

Inspection of a good school: Hartside Primary Academy

Hartside, Crook, County Durham DL15 9NN

Inspection dates:

14 and 15 June 2022

Outcome

Hartside Primary Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils mirror the school's 'character traits' in their daily behaviour. They know the importance of having empathy, showing kindness, respecting others and having the grit to keep going. One pupil said that 'traits help us to be our best selves'. Pupils prize each other's well-being. Some are chosen to be 'helping hearts' to comfort those who are upset or be a friend to those who need it.

Pupils love school and speak of it being 'full of great people and great teachers'. They know that teachers expect them to always do their best – so they do. School is fun. Pupils recently competed in 'Hartside's Got Talent', with the winners declared after a pupil vote.

Behaviour in school is good. Playtimes are exciting with lots of equipment to use. A trim trail is being installed for older pupils. Various designs were chosen by the 'outdoor play and learning' leaders and the final choice was voted on. Bullying is very rare. Teachers do not hesitate to sort out any misbehaviour. School is integral to its community. Many parents wrote positive comments about the school during the inspection, noting how safe and happy their children were. Pupils love being part of their house teams: Green Lantern, Iron, Spider and Wonder. They compete for attendance awards and in sports.

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

Leaders have improved the structure of the curriculum. Many subjects have clearly identified threads that run through them. Leaders have identified the essential knowledge pupils must remember. Learning is then well planned and sequenced. Pupils can make connections to what they have learned previously. They make sense of new knowledge because they remember previous similar learning. Teachers know what pupils must learn and make good use of assessment to check if it has been remembered. Learning is simplified to avoid overloading pupils' memories. A few subjects are not yet as carefully structured so that the knowledge pupils acquire links to other things they know.

Leaders have transformed the quality of early reading in school. Delays in reading caused by COVID-19 have been addressed. Leaders have introduced a new phonics scheme after considering relevant research. In lessons, teachers focus on new sounds and how to blend them together. Leaders provide high-quality support and coaching to teachers and teaching assistants. Teaching is of a consistently good quality. Pupils' phonics understanding is helping them with their writing and to spell accurately. Leaders have considered the range of literature to introduce and read to all year groups. Pupils speak positively about reading and are proud of their revamped library. Pupils are becoming fluent and confident readers.

Extensive and innovative work by leaders has resulted in a rich and high-quality wider offer for pupils that goes beyond learning in the classroom. A large number of after-school clubs reflect different aspects of the school curriculum. Leaders track attendance to make sure all pupils take part in at least one club. There is a planned approach to introducing pupils to a range of topics and issues. Assemblies are tightly planned across the year. Leaders' flexibility allows assemblies to be steered away from this plan to reflect immediate needs or circumstances. Leaders analyse the topics that are taught to see how they promote pupils' wider personal development. Leaders plan trips out of school to reflect the current class topic and also introduce pupils to wider experiences.

Children in the early years are confident and happy. There is a buzz of enthusiasm. Children play and learn well on their own or with friends. In the Nursery, children were seen rolling a dice and drawing the corresponding number of dots onto a ladybird. Staff take every opportunity to include basic skills in learning about words and numbers. For example, being able to count to 20 is an important part of hide and seek. In Reception, children learn new sounds and write and spell words with accuracy. Handwriting is increasingly neat.

Leaders have created an inclusive approach that means no-one misses out on learning. Positive attitudes in lessons and good behaviour mean learning is not lost. Pupils are not distracted because of their motivation to succeed. Accurate assessment identifies anyone who is falling behind. Staff support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. Pupils with SEND mainly learn alongside their peers. Extra help is given in class when needed to make sure all pupils learn in every subject.

Staff talk of a strong morale and a good team. They say someone is always on hand to share the load and help. Staff appreciate leaders' kindness and concern for their well-being. Small steps to reduce workload have had a big effect. Reducing paperwork and the number of meetings is appreciated. Partnership work within the trust is positive. Shared expertise, systems and oversight are of good quality.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders' systems to guarantee all pupils are safe are extensive and robust. The school benefits from the expertise of the safeguarding and compliance manager from the trust. Records are meticulous. Recruitment and vetting checks are thorough. Training for staff is regular and reflects local issues. Leaders keep all staff up to date with weekly updates. Leaders secure help from appropriate partners when needed. These include counsellors, the school nurse and police community support officers. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, for example online. They know about road safety and stranger danger.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum is not yet sufficiently well planned and sequenced in some subjects. In these subjects, the key ideas that link substantive knowledge together lack clarity. Pupils are unable to connect learning or build on what they already know. Leaders must continue their work on curriculum structure so that pupils know more, can do more and remember more in every subject.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Hartside Primary School, to be good in July 2016.

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.

If you are the school and you are 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

Unique reference number	145429
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10227626
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	239
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	John Dellar
Headteacher	Shawn Laws
Website	www.hartsideprimary.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school converted to be an academy on 1 February 2018.
- The school is part of Advance Learning Partnership Multi-Academy Trust.
- The school has provision for two-year-olds but currently none attend.
- The school uses no alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher, special educational needs coordinator, teachers, the safeguarding and compliance manager from the trust, and the school's office and data manager. The inspector met the chief executive officer and the school improvement officer of the trust. He also met two members of the local academy council, including the chair and a trustee from the board.

- Deep dives were carried out in reading, history and mathematics. For each deep dive, the inspector met with leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons where available, spoke to teachers and teaching assistants, spoke to some pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector listened to a range of pupils read from different year groups.
- The inspector also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about other curriculum subjects.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour during lesson visits and at break time. He spoke to pupils about their views on behaviour, and a group of pupils gave the inspector a tour of the school.
- The inspector looked at the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks, and spoke to leaders, teachers and pupils about safeguarding.
- The views of the 63 parents who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire, Parent View, were considered. This included the 35 written comments.
- The inspector met with staff to discuss their well-being and workload. He considered the 21 responses and comments from Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Phil Scott, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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