

Harrow Gate Primary Academy

Piper Knowle Road, Hardwick, Stockton-on-Tees, Cleveland TS19 8DE

Inspection dates

6–9 June 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Senior leaders, well supported by the academy trust, have created a culture of high expectations and ambition. This has resulted in rapid improvements in all of the school's work.
- Detailed systems to check teaching mean that staff receive timely, well-targeted support to develop their expertise. Consequently, teaching is now good and improving quickly.
- Strong relationships with teachers and interesting lessons mean that pupils work hard and try their best. Teachers demonstrate new learning well and ask questions which deepen pupils' understanding.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress and more now reach the standards expected for their age. Leaders have ensured that they address anything which may prevent this group of pupils from learning well.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are rising because of the good progress pupils now make. Standards in other subjects are in line with expectations for the age of pupils.
- Occasionally, particularly in phonics, the curriculum is not covered rapidly enough and this slows pupils' progress.
- Sometimes work is not challenging enough to stretch pupils, especially those who are most able, and assessment is not used well enough to match work to all pupils' capabilities.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are closely supported by staff who know them well and provide the right level of support so they make good progress.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They cooperate well with each other in lessons and the playground. They talk animatedly about how behaviour is now better and how they now feel safe in school. Parents endorse this view.
- Support provided by learning mentors is of a high quality and successfully helps those who may be experiencing difficulties to overcome them.
- The curriculum reflects the school's core values, 'Achievement, Resilience and Trust', very well. It fully engages pupils and is thoughtfully designed to ensure pupils are fully prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The early years is good. Children settle into school and follow rules and routines. They can progress well in their reading, writing and mathematics. Sometimes adults miss opportunities to deepen children's thinking and their communication and imaginative skills.
- Challenge to school leaders through local governance arrangements is inconsistent. Some delegated tasks are not fulfilled effectively.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the consistently good teaching and pupils' good progress by:
 - providing more consistent challenge to all pupils, particularly the most able pupils, in all subjects and in all year groups
 - increasing the pace of learning, especially in phonics, to ensure that the curriculum is covered more rapidly and progress is accelerated
 - ensuring that assessment is accurate in all classes so that work is matched to pupils' capabilities.
- Further improve the early years by:
 - supporting children's play more effectively to help them to deepen their understanding and solve problems for themselves
 - providing more opportunities for children to develop their communication and imaginative skills as they play.
- Continue to develop local governance so that leaders are challenged effectively in all aspects of their work.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Pupils and staff report that the school has improved rapidly since the appointment of the senior leadership team. The principal, ably supported by other senior leaders, has successfully established a culture based on the school's core values, 'Achievement, Resilience, Trust'. This is seen in the high expectations and ambition for the school and its pupils.
- Leaders have a very detailed and accurate picture of the school's work as a result of the clear systems they have established and the very regular checking which takes place. Any issues which arise receive a rapid and effective response. This has resulted in improvements to pupils' behaviour, to teaching and to pupils' outcomes.
- Extremely close attention to the performance of staff means that support is timely and incisively targeted. Those at different stages of their career receive appropriate development through a range of programmes delivered or brokered through the academy trust.
- The same close detailed attention is paid to the performance and progress of pupils. Those in danger of falling behind receive additional support. Funding used to support disadvantaged pupils is now carefully targeted and their progress is good, with their attendance improving.
- Middle leaders have been enabled to play a full part in improving the quality of teaching. For example, the very knowledgeable coordinator of special educational needs provides training to staff that develops their expertise in supporting pupils. This support is carefully targeted and based on her own careful checking of teaching and pupils' progress. Additional funding is used effectively, ensuring that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well.
- The curriculum is well designed and successfully engages pupils to learn and deepen their knowledge. Each topic pupils study results in an end product which is real and meaningful. For example, older pupils created a news report about volcanoes using appropriate technology. Younger pupils' study of painting skills and an artist's style culminated in an art gallery event which parents were invited to.
- Good opportunities are provided to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and to prepare them for life in modern Britain. The study of different novels is particularly effective in helping pupils to reflect on issues such as disability or life as a refugee. Participation in local community events such as an annual summer festival enhances their social and cultural development. Pupils' understanding of democracy is developed through events such as a mock general election.
- The sport premium is used well to increase participation in sporting clubs both before and after school. Pupils are also enthused and engaged by visits from experts who have competed in the Olympics.
- Engagement of parents is effective. A range of opportunities to share in their child's achievements and experiences in school are coupled with chances to help their learning

and personal development.

Governance of the school

- The academy trust provides effective support to the school and has enabled the rapid improvements to take place, by providing an appropriate level of support and challenge when it is needed. The trust ensures that statutory duties are met. The trust recognises that local governance is not strong in all aspects of its delegated work.
- Local board members visit the school regularly and use information on visits informally to form a view about the effectiveness of other aspects of the school's work. However, there is currently no systematic approach to checking the full range of delegated responsibilities, such as the impact of the sport premium funding or ensuring that the school fully meets its equality duty.
- The expertise of local board members is used well and, as a result, there is effective challenge to hold school leaders to account for pupils' achievement.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils' welfare is at the heart of the school's work. Staff are clear about the procedures that need to be used if there is concern about a pupil. Comprehensive records are kept and checked regularly.
- The parent support adviser works closely with pupils and their families to ensure that appropriate support is provided when it is needed.
- Pupils are clear who they would turn to if they had a concern and trust staff to help them.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Action taken by senior leaders has ensured improvements to teaching so that it is good and improving quickly. Consequently, pupils' outcomes are also improving because they now make good progress. Clear expectations have been established and very close support is provided to those who need to improve aspects of their performance.
- Strong relationships between pupils and staff mean that pupils generally attend well and listen carefully. They concentrate well and try hard because of the interesting activities provided for them.
- Teachers demonstrate new learning well and make sure that pupils gain a good grasp of the new vocabulary associated with the task they are tackling. This enables them to fully understand what they have to do and how to be successful.
- Adults' questioning is generally effective in helping pupils to deepen their understanding and clarify any misunderstandings. For example, older pupils were supported to deepen their understanding of the book they were reading through questions which prompted them to 'read between the lines'.
- Teachers generally have good subject knowledge and use this well to select the right

resources to move pupils' learning along effectively. For example, pupils' learning was promoted successfully during a physical education (PE) lesson because the teacher knew what to do next to move them on quickly, using resources well to do this.

- Teaching assistants provide effective and timely support to pupils that enables them to learn well. They successfully ensure that pupils stay on task by asking questions and clarifying what has to be done. They have a good knowledge of individual pupils that means they can respond effectively to their needs.
- The most able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently. In subjects such as geography and history they are given tasks which do not demand enough of them. Scrutiny of their work indicated that in mathematics they are not stretched enough in their mathematical understanding or given more complex problems to solve.
- Occasionally teachers' inaccurate assessment means that pupils do not have tasks which enable them to progress well. All pupils are given the same work, which means that it is too hard for some, so they struggle, and too easy for others so that they finish quickly and do not make the best use of time.
- Sometimes, particularly in phonics lessons, although pupils are engaged and enthusiastic, not enough new learning takes place. This slows rates of progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are polite and considerate to each other. They work well together in class and share ideas willingly. During reward assemblies they celebrate the success of others with enthusiasm.
- Learning mentors are particularly successful in supporting pupils' emotional well-being. They work closely with pupils and their families to help overcome the difficulties that pupils face and which can prevent them from learning as well as possible.
- Those who are new to the school are welcomed and pupils say that everyone is friendly. They say that someone will always play with them and look after them.
- Pupils move safely around school in an orderly manner, following school rules. Playground equipment is used appropriately and when rules are broken in the playground pupils accept their sanctions.
- Knowing how to stay safe is well understood by pupils. The dangers of using the internet and how to keep safe are known. Pupils' understanding of safety in life is enhanced by visits to the 'crucial crew' where they learn about the dangers of fire and electricity.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to be and stay healthy. Older pupils have signed a class charter and promised to eat more healthily. Through visits from the local police they learn about the dangers of alcohol and other drugs.
- The well-attended breakfast club provides pupils with a safe, healthy and active start to the day. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the healthy breakfast choice and the sports

clubs on offer.

- Pupils spoken to are clear that bullying and unacceptable behaviour are now rare and dealt with swiftly if they do occur. They report that this is a big change since the principal took up post. They understand that bullying in all of its forms will not be tolerated and that derogatory name-calling is forbidden and dealt with promptly. School records confirm pupils' views of the school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The behaviour policy is well understood by pupils and they know the consequences of poor behaviour. They understand that poor behaviour is not tolerated and that good behaviour is necessary to keep everyone safe. School records and parents confirm that poor behaviour is now rare.
- Pupils form trusting relationships with adults, who get to know them well. The work of the learning mentors is particularly successful in supporting pupils to manage their behaviour and find ways to respond which are not aggressive.
- Pupils respect resources and equipment and use them appropriately. The school is well maintained. Pupils' work is displayed attractively and with pride. The grounds are litter-free. Expectations of all who visit the school are made clear.
- The school has stringent procedures in place to improve attendance and make sure that pupils attend on time and regularly. These procedures are making a difference so that attendance is improving and there are fewer pupils with high levels of absence. However, attendance remains below the national average and proportions of pupils with high levels of absence are still above the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Improved teaching and extremely thorough checking of pupils' learning have led to improvements in pupils' progress and higher proportions working at the standard expected of them. An analysis of current pupils' work and their records of achievement indicates that they are now making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- From typically lower starting points, pupils make good progress across a range of subjects including art, PE, history and geography.
- In 2016 the proportions of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics were below national averages at the end of Year 2. Closely tailored support for pupils as well as improved teaching have resulted in progress accelerating and an increasing proportion now reaching the required standard.
- The good progress made by the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics means that more pupils are now at the expected standard for their age and ready for the next stage of their education.
- Disadvantaged pupils now make good progress as a result of well-targeted funding. Consequently, increasing proportions of disadvantaged pupils are now reaching the expected standard for their age.

- Effective support and close guidance help pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their different starting points.
- Although pupils make good progress overall in phonics, the proportions reaching the national standard are still below average. This is because progress in learning and using new sounds is not rapid enough.
- Scrutiny of the most able pupils' work indicates that they could be stretched to make more rapid progress in some year groups and subjects, for example in history and geography. In mathematics they are not given enough more complex problems or challenges to grapple with.

Early years provision

Good

- Staff want to help children progress as quickly as possible and as a result they plan opportunities to help them make good gains in their learning and development.
- Starting points for the majority of children are typically below those expected for their age, particularly in their communication and social skills. They make good progress so that, by the end of their time in Reception, proportions close to the national average have a good level of development and are ready for Year 1.
- Children settle quickly into Nursery. They learn rules and routines and respond to adults promptly. They behave well as a result of the clear expectations set. Adults are good role models and help children to learn manners, for example. Guided by adults, children learn to play together well.
- In well-structured sessions adults guide children to learn new skills such as counting a number of objects or learning to write a sentence. Children learn to concentrate for longer periods of time as sessions are increased in length.
- When adults support children's play they sometimes miss opportunities to capitalise on their ideas, ask probing questions and deepen their learning. For example, children's curiosity about bees in a tree outside was not used to deepen their knowledge.
- Sometimes adults guide children too closely and do not encourage them to talk about their own solutions or use their own imaginative ideas. Consequently, when children enter Year 1 their standards of communication and ability to be imaginative are below the national average.
- The early years leader is keen to improve the quality of teaching and learning. She is aware of the strengths and areas for development and has provided training to enable staff to improve their skills so that children now make good progress.

School details

Unique reference number

141301

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| Local authority | Stockton-on-Tees |
| Inspection number | 10031909 |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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| 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 | 474 |
| Appropriate authority | Academy trust |
| Chair | Jack Harrison |
| Principal | Victoria Galt |
| Telephone number | 01642 673984 |
| Website | http://www.harrowgateacademy.org |
| Email address | harrowgate@harrowgateacademy.org |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Information about this school

- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish on their website.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is larger than the average primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium is almost twice the national average.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils who have support for special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below average.
- In the early years, children attend the Nursery class for five mornings or five afternoons each week. In the Reception Year children attend full time.
- The school organises a breakfast club.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school became a member of the Enquire Academies Trust on 1 September 2014.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of teaching and learning in parts of lessons in every class and a PE lesson. Three of the observations were undertaken jointly with the principal.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about learning and school life, both individually and in groups.
- Inspectors listened to pupils reading. They reviewed pupils' work in lessons and analysed samples of work in pupils' books. Senior leaders participated in analysis of some of the samples.
- Discussions were held with representatives of the Enquire Academies Trust and members of the local governing board.
- Inspectors looked at the school's review of its own performance, its improvement plan, a number of key school policies and the minutes of the local governing board. They considered a range of documentation in relation to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- Informal discussions were held with parents, and the 20 responses to the online questionnaire for parents (Parent View) and the school's own parental questionnaire were analysed.
- There were 39 staff questionnaires completed and considered by inspectors.
- The inspection was conducted with a break of 48 hours between day 1 and day 2 as a result of the lead inspector's illness.

Inspection team

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|-----------------------------|------------------|
| Susan Waugh, lead inspector | Ofsted Inspector |
| Alison Aitchison | Ofsted Inspector |
| Andy Jones | Ofsted Inspector |

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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