to gather their views on the school.
- The inspectors considered 45 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. They spoke to parents at the school gate and on the phone. Inspectors also considered correspondence sent directly to the team.

Inspection team

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His Majesty's Inspector

Lynda Walker

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