

Inspection of Harrold Primary Academy

The Green, Harrold, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK43 7DB

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 September 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The headteacher of this school is Debonair Brown. This school is part of the Meridian Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Mark Woods, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Shirley Jamieson.

What is it like to attend this school?

Most pupils are happy and say they feel safe at Harrold Primary Academy. They are polite and build positive relationships with each other and with staff. Pupils know that staff will help them with any of their worries or issues.

The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Staff communicate these clearly. Established routines help pupils to settle quickly. For example, pupils enter school happily, discussing the day ahead.

Pupils are expected to work hard, and they do. They enjoy learning and strive to show 'we are ready' in lessons. Pupils achieve well in most subjects, including mathematics and reading. However, the curriculum is new and still being fully established. The school know there is further work on a few areas of the curriculum to ensure pupils achieve consistently as well as they should.

Pupils demonstrate the school values of being respectful, responsible, ready and resilient. They benefit from a wide range of extra opportunities. Additional educational visits help to bring their learning alive. Pupils enjoy opportunities to nurture their talents, such as learning to play the drums. Extra-curricular clubs, including computing, cooking and reading, are well attended.

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

The school has carefully managed a recent period of staff turbulence. Trust leaders have supported leaders and new staff to ensure that pupils' learning and safety were prioritised and maintained during this time.

The school have an accurate understanding of strengths and areas for development. The curriculum is currently in a transition phase where some areas are more effective than others. Leaders are in the process of implementing a curriculum that is fit for the school. They have enjoyed early success, grouping and teaching pupils new ideas in a logical order. However, in a few areas, staff are still being trained to teach and assess the curriculum as well as they do in subjects such as, for example, mathematics. Where this is the case, new knowledge is not taught as well, and pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

The school has prioritised the teaching of reading. The recently introduced phonics programme is well thought through. Staff identify texts that enable pupils to improve their vocabulary. Children in Reception are getting off to a good start in their early reading. They confidently sound words out. Previous phonics training has ensured staff have secure knowledge of how pupils learn to read. Where pupils struggle to read, appropriate and well-planned support is put in place to help pupils. This ensures that pupils become confident and fluent readers.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn well alongside their peers. Any barriers to learning are quickly identified. Staff are trained well to deliver specialist support. The school ensures that pupils with SEND are included in all aspects of school life and access the same curriculum as everyone else.

Pupils behave well. There is a shared understanding of leaders' behaviour expectations. Staff are swift to act when behaviour falls below these expectations. Staff develop routines and independence. This begins in the early years, for example, children in Reception thrive as they share happily in their welcoming, indoor environment. Children are independent when selecting resources that help them to play and learn. Older pupils follow the school rules and try their best in all they do.

The school carefully considers pupils' personal development. Pupils learn about relationships and equality. Pupils have developed a strong understanding of how to stay safe both on and offline. The school carefully consider the purpose of any wider opportunities, so it fits in with what pupils are learning, for example, the 'faith tour' is an integral part of ensuring pupils learn to become respectful of different cultures. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to develop their resilience, such as the much-loved residential visits.

A small number of parents feel that communication is not as effective as it could be. While this is the case, many parents agree that the school is improving in this area.

The trust provides a balance of both support and challenge. It works closely with leaders to prioritise safeguarding and improving the quality of education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the curriculum is still in a transitional phase. Staff are still being trained in how to effectively implement a few areas of the curriculum. As a result, staff do not explain new concepts well enough. Consequently, in these instances pupils do not achieve as well as they could. Leaders should ensure they continue to implement the new curriculum. This will ensure staff receive the training they need to effectively teach the curriculum content so all pupils achieve consistently well in all curriculum areas.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	143084
Local authority	Bedford
Inspection number	10288543
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	107
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Shirley Jamieson
Headteacher	Debonair Brown
Website	www.harrold.beds.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	17 and 18 September 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Harrold Primary Academy joined the Meridian Trust in September 2021.
- Over the last two years, there have been many changes in staffing.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- 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.
- The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer of the trust, members of the board of trustees and members of the local governing body.

- Inspectors met the executive headteacher, the headteacher, senior leaders, teachers and support staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and art. These included discussions with subject leaders, visits to lessons, meetings with staff and pupils and scrutiny of pupils' work. They also considered curriculum documentation and spoke to leaders about the curriculum.
- The lead inspector scrutinised the school's single central record, met with the designated safeguarding lead and reviewed the school's safeguarding records. Inspectors spoke to pupils and staff about safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered the views of pupils and staff.
- Inspectors considered 44 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors also considered 32 free-text responses from parents. The lead inspector also met with parents during the inspection.

Inspection team

Conor Heaven, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Mark Sim

Ofsted Inspector

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