

Hartley Primary Academy

Round Ash Way, Hartley, Kent DA3 8BT

Inspection dates

9–10 March 2016

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Pupils consistently achieve standards above national averages.
- Pupils make exceptional progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The most-able pupils achieve standards well above similar pupils nationally.
- The few disadvantaged pupils or pupils with special educational needs or disability generally do as well as their classmates. Their performance is better than that of other pupils nationally.
- Excellent progress results from outstanding teaching.
- Pupils love to go to school because they know that lessons will be fun and exciting. Pupils enjoy learning.
- The Principal is an outstanding leader. She is ably supported by expert senior leaders.
- Leaders at all levels know the school's strengths and where it is most effective. They are relentless in their focus on standards and are never complacent.
- Leaders receive valuable support from the governing body.
- Leaders also benefit from the expert work of officers of the Leigh Academies Trust.
- The behaviour of pupils is exceptional. They are proud of their school and show it through the pride they take in their work.
- Pupils like to explain in detail to visitors all the many things the school does to help them learn.
- The attendance of the vast majority of pupils is excellent.
- The school has excellent relationships with the vast majority of parents. Parents are highly complimentary about the school and appreciative of all it does for their children.
- The school makes an outstanding contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils develop appropriate attitudes and values for living in modern, diverse Britain. They are polite to each other and treat adults and other children with respect.
- Pupils make an outstanding start to school in the early years. They are cared for well, encouraged to learn quickly and benefit from skilful teaching that makes exemplary use of the rich learning environment.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the highly effective practice currently in the school is shared more widely across Leigh Academies Trust and with other schools locally.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- The Principal of this outstanding school has been central to its success. She is deeply respected by the whole community since she has been responsible for driving up standards over an extended period of time. The Principal has a very direct management style which means that everybody on the team knows exactly what is expected of them.
- The Principal has been ably supported by two experienced and long-serving senior leaders. The vice-principal and assistant principal both contribute extensive expertise to the leadership team. As a group, they have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths. They are, however, appropriately modest about their effectiveness and determined never to become complacent. This is what keeps the school moving forward.
- Senior leaders have built a highly effective team of practitioners. Everyone knows their job and does it very well. The office team is, for example, highly efficient and professional. The work it undertakes for the school is thorough, which means senior leaders can concentrate on securing ever better outcomes for pupils.
- Senior leaders benefit from highly focused support from Leigh Academies Trust. This is a multi-academy trust (MAT) that Hartley joined after it was converted to an academy. Senior leaders from the trust keep a very close eye on the school's performance. They hold the Principal and her team to account and broker specific support from advisers and consultants who have the required expertise. For example, the trust's director of primary literacy works closely with teachers on a weekly basis to ensure that standards in English keep rising.
- The leadership of teaching and learning is extremely impressive. The Principal leads this from the front, constantly suggesting ways in which already strong practice can be even better. She is not afraid to hold teachers to account when performance falls short of her high expectations. Staff, however, enjoy being led in this way and appreciate the positive impact it has on their work and career.
- Notably, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), makes an outstanding contribution to the education, health and well-being of the small but needy group of pupils who have barriers to their learning. The SENCo has created some powerful tools for the early identification of pupils who are beginning to fall behind in their learning. She is also adept at working with the class teachers to spot pupils who may have previously undetected but more complex problems. This expertise is being spread more widely across the schools in the MAT.
- The leadership of English and mathematics is highly effective. The subject leaders evaluate the curriculum regularly to ensure that it is enabling pupils to meet the new age-related expectations. They track the progress of pupils in reading, writing and mathematics and organise teaching so that it is matched well to the learning needs of each pupil. Subject leaders are able to account accurately for variations between the performance of groups of pupils and show how individuals, as well as specific groups, are doing.
- Leaders ensure that resources are used well. For example, they are able to show in great detail how the pupil premium (additional money from the government for pupils who are eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority) is being used to improve outcomes for such pupils. They provided inspectors with clear evidence of the impact of the primary physical education and sports premium on developing pupils' attitudes to healthy lifestyles and participation in sporting activities.
- The curriculum is rich, deep and carefully planned. Pupils are provided with a wide array of extra-curricular activities which enhance their learning experience and contribute brilliantly to their understanding of the world around them. They go on residential trips, including to The Netherlands in Year 6. They welcome visitors to the school, including the local vicar and 'Dino Man', who arrived during the inspection to teach pupils about dinosaurs. Pupils and parents told inspectors about the many after-school clubs that they enjoy and inspectors observed the well-organised and well-attended breakfast club in action. All of this, as well as regular assemblies, contribute magnificently to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils also receive very clear messages about British values. They are able to practise being a representative by belonging to the school council. They understand about rules and how this relates to the law of the land and also the role of the monarchy. Pupils understand clearly the difference between right and wrong. They are able to explain the importance of rewards and like to receive them, especially in the Friday assembly. They leave Hartley very well prepared for the next stage of their education.

■ The governance of the school

- Governance is outstanding. The Chair of the Governing Body is dedicated and committed to the school. He has supervised successfully the progression of the school on its journey from being a Kent County Council maintained school. He recognised the advantages of joining the multi-academy trust and now leads effectively the governing body of Hartley and its partner secondary school.
 - The Chair of the Governing Body has gathered a team of effective governors, some of whom are principals of other academies within the trust. As such, it is a highly professional and proficient body, able to hold senior leaders to account. It does this well, including ensuring that only consistently good staff performance is rewarded financially.
 - Governors know the school and its performance inside out. They can account for the detail of each aspect of school life as well as the school's senior leaders. They know what is going well and share the task of planning for continuous improvement with the Principal. Their evaluation of the school's strengths is accurate and based on purposeful visits, close analysis of information and robust questioning of the Principal's reports. Notes show also their appropriate challenge of the MAT's officers on financial matters and strategic issues.
- The arrangements for safeguarding, led by the vice-principal, are highly effective. No one enters the school, even as a temporary visitor, unless they have been checked robustly. Leaders ensure that staff are regularly trained in safeguarding matters and can identify any pupils at risk. The vast majority of pupils said that they felt safe at the school and parents were fulsome in their praise for this aspect of the school's work. The site is well maintained, clean and tidy.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding

- Teaching has many strengths. Teachers plan together so that they collectively produce lessons which are inspiring and imaginative. Many pupils said that they love to come to school because they know the lessons each day will be exciting.
- Teachers consider daily what each pupil knows, understands and can do already and they also take account of their own assessment of the success of the previous day's work. This is impressive because teachers adjust their plans constantly. When things do not go to plan, they are quick to go over the work or approach it in a different way to ensure that no gaps appear.
- The school has invested in a wide range of resources, including a recent update of all its information technology. Teachers use computers with expertise to promote pupils' learning. Pupils in Year 1 were using iPads to find out about dinosaurs. Pupils in Year 5 were learning about the present continuous tense using an interactive and amusing video. In Year 6, one of the class teachers used the interactive television to work with pupils on an exercise in mathematical reasoning based on what they had learned about Pascal's triangle.
- Teachers make good use of other resources to support learning. For example, some use counting tools with younger pupils in mathematics. In science, teachers make learning fun by enabling pupils to build electrical circuits with good-quality equipment. In many aspects of the curriculum, the site is used well to support learning, such as in the Forest School setting. On one occasion, pupils had to work out who had been staying overnight in their forest. They found a campsite in the middle of it when they arrived in the morning.
- Since September 2015, led by the vice-principal, the staff have been working with a new assessment system. This is based on six steps of progress that each pupil is expected to make in a year towards the new national curriculum's age-related expectations. Teachers were able to show how this is helping them plan learning for their classes and also how it is helping them find gaps in pupils' prior knowledge or skills.
- Teachers are sensibly working closely with other schools in the trust to make sure that progress at Hartley compares well with similar schools. Teachers routinely share what they have been doing with each other and with teachers in neighbouring schools, including others local to the Longfield area. They are growing in confidence that the new system will help them maintain existing high levels of performance. They are not, however, complacent and intend to keep checking their work with others.
- All adults contribute to the highly effective teaching of reading. From the Reception Year onwards, adults teach phonics (letters and the sounds they make) systematically and skilfully. This leads to high levels of attainment when pupils' reading is checked. It also enables pupils to develop a passion for reading and love of books. There are lots of books in classrooms and corridors as well as in the library area.

- Teachers make sure that there is plenty of time for pupils to practise writing in detail and at length. They also focus intently on encouraging pupils to spell accurately and use correct grammar. Teachers set aside time for pupils to go back over work and make any necessary corrections. The most-able pupils are given individual, additional work or more challenging tasks to extend what they have learned so that no time is wasted.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- 'The school provides a caring and supportive environment to children and there is a clear emphasis on enabling children to be the best they can be — both academically and as "people"'. Inspectors found this to be the case. This lovely quotation from a member of staff illustrates perfectly the nurturing, family atmosphere of which the school is rightly proud.
- The school also enables pupils to grow and develop as independent young learners. They develop confidence and resilience. They thrive on being challenged and do not give up even when learning gets tough.
- Pupils are informed accurately about the different types of bullying that can occur. They were able to describe what it is and the effect that it can have. They were clear that even though they know what it is, it rarely happens at Hartley. They were also clear that teachers would deal with bullying if they knew it was happening.
- Pupils receive expert tuition on keeping themselves safe online. They were able to speak knowledgeably about the ways in which they can be at risk from strangers and pointed to the excellent work they had done on e-safety that adorns the hall wall. In addition, they could talk about lessons they had received on road safety. Pupils recognised that sometimes, in the interests of safety, leaders have to impose some rules, such as limiting the amount of time they can play on the fields or forest, in the wet, or with a football.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. A member of staff replied to Ofsted's survey, 'The conduct and politeness of the children is lovely to see.' Inspectors saw this too. They also found no poor behaviour at all over the course of two days.
- Pupils are proud to belong to the community of Hartley Primary Academy. They wear their uniform with pride and like to talk enthusiastically about all they are learning and doing.
- Pupils' conduct in lessons is exemplary. They listen to instructions carefully, move from activity to activity in a business-like manner, and cooperate well when working in pairs or groups. Pupils laugh frequently. This is because teachers make lessons fun. Teachers understand that pupils will learn more if they are enjoying themselves at the same time.
- Teachers have a range of effective techniques for managing pupils' behaviour. They all have a signal that tells pupils they must stop what they are doing and listen. Some count down from three to one. One used a little bell and another an African rainmaker. Teachers hardly raised their voices across the whole inspection. This calm and orderly environment inspires pupils to behave well. They are also inspired by great teaching so that they rarely lose concentration. Their attitudes to learning are exceptional.
- Pupils' attendance is excellent. There is a tiny minority of pupils whose persistent absence distorts the otherwise low absence rates across the school. Leaders provided ample evidence of the many ways in which they are trying to address this. Leaders work closely with the trust's attendance and welfare officer to find further ways of enabling this small group of families to get their children into school more often.
- The school has not excluded any of its pupils for a very long time.
- The school uses an effective system for reminding pupils about its high expectations. Pupils point to the graded scale on each classroom wall. They were able to explain how this helps them remember that actions have consequences.

Outcomes for pupils

are outstanding

- Pupils consistently attain standards above the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. For example, in 2015, in Year 6, all the pupils made expected progress in reading and writing and 98% made expected progress in mathematics.
- In 2015, in Year 2, the proportions of pupils achieving the expected standards at the end of Key Stage 1 were also well above average. Similarly, in Year 1, 90% of the pupils were successful in the phonics screening check. This outcome was also well above the national average.
- Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 also achieved standards that were higher than the national benchmarks on average. High proportions made more than expected progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils generally do as well as their classmates. As the standards in the school are so high, even when they are just behind their classmates, their performance is better than that of other pupils nationally. This is exceptional performance.
- In addition to successful raw attainment, pupils leave the school having added value to their learning in all key stages. There is no difference in this measure between boys and girls, advantaged and disadvantaged pupils or between those with special educational needs or disability and those without.
- Teachers ensure that these secure outcomes at the end of the key stages are supported by successful progress within each year group. Currently, pupils on roll are making strong progress according to the detailed tracking the school is using now that national curriculum levels have been replaced.
- During the inspection, rates of progress were examined in lessons and in pupils' books. Over time, progress was found to be strong as, for example, pupils develop mathematical reasoning as well as the ability to handle numbers accurately and to work effectively with shapes and measurements. They develop the ability to show their working out clearly and most become skilled at using mental arithmetic.
- The broad and varied curriculum provides plenty of opportunities to practise writing and to develop a wide vocabulary. Teachers insist on the correct use of technical language which aids this aspect of pupils' development.
- The standards at Hartley Primary Academy are exceptional. They have been consistently above average over time. Leaders are determined that they will be maintained, even with the new style of assessments at the end of Key Stage 2.

Early years provision

is outstanding

- Children get an absolutely flying start in this setting. They leave really well prepared for Year 1.
- All adults plan, deliver and assess phonics enthusiastically and well. They make great use of the learning environment to support this work and constantly reinforce learning with careful questioning and examples of when to use the right word.
- The early years leader manages this setting with great skill. She ensures that a vibrant and purposeful range of activities is available every day. She also ensures that there is a good blend of child-initiated learning through play and very direct teaching from an adult.
- The outdoor learning space mirrors exactly the environment in both Reception classes. The children love it. Even when it is raining hard, pupils go outside to learn through play. Adults take turns to ensure they are supervised appropriately and make consistent and regular learning gains.
- Leaders make excellent use of a computerised tracking system. It helps them gather from observation evidence of each child's progress towards each of the early learning goals. Parents are appreciative of the instant access this gives them online to the progress their children are making. Parents also like that they can contribute their own evidence to the school's baseline assessment of each child.
- A large majority of children end Reception having reached a good level of development. In 2014 and 2015, the proportions of children achieving this benchmark were well above the national averages. The current cohort is expected to achieve equally well. Of note is their ability to recount to adults exactly what they are doing. They are confident and self-assured.
- Current children in Reception are making strong progress. Most started the year unable to form letters. Many are, however, already writing full sentences with a high degree of accuracy. Some count confidently up to 10 and some can take away the correct number to answer simple sums. This is impressive.

- The atmosphere and ethos of the early years are delightful. Children happily go about their work, ably supported by cheerful and well-trained adults. Children also cooperate with each other admirably. They play well, taking turns as appropriate, or follow clear instructions from the teaching staff.
- Children are supported to make good choices about healthy snacks and to pay attention to good hygiene.
- The strength of the early years is apparent to external visitors. As such, the early years team is lending its support to other settings in the MAT and other schools locally. The team has exemplary practice from which others are already benefiting.

School details

Unique reference number	139615
Local authority	Kent County Council
Inspection number	10011122

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	409
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Graham Clewes
Principal	Lorraine Hollingworth
Telephone number	01474 702742
Website	www.hartleyprimaryacademy.org.uk
Email address	office@hartleyprimaryacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Hartley Primary Academy is a larger-than-average school in the village of Hartley, near Longfield in Kent.
- Hartley Primary Academy is part of Leigh Academies Trust.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged is well below the national average.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage and only a few have English as an additional language.
- There is a tiny proportion of pupils who receive support for special educational needs or disability.
- There is a tiny proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- The school's population has average stability. The proportion of pupils from low-income households is below average.
- The Principal, vice-principal, assistant principal, SENCo and the early years leader contribute extensively to the work of the wider multi-academy trust.
- Hartley Primary Academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection began as a short inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. During the first day of inspection, senior leaders presented compelling evidence that the school might be judged outstanding. The lead inspector converted the inspection into a full inspection under section 5 of the same Act. Three further Ofsted inspectors joined the team on the second day.
- On day one of the inspection, the lead inspector jointly observed learning in 14 parts of lessons with the Principal. On the second day of the inspection, learning was jointly observed three times and inspectors made a further 14 visits to lessons.
- The lead inspector held regular meetings with the Principal. He met with the assistant principal, who is also the SENCo. In the absence of the vice-principal, he met with senior leaders responsible for English and mathematics.
- Inspectors met with the early years leader.
- The lead inspector met the Chair of the Governing Body and other governors. He also met the Chief Executive Officer of Leigh Academies Trust, the proprietor, as well as the Deputy Chief Executive Officer.
- The lead inspector met briefly with Kent County Council's school improvement partner.
- Inspectors spoke with many parents informally at the beginning of each day and took into account 147 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's confidential online survey.
- Inspectors talked to staff members and took into account 46 responses to Ofsted's new staff survey as well as surveys undertaken by the MAT itself.
- The lead inspector met the school council on day two and another inspector heard a few pupils read. Inspectors also considered 100 responses to Ofsted's new pupil survey.
- The team examined a wide range of the school's documents, including its most recent analysis of the performance of current pupils. Inspectors looked at the checks the school makes on adults wishing to work or volunteer in the school, records of any incidents of poor behaviour, information about pupils' attendance, and the notes of visits of external supporters and governors.

Inspection team

Dr Simon Hughes, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Sean Flood	Ofsted Inspector
Kathryn Hobbs	Ofsted Inspector
Francois Walker	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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