

Hartsholme Academy

Carrington Drive, Lincoln, Lincolnshire LN6 0DE

Inspection dates

17–18 April 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders and those responsible for governance did not take effective action to reverse the significant decline in standards over the past two years.
- Over time, the Link Education Trust has not been effective in holding leaders to account for the school's underperformance. Governance of the school has broken down.
- Leaders have not used effectively the additional funds made available to raise standards for disadvantaged pupils.
- Senior and subject leaders' checks on the quality of teaching are not rigorous and comprehensive enough. As a result, underperforming teachers are not improving quickly enough. Teachers do not have consistently good subject knowledge and so do not consistently question pupils effectively.
- Middle leaders are inexperienced in their roles. Their work has limited impact on standards.
- Teachers do not consistently use assessment to ensure that learning tasks are well matched to pupils' abilities.
- Teachers' expectations of the standards of pupils' work are too low and there is a legacy of poor and significantly declining outcomes for pupils. This applies equally to disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.
- The curriculum that pupils receive does not prepare pupils well enough for secondary education.
- Pupils' attendance declined in 2017 to below the national average. Rates of persistent absence also increased to almost double the national average and have continued to grow.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the early years is not consistently good.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher has quickly identified the strengths and weaknesses of the school. He has established a clear plan for improvement.
- As a result of the pastoral support team's effective work, the proportion of pupils who are excluded from school has reduced significantly.
- Safeguarding is effective. The school's work to protect and support vulnerable pupils is a strength. Relationships are strong. Pupils have confidence in staff to keep them safe.
- The school is calm and orderly; pupils' behaviour is respectful of others.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the impact of leadership and management in order to secure sustained improvement by:
 - ensuring that leaders carry out rigorous and regular checks on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment
 - ensuring that leaders use the outcomes of their checks to hold teachers to account for pupils' progress
 - ensuring that leaders and those responsible for governance take urgent action to address and resolve issues of staff underperformance, especially in key stage 1
 - developing the roles of middle and subject leaders so that they become less dependent on the guidance of the headteacher and skilled in supporting colleagues and monitoring the effectiveness of their areas of responsibility
 - senior leaders ensuring that the curriculum enables pupils to be fully prepared for the next stage of their education
 - establishing strong governance which is able to provide strategic direction for the school, holding leaders effectively to account for the school's performance.
- Eliminate inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by making sure that:
 - teachers use assessment accurately to set work that is consistently well matched to pupils' abilities
 - teachers and support staff have secure subject knowledge in English and mathematics and use questioning skills effectively to challenge pupils and move them on in their learning
 - teachers have consistently high expectations of the quality of pupils' written work and insist on high standards of presentation, especially in mathematics
 - teachers consistently apply the school's policies and procedures.
- Urgently improve outcomes for pupils, especially in mathematics, including for pupils who are disadvantaged and who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Improve pupils' attendance and reduce rates of persistent absence by ensuring that secure systems are in place to promote sustained improvement.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the early years so that it is consistently good across the whole of the early years provision.

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

Inadequate

- Leaders and those responsible for governance failed to take effective action to reverse the school's rapid and significant decline.
- Until recently, the school's assessment system was not fit for purpose. Senior and subject leaders believe that teacher assessments were inaccurate in the past. They judge that this led to an overgenerous and unreliable view of pupils' progress over time.
- Over time, there have been frequent changes of school leadership. In particular, there has been a rapid turnover of headteachers of school. This has had a destabilising effect on the school and has contributed to its decline.
- Until recently, leaders did not make sure that the additional funds made available by the government to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils were used effectively. Previous plans for spending were not fit for purpose. Leaders did not precisely analyse the impact of their actions on pupils' outcomes. As a result, disadvantaged pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics was well below that of other pupils nationally in 2017.
- Leaders have not monitored the quality of teaching and learning thoroughly enough. Consequently, underperforming teachers are not improving quickly enough, especially in key stage 1, and pupils have therefore not made good progress in their learning.
- Until recently, the school's approach to the curriculum did not enable pupils to learn and make progress. Following a review, leaders have begun to make changes to the curriculum. These changes have begun to strengthen the teaching of English and mathematics, but leaders' plans for improving their approach to all other subjects are still in the early stages.
- Curriculum leadership is not strong; the inexperienced middle leaders are still developing their skills and they are too reliant on the headteacher for guidance. Middle leaders are not able to explain a clear and precise rationale for what they wish to achieve for pupils.
- Following his appointment in September 2017, the headteacher quickly identified the strengths and weaknesses of the school. He has rightly prioritised the need to address the legacy of pupils' underachievement through a determined strategy to improve teaching and raise standards.
- The impact of the support provided to the school by the Link Education Trust has been inadequate. The pace of improvement was further hindered during the autumn term by a period of turbulence in the trust. Consequently, many of the proposed changes have only been implemented by leaders since January 2018. It is too soon to see the impact on outcomes for pupils.
- Staff are supportive of the changes that the new headteacher has introduced. They told inspectors that they value the extensive, additional training they have received since September 2017. In particular, staff say that they value opportunities to visit other schools to observe effective practice. Staff say that they consider the new

assessment system to be more reliable and helpful in enabling them to identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge.

- Parents and carers who spoke with inspectors expressed support for the headteacher and the changes he has begun to introduce. A number of parents of pupils in Year 6 say that these changes enable their children to be better prepared for secondary school.
- Following an external review of the pupil premium funding in February 2018, the headteacher has made sure that an effective plan is now in place for supporting disadvantaged pupils. The current plan meets statutory requirements and is published on the school's website. It is too soon to measure the impact of the new plan on pupils' outcomes. For this reason, a further external review of the use of pupil premium is not recommended.
- Since September 2017, the school's special educational needs coordinator has instigated a significant number of positive changes to the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. These improvements include the introduction of a new assessment system to precisely identify pupils' needs and track their progress, and pupil welfare meetings to hold staff to account for pupils' progress. As a result, support is more precisely targeted to pupils' needs and there is evidence that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are beginning to make accelerated progress.
- By means of some astute appointments, the headteacher has established a new pastoral support team. Because of its effective work, the proportion of fixed-term exclusions has reduced sharply over the past five months.
- Leaders have made sure that they use the additional sports funding effectively to improve pupils' physical fitness and their overall health and well-being. An appropriate balance of staff training and pupil activities is in place. As a result, staff are improving their skills in the delivery of physical education and an increased proportion of pupils are taking regular exercise.

Governance of the school

- The governance of the school is inadequate. There is no local governing body; responsibility for governance rests solely with the Link Education Trust (formerly known as the New Dawn Trust, up to September 2017). Over time, the trust has not fulfilled its statutory functions in holding leaders to account and providing effective strategic direction for the school.
- The trust directors presided over a period of significant decline. They did not take effective action to reverse the declining pupil standards.
- During the autumn term 2017, following an external investigation into the maladministration of the school's Year 6 statutory assessments in 2016 and other factors, the trust underwent a period of further decline. This culminated in the mass resignation of trust officers in December 2017, including that of the chair, vice-chair and chief executive officer. Current leaders and the remaining three trust directors acknowledge that governance has failed.
- The school does not currently have an effective governing body in place. Trustees are not in a position to fulfil their statutory duties in regard to the school. However, from

January 2018, the school has received effective and well-judged external support from the Humber Teaching School (part of the Healing Multi-Academy Trust). The newly appointed interim chief executive officer is now working closely with the headteacher to establish a new culture of high expectations and bring about a range of much-needed improvements.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders have made sure that all the necessary checks are in place, in line with statutory requirements.
- Pupils say, emphatically, that they feel safe at school. They know that bullying sometimes happens but, equally, they have no qualms about sharing any concerns with school staff who will 'stay calm and listen' before resolving the issue appropriately.
- The school's safeguarding team works in an efficient and well-coordinated manner to make sure that staff training is up to date and comprehensive. A recent and detailed external audit of the school's safeguarding procedures found no serious areas of concern.
- Leaders responsible for safeguarding have established a thorough procedure for making sure that any welfare concerns are handled promptly and appropriately, involving outside agencies where needed. A range of staff who spoke with inspectors were confident in their knowledge of how to report concerns and deal with sensitive disclosures from pupils. There is a strong culture of care and concern for pupils' welfare throughout the school.
- The school's work to support vulnerable pupils and families is strong, including, in particular, for those pupils with protected characteristics.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent. Too often, teachers do not match the work well enough to pupils' abilities. Consequently, pupils do not make enough progress in their learning.
- Teachers do not use their assessments consistently well in order to plan activities to promote learning. Especially in key stage 1, teachers often do not allow pupils sufficient time to complete a task or respond to questions. This results in confusion for pupils and their attention wanders.
- Teachers' and teaching assistants' use of questioning is not consistently effective. The quality of the additional support provided through small groups is variable. As a result, the time set aside to help pupils catch up in their work is not used consistently well, and pupils do not make good enough progress.
- Teachers' expectations for the standard of work in pupils' books are not high enough. In particular, the work in pupils' mathematics books across the school denotes a lack of pupils' pride in their work and careful attention to detail. Standards of presentation in mathematics are low. In some English books, the quality of handwriting and letter formation is poor.

- Leaders have recently introduced a new scheme of work for mathematics across the school. This is because previously there was insufficient coverage of the mathematics national curriculum and pupils had significant gaps in their knowledge. Teachers are still developing their subject knowledge in mathematics in order to teach effectively and enable pupils to make rapid gains in their learning.
- Teachers do not consistently apply the school's policy for providing pupils with feedback on how to improve their work, particularly in mathematics. For example, evidence from pupils' work in their books confirms that when feedback is provided, teachers do not always follow up by checking that pupils have acted upon it to improve their work. Pupils who spoke with inspectors said that they receive less feedback for mathematics than for English and, consequently, feel less sure of how well they are doing and how they might improve.
- The majority of staff have accurate knowledge of phonics and are able to teach with confidence. Consequently, pupils read with increasing skill and confidence, especially in key stage 2. In key stage 1, pupils' ability to apply their phonics knowledge to their general reading is inconsistent, because they do not have enough opportunities to practise their reading outside of phonics lessons.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are not consistently good. Sometimes their attention wanders and they lose focus. This is because learning tasks are not well matched to their abilities and sometimes because they cannot find a suitable area to work within the classroom. The work in pupils' books, especially in mathematics, denotes a lack of pride in their work.
- Pupils are confident and say that they are happy at school. They describe their learning as 'fun' and say that they value the trusted adults who care for them and keep them safe.
- The vast majority of parents who spoke with inspectors and who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire said that their children are happy and safe at the school.
- The school's work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective. Pupils speak with confident awareness about those whose culture and lifestyles are different from their own. They show natural tolerance and understanding for others. In particular, leaders and staff work effectively to promote pupils' understanding of the importance of supporting people who have a protected characteristic as defined by the 2010 Equalities Act.
- In particular, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. This is evident in their ability to discuss the meaning of fundamental British values; pupils have clear and enthusiastic recall of a series of assemblies about liberty, democracy and tolerance.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils' overall attendance is slightly below the national average and levels of persistent absenteeism are well above the national average and increasing.
- Leaders acknowledge the urgent need to reduce absence and have recently strengthened their work in this regard. The persistent absences relate to a relatively small number of pupils; the school's actions are appropriate, well documented and ongoing. However, leaders' actions have not yet had a positive impact on absence figures, which continued to rise between September 2017 and April 2018.
- The school is a generally calm and orderly environment; pupils move around in a courteous and respectful manner. Lunchtimes and playtimes provide effective opportunities for positive social interaction. In particular, older pupils show natural kindness and care towards the younger ones.
- Pupils speak with confident knowledge about their school rules. They are aware of what constitutes bullying and know what to do if it occurs, although they are clear that such instances are rare.
- There is a small proportion of pupils who display more challenging behaviours. Leaders' recent work to support these pupils has been highly effective. Leaders have worked closely with the local authority and have followed the recommended procedures rigorously. As a result of their concerted efforts, rates of fixed-term exclusions dropped sharply from November 2017 onwards.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Outcomes for pupils have declined significantly over time. In 2016 and 2017, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was well below the national average by the end of Year 6. During that period, no pupil has attained at the higher standard in all three subjects combined. In particular, pupils' attainment in reading dropped sharply in 2017 to well below national figures.
- In 2017, pupils' progress in reading and mathematics was well below the national average. All of this applies equally to outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Historical assessment information shows that pupils' progress declines as they move through the school. The decline begins from the end of the early years and accelerates as pupils move through key stages 1 and 2.
- The school's performance fell below the government's floor standards in 2017. Leaders and governors failed to ensure that pupils were well prepared for secondary education by the end of Year 6.
- Leaders acknowledge that, in both key stages 1 and 2, teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment and progress over time have been unreliable and based on a flawed assessment system.
- From September 2017, leaders have implemented a new, more rigorous assessment system. Leaders increasingly hold teachers to account for pupils' attainment and

progress. Consequently, a more reliably accurate picture of pupils' outcomes is beginning to emerge. It will be some time before the impact of this on pupils' progress can be fully tested, in view of the unreliability of historical figures.

- However, the school's latest internal assessment information shows that pupils in most year groups are beginning to make better progress from low starting points, with the exception of Year 2 and Year 6, in which the legacy of underachievement is still evident, especially in mathematics. Evidence from observations of learning and from pupils' current work in their books confirms that standards in mathematics are still low.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The early years provision consists of a Nursery and two parallel Reception classes. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently good across the whole of the early years provision.
- Transition from the Nursery to the Reception classes is not sufficiently well planned. Staff do not plan well enough to ensure that children's needs are well met in all classes.
- Leaders and staff in the early years do not use assessment consistently well to plan activities that are well matched to ability and enable children to make rapid gains in their learning and development. This is because activities are sometimes planned around children's interests, rather than a careful analysis of their learning needs. For example, children in the Nursery do not take part in or persevere in tasks as well as might be expected for their age.
- Until this academic year, leaders and staff did not make adequate provision for disadvantaged children, or consider their particular needs when planning the curriculum. As a result, the proportion of disadvantaged children who achieved a good level of development by the end of the year was below that seen nationally for all children in 2017.
- Since September, staff are making greater use of their assessments when children join the school to make sure that they are now addressing the needs of disadvantaged children. As a result, the school's current assessment information shows that disadvantaged children in the early years have made good progress in reading, writing and number since they started school.
- Children behave well throughout the provision. They play cooperatively, take turns politely and listen to one another's ideas.
- In the Reception classes, activities are carefully designed to provide a broad range of experiences that engage and motivate pupils. Positive relationships between adults and children enable children to develop independence. They are becoming resilient and confident learners.
- Leaders and staff employ an effective range of strategies for involving parents in their children's learning. There is a daily dialogue with parents, both face-to-face and via online communications. Parents agree that communications are good and say that they feel well informed about their children's progress.
- Safeguarding in the early years is effective. The area is secure and staff training is thorough and up to date. Children are very well cared for across the provision.

School details

Unique reference number	137813
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10052614

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	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	445
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Aimee Horton
Headteacher	Daniel Callaghan
Telephone number	01522 683705
Website	www.hartsholmeacademy.com
Email address	enquiries@hartsholmeacademy.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Hartsholme Academy is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Pupils are taught in single-aged classes. Children in the Nursery attend part time.
- The vast majority of pupils are from a White British heritage. A very small proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds or speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is slightly above the national average.
- The school converted to academy status on 1 January 2012, in a 'stand-alone' capacity. The school joined the New Dawn Trust on 1 October 2014. The trust changed its name to the Link Education Trust from 1 September 2017. Discussions are currently underway to rebroker the school to another multi-academy trust.
- In December 2017, the chief executive officer left the Link Education Trust, as did all but three of the directors, including the chair and vice-chair. There is no local governing body. A new chair and vice-chair were appointed in January 2018.

- There is an interim chief executive officer, who was appointed in March 2018 on a temporary basis from the Healing Multi-Academy Trust.
- The school receives support from the Humber Teaching School.
- The current headteacher was appointed in September 2017.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 37 lessons or part lessons, some jointly with senior leaders, across all classes, including in the Nursery.
- Inspectors looked at work in pupils' books and considered the school's assessment information on the progress and standards achieved by pupils.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked to them about their reading.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the assistant headteachers and leaders with responsibility for mathematics, English, early years, sports, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance. Inspectors also met with those responsible for the leadership of the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils. Inspectors also spoke with a range of teachers and support staff.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the Link Education Trust, the interim chief executive officer and the school improvement leader from the Humber Teaching School.
- Inspectors met with a group of pupils and also spoke informally with pupils during lessons, lunchtimes and breaktimes.
- Inspectors met with parents at the start of the school day, on both days of the inspection. The lead inspector considered the 60 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.
- Inspectors considered a wide range of documentation, including the school's improvement plan and self-evaluation summary, minutes of meetings of the trust, the school's current information on pupils' attainment and progress, attendance records, behaviour and exclusion logs, external reports on the work of the school, monitoring and evaluation records and a range of documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Christine Watkins, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Lynn Corner-Brown	Ofsted Inspector
Phil Unsworth	Ofsted Inspector
Liz Moore	Ofsted Inspector

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