

Inspection of High Halstow Primary Academy

Harrison Drive, High Halstow, Rochester, Kent ME3 8TF

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 June 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

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are highly motivated and engaged in learning at this school. Staff explicitly teach learning behaviours and routines. Leaders ensure that these are embedded consistently across the school. Pupils know what is expected of them. They are ambitious to demonstrate meeting high expectations. There is an unwavering thread of respect for others that runs throughout the school. Bullying is not tolerated. Pupils are confident that leaders would 'intervene in a flash' if bullying occurred. Behaviour that is less than exemplary is rare and quickly addressed by staff.

Leaders have high expectations for every pupil and particularly for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff engage pupils through the ambitious curriculum. Pupils are excited about their learning. This 'learning buzz' permeates the entire school.

Pupils benefit from an extensive range of wider curriculum and leadership opportunities. Leaders consult pupils about the activities they would like to take part in. As a result, there is high take up from pupils. The digital curriculum is highly effective in supporting pupils across the school to access learning. For example, specialist software ensures that all pupils, particularly those with SEND, can learn independently.

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

Leaders' ambitious curriculum is pivotal in setting out high expectations for every pupil. Pupils study a full range of traditional curriculum subjects. Activities are precisely planned to reinforce the most important knowledge that pupils need to learn. This starts right from the early years. These activities engage pupils in learning and provide experiences that deepen understanding. As a result, pupils consistently remember their learning exceptionally well. In the early years, strong relationships reinforce high expectations. Adults have been highly trained to enable them to adapt the curriculum so that every child can be a successful learner.

Reading is a high priority. Children learn phonics knowledge from the moment they start in Reception. Leaders have carefully chosen a well-structured programme that works for the pupils. High-quality staff training ensures that teaching is effective. Pupils read books that are carefully matched to the sounds they know. This helps them to read with confidence. Support for pupils who are falling behind is swift and tailored to individual needs. Leaders aim for every pupil to keep up with their peers. A love of reading is tangible across the school. Staff and pupils talk animatedly about their favourite books. Leaders have selected a range of core texts for all pupils to read. These enrich pupils' vocabulary and teach them about diversity and life in modern Britain and the wider world.

Leaders have a relentless ambition for every pupil to achieve highly. Staff subject knowledge is extensive. Staff have a deep understanding of the curriculum content and have carefully considered how to teach this. The inquiry approach to learning is

highly effective for all pupils and particularly those with SEND. This means that pupils remember their learning very well. They make strong links between subjects and concepts. When necessary, teachers adapt and scaffold learning. This means that pupils with SEND achieve exceptionally well.

Pupils are highly engaged in their learning. Leaders have set clear expectations for all pupils. These start in the early years. Leaders have created well-established routines. A calm, consistent ethos permeates the whole school. Pupils manage themselves maturely and thoughtfully. New pupils are welcomed with respect and warmth. Leaders have created a culture where differences are celebrated. Pupils talk confidently about how everyone is treated equally. There is a proactive approach to addressing unkind behaviour, particularly when pupils are online. This means everyone feels safe and supported.

Pupils are fully prepared for their next stage of learning. Staff have extensively mapped out opportunities for pupils to develop leadership roles such as house captains, young leaders and curriculum ambassadors. As a result, pupils understand how important their views are. They have a voice in whole-school decisions and talk positively about the changes they have made. Leaders have expertly woven PSHE into the curriculum. Pupils understand fundamental British values and what they mean to them in their community. They are taught about how they can make a difference beyond their school gate. For example, the motivation of the nature squad to tackle idling cars outside the school gate and invest in scooter pods has positively impacted the whole-school community.

Leaders, including those across the wider trust, are ambitious for every pupil. They ensure that all staff receive highly effective training. As a result, staff at all levels are well equipped to support every pupil with their learning. Leaders work hard to continue to improve the school. They are mindful of staff well-being. They ensure that staff workload is managed effectively so that staff can focus on doing their very best for pupils. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the support they receive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have a thorough oversight of safeguarding. They have created a culture of vigilance that is upheld by all staff. Governors make systematic checks on leaders' safeguarding work. Leaders work proactively with a range of outside agencies. They are relentless in chasing extra support for families. Staff use robust processes to share and report concerns.

Pupils have absolute trust in their teachers to keep them safe. They are keen to share what makes them feel safe. Leaders have developed a detailed digital curriculum. This is highly effective in teaching pupils how to keep safe online.

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	137990
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	10268780
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	210
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trustees	Frank Green
Principal	Gemma Stangroom
Website	www.highhalstowprimaryacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	16 January 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Leigh Academies Trust.
- The academy is authorised as an International Baccalaureate World School. It teaches the Primary Years Programme.
- The school offers breakfast club provision, which is run by the school.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provider.

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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, history and science. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils

about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. An inspector also heard pupils read to a trusted member of staff.

- Inspectors met with leaders, staff, pupils and those with responsibility for governance, including the chair of the local governing board and a member of the board of trustees.
- Inspectors observed breaktimes and lunchtimes and the start and end of the school day.
- Inspectors scrutinised local trust board meeting minutes.
- Inspectors met with the special education needs coordinator to discuss the provision for pupils with SEND. They visited lessons to look at the support these pupils were receiving.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the confidential staff and pupil surveys. They took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View and comments made by those who responded.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors looked at the school's website and policies, met with leaders and spoke with pupils and staff. They scrutinised school records of the safeguarding checks carried out on adults working at the school and spoke with those who have responsibility for governance. They scrutinised a selection of child protection records.

Inspection team

Emma Law, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Mark Rivers

Ofsted Inspector

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