

Inspection of a good school: Holley Park Academy

Ayton Road, Oxclose, Washington, Tyne and Wear NE38 0LR

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 June 2024

Outcome

Holley Park Academy continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Lisa Curtis. This school is part of Northern Lights Learning Trust (NLLT), which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Jo Heaton OBE, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Katie Hammond.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Holley Park are happy, polite and considerate. They have exemplary manners. They live out the school's vision of 'work together, achieve more'. They embody the school values, 'the five Rs', which include resilience and resourcefulness. The school's curriculum further embeds these values. Staff encourage pupils to become thoughtful and compassionate members of the school community. Older pupils refer to themselves as role models for those who are younger.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils. Pupils rise to these expectations. Pupils work hard in lessons and listen carefully. They achieve well as a result. Pupils take pride in their work across the curriculum and are proud to represent the school. This pride is tangible when you enter the school. Pupils greet visitors warmly. They have excellent relationships with staff.

Pupils are safe at school. A common response in discussions with pupils was, 'There's nowhere we don't feel safe.' Behaviour in lessons and unstructured times is positive. Where any issues arise, staff deal with these. Incidents of bullying are infrequent. The school investigates any allegations of bullying and deals with these swiftly. Pupils know there are 'lots of trusted adults' who would 'sort out any problems'.

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

Since joining NLLT and following the appointment of the new headteacher and deputy headteacher, leaders have reviewed the school's curriculum carefully. They have crafted a curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils. This includes those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff make skilful adaptations to the curriculum to

enable all pupils to succeed. This curriculum has firm foundations in the early years provision. The youngest children in school enjoy a vibrant learning environment. They quickly settle into established routines. Pupils develop resilience and independence. Adults model language and vocabulary clearly. Children use this vocabulary independently in their learning. Some children making papier-mâché 'planets' from balloons describe Mars as having 'dirty dust'. Others talk knowledgeably about ice melting and water freezing. In mathematics, the very youngest children confidently use vocabulary such as 'lighter' and 'heavier'. Children are ready for their next stage of education in key stage 1 as the result of quality provision and well-planned transition.

Phonics teaching is effective and purposeful. Staff teach the phonics programme with fidelity. Careful monitoring of individual pupils ensures that any gaps in phonics knowledge are addressed. As a result, pupils achieve exceptionally well. Pupils develop the skills that they need to become fluent, confident readers.

Lessons in other subjects build on the key knowledge and skills identified within the curriculum. Lessons also build sequentially on pupils' prior knowledge. Lessons proceed without any disruption as a result of the positive learning environment and positive behaviour of pupils. In geography lessons across the school, younger pupils clearly articulate the difference between human and physical features. Pupils make deductions as to why populations may increase or decrease. Pupils investigate digital maps and use subject-specific language to describe Bolivia as 'a landlocked country to the north of Argentina, bordered by Peru and Brazil'.

In mathematics, pupils use a range of strategies with confidence. They reason mathematically with increasing confidence. However, leaders identified that the mathematics curriculum in previous years was more focused on basic mathematical fluency rather than on promotion of problem solving and reasoning. This was partially due to the impact of the disruption during the COVID-19 pandemic. Leaders developed a new curriculum which began in September 2023 which is more ambitious. This has not had sufficient time for impact to be shown in increasing pupil achievement at the higher standard by the end of key stage 2.

Attendance rates for all groups of pupils are above the national average. Leaders have taken effective action to decrease the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent.

There are numerous opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities in the school, including head boy and head girl with deputies, subject ambassadors and sports leaders. Pupil leaders are proud of the impact that pupil voice has in the school. For example, the pupil parliament worked with the school council to gather pupil views about equipment at breaktimes. As a result, pupils now have access to a wider range of activities and play equipment at breaktimes, including construction games, books and new toys. The school has developed a varied set of experiences for all pupils across the curriculum. These equip pupils well to be safe, understand equality and develop respect for all. A programme of educational visits to places of worship for different faiths, such as the mosque or the mandir, enhances pupils' understanding of the religious education curriculum. The curriculum helps pupils to know that discriminating against different groups of people is unfair. Pupils learn about the importance of equality, respect and tolerance.

Governors and trustees fulfil their roles with diligence. They work in partnership with school leaders to promote continual development. This is not detrimental to staff workload, however. Staff feel very well supported in school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Historically, the mathematics curriculum has not provided the full range of mathematical concepts within the curriculum offer. This means that pupils' knowledge in how to use mathematical reasoning or how to solve mathematical problems was limited. The school should continue to embed and monitor the implementation of the recently improved mathematics curriculum to ensure that pupils develop problem solving and reasoning knowledge across the school.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2015.

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	138534
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	10297371
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	231
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair/Chair of trust	Katie Hammond
CEO of the trust	Jo Heaton OBE
Headteacher	Lisa Curtis
Website	http://www.holleyparkacademy.co.uk
Date(s) of previous inspection	19 November 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school joined Northern Lights Learning Trust in July 2022. It had previously been the single academy in Acer Learning Trust.
- A new headteacher and deputy headteacher have been appointed since the previous inspection. The deputy headteacher was appointed in January 2023. The headteacher was appointed in January 2024.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- A breakfast and after-school club operates on site under the management of the school.

Information about this inspection

- 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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, other school leaders, school staff, representatives of the governing body, representatives of the board of trustees, representatives of the trust central team and the CEO.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector listened to pupils from Reception and Years 1, 2 and 3 reading to a familiar adult.
- The inspector also met with the trust Director of Education (Primary) and discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- The inspector considered the responses to the online staff and pupil surveys, including the free-text comments.

Inspection team

Richard Beadnall, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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