

Inspection of Haltwhistle Primary Academy

Park Avenue, Haltwhistle NE49 9BA

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 February 2023

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils excel in this aspirational school environment. Classrooms are a buzz of debate and discussion, yet there is a calm, purposeful aura around the school. Staff deliver a creative, dynamic curriculum that excites and enthuses pupils. Adults have high expectations for pupils to work hard, behave well and uphold the school's values. Leaders have raised expectations for pupils and staff. There is a belief that everyone can be 'inspired' and 'achieve' their very best.

Pupils' behaviour is exceptional. They are respectful, kind and polite. They have wonderful manners and are supportive of each other. Pupils understand that some of their friends find behaviour more difficult and need extra help. Adults have taught pupils to be tolerant and accepting of the needs of others.

Children in the early years access a wonderful learning environment. Adults provide high-quality outdoor activities as a daily part of the curriculum. Children in early years get off to a wonderful start at school.

Pupils know what bullying is. Record-keeping shows that bullying is rare. Occasional incidents of poor behaviour are dealt with quickly by staff. Senior leaders and other staff are visible around the school at breaktime and lunchtime. Pupils appreciate this, as it makes them feel safe and happy.

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

Leaders, including governors and trustees, have a relentless determination to create a school where pupils thrive. Leaders have faced many setbacks and challenges, including the closure of the previous schools, managing the school during the COVID-19 pandemic, and dealing with a flood in the school. However, nothing stands in the way of their vision and ambition to provide an excellent education for pupils.

Leaders identified that pupils' behaviour, attitudes and engagement in learning were areas that needed addressing. Their skilful approach to include pupils in decision making around what is right and wrong has resulted in a school with exemplary behaviour. Pupils are now proud of their school.

Leaders are determined that all pupils receive a school experience that will positively influence their life chances. The curriculum is aspirational, ambitious and uses the local area to enhance pupils' knowledge. All subjects are meticulously organised. Experts in curriculum design from across the trust, including staff at Haltwhistle, carry out research and check to see that the content teachers deliver is right for the pupils.

Leaders have designed an early years curriculum with clear purpose and intent. Children develop their speaking and listening skills through carefully organised activities where adults interact, prompt and ask just the right questions. Adults in the early years encourage pupils to solve problems. For example, they set up activities with bits missing. The children then have to think about what they might need and are expected to go off and find it independently.

Leaders provide regular training so that staff understand how to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Some pupils with SEND have social, emotional and mental health needs. Staff have supported these pupils to develop resilience, positive friendships and understand how to manage their own emotions. This is proving to be successful. When pupils feel overwhelmed or anxious, they know what to do and who to speak to for help.

Leaders have implemented a reading curriculum that helps pupils build the knowledge and skills they need to be confident, fluent readers. The reading leader provides regular training sessions so that all staff deliver a consistent, high-quality curriculum. Reading books are accurately matched to pupils' needs so that they can practise and apply the sounds they are learning. As a result, pupils achieve well in reading.

Leaders place pupils' personal development at the heart of the curriculum. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum and assemblies teach pupils about diversity, inclusivity, healthy relationships and prejudice. Pupils have a thorough, mature understanding about race, beliefs, sexuality and individuality. The curriculum teaches pupils about the value of teamwork and respect. A pupil commented, 'We are all connected, and each of us is an important part of the school.'

Leaders give pupils responsibility and encourage them to contribute to the life of the school. Pupils are proud to be part of the school council and carry out roles such as eco-warriors, digital ambassadors and librarians. The curriculum is further enhanced with links to Lancaster University and Kielder Observatory for 'dark skies' star gazing. Leaders provide an extensive offer of activities, in and out of school, which helps pupils to develop their talents and interests.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff teach pupils about local risks pertinent to the rural setting of the school. Staff teach pupils about the dangers of rivers and icy water. Through comprehensive training, adults are acutely aware of the risks that pupils face and know what signs of concern to look out for. Staff understand reporting systems. Leaders maintain detailed record-keeping, which shows challenge to external services when school leaders do not think enough is being done to support families.

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	146372
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	10255554
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	244
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Margaret Elise Wright-Stephenson
Headteacher	Susie Drake
Website	www.haltwhistle.wiseacademies.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school joined the WISE multi-academy trust in September 2018. When the predecessor school, Haltwhistle Community Campus Lower school, was last inspected in March 2016 by Ofsted, it was judged to require improvement.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

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.
- Inspectors did deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics, computing, science and history. Inspectors spoke to leaders about the curriculum and met with teachers from the lessons visited. Inspectors looked at samples of

pupils' work and spoke to pupils about the curriculum, behaviour and what it is like to attend this school.

- Inspectors looked at curriculum documents for a range of subjects.
- Inspectors listened to a range of pupils from different year groups read.
- Inspectors met with the special educational needs coordinator, members of the governing body, the chief executive officer and trustees.
- Inspectors looked at the single central record and spoke to leaders, teachers, governors and pupils about safeguarding.
- Inspectors spoke to early career teachers and their mentors.
- Inspectors spoke to parents and observed pupils at breaktime and lunchtime.
- Inspectors considered the responses made by parents to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including any free-text responses. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

David Milligan, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Katie Spurr	His Majesty's Inspector
Ailsa Taylor	Ofsted Inspector

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