

Inspection of a school judged outstanding for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Sedgefield Hardwick Primary Academy

Hawthorn Road, Sedgefield, Stockton-on-Tees TS21 3DA

Inspection dates:

22 and 23 October 2024

Outcome

Sedgefield Hardwick Primary Academy has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Paul Taylor. The school is part of The Laidlaw Schools Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Sally Newton, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Susanna Kempe.

What is it like to attend this school?

Sedgefield Hardwick Primary Academy is aspirational for all pupils. Pupils' individual contributions to the school community are valued and celebrated. The curriculum is ambitious. The school's ethos, of 'Instil, Inspire, Innovate' is clear to see. This is reflected in pupils' enthusiasm for learning and their positive attitudes towards school. Pupils achieve exceptionally well from their starting points.

Staff know their school community extremely well. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are included in all aspects of school life. Staff are committed to pupils' inclusion and achievement. Pupils with SEND achieve the best possible outcomes. They benefit from the bespoke support provided to them.

The character development of pupils is the cornerstone of the school's success. Pupils have a mature and comprehensive understanding of mental well-being, managing emotions and treating others fairly. The school offers a broad range of extra-curricular activities, helping pupils to develop new skills and interests. Playtimes are a highlight for many pupils. They enjoy the many creative and energising activities available to them.

Pupils are safe here. They are taught how to stay safe online. Pupils' behaviour is excellent.

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

Pupils benefit from the broad, well-sequenced curriculum. The school is continuously refining staff's subject-specific expertise. Pupils benefit from clear explanations of important concepts. These are revisited often. This helps pupils remember their learning over time. Pupils confidently discuss their learning, engaging in meaningful conversations and debates.

The curriculum is designed to inspire curiosity and a love for learning. Pupils benefit from engaging lessons that help them develop detailed knowledge across subjects. The school provides regular opportunities for pupils to apply their learning to real-life and current events. This excites pupils. Technology is used skilfully to add variety and high-quality interactions to pupils' learning experience. This also helps pupils independently check their understanding throughout lessons. Pupils with additional needs benefit from tailored interventions, ensuring they access the same rich curriculum as their peers. Pupils achieve exceptionally well from their starting points.

As soon as children join Reception, reading is a priority. Staff are expert at teaching children to read. Children quickly develop the knowledge that they need to become fluent readers. Pupils who struggle with reading receive effective additional support, which is tailored to their specific needs. The school has introduced pupils to a wide and diverse range of texts. Pupils love reading and enjoy the new school library.

The school excels in its provision for pupils with SEND. Staff work closely with parents and external agencies to deliver the tailored support each pupil needs, while also fostering their independence. This targeted support enables pupils with SEND to achieve notable progress from their individual starting points. This allows them to thrive academically and socially. The achievement of these pupils exemplifies the exceptional quality of education the school provides.

Children in the early years benefit from the stimulating and engaging environment. Staff expertly guide children through a range of activities that develop their social, emotional and learning skills. For example, children in Reception enjoy exploring nature, making predictions, and discussing their findings with friends and staff. Staff develop children's language use and confidence through high-quality interactions. Children develop a love for learning from an early age. This prepares them well for Year 1 and beyond.

Pupil's behaviour is exemplary. In lessons, pupils are focused, respectful and eager to learn. The school's approach to behaviour prioritises teaching pupils how to regulate their emotions. This has had a positive impact across all year groups. The school is proactive in promoting good attendance. Pupils attend school well.

The school's commitment to developing pupils' character is outstanding. In 'character lessons', pupils discuss important topics such as emotional well-being, equality, respect and civic responsibility. Pupils debate issues relating to equality and fairness, demonstrating a mature understanding of these concepts. They have a strong

commitment to social justice and citizenship. Pupils are keen to share how their contributions can make the world a better place.

Governors and trustees provide effective challenge and support, ensuring that safeguarding remains a priority and that the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils. Staff workload is carefully managed. All staff members are proud to work here.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged outstanding for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Sedgefield Hardwick Primary School, to be outstanding for overall effectiveness in November 2017.

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 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	149225
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10346826
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	256
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Susanna Kempe
CEO of the trust	Sally Newton
Headteacher	Paul Taylor
Website	www.sedgefieldhardwick.laidlawsschoolstrust.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school joined The Laidlaw Schools Trust in 2022.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The breakfast and after-school provision is delivered by an external provider.
- The school does not use any alternative education provision.
- The school does not currently have provision for two-year-olds.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 leaders and has taken that into account in this evaluation of the school.

- The inspector spoke to senior leaders, including representatives from the trust and local governing body.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector also spoke to leaders about pupils' learning 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 met the SEND coordinator, spoke to pupils with SEND and reviewed plans to support these pupils. They visited lessons to see how pupils with SEND are supported.
- The inspector visited the early years provision to check safeguarding arrangements and discuss the learning with children and leaders.
- The inspector observed behaviour at the start of the day, at lunchtimes and in lessons.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's pupil survey, and staff survey. They also considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including any free-text comments.

Inspection team

Georgina Chinaka, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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