

Inspection of Hardwick Green Primary Academy

Tithe Barn Road, Stockton-on-Tees TS19 8WF

Inspection dates:	5 and 6 November 2024
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

The principal of this school is Christopher Story. The school is part of The Enquire Learning 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), Darren Holmes, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Delyse Turrell.

What is it like to attend this school?

Hardwick Green Primary Academy has care and support at the heart of all it does. Pupils enjoy coming to school each day, knowing that staff want the best for them. Behaviour around school is calm and positive, with clear routines that help pupils feel safe and ready to learn. Pupils say they know who to talk to if they have any worries. Parents value the effective communication between home and school.

While pupils benefit from a nurturing environment, some aspects of the quality of education need to improve to ensure that all pupils reach their full academic potential, particularly in reading and mathematics. There are inconsistencies in curriculum delivery that mean some pupils, particularly those with disadvantage, are not as well prepared for the next stage of their education as they should be.

The school prioritises well-being and personal development, helping pupils to feel valued and supported. Pupils show respect for others and benefit from various extra-curricular opportunities, such as the popular street dance class, eco club and residential visits. Staff teach pupils how to keep themselves safe in the local area and when online. Parents, pupils and staff are confident in the school's commitment to keeping pupils safe.

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

The school has designed a broad and ambitious curriculum. This begins right at the start in the early years. However, the curriculum is not consistently well implemented. In some subjects, teachers do not emphasise the most important knowledge that pupils should learn. At times, the activities that teachers choose do not help pupils to learn and remember the knowledge they need. This inconsistency affects pupils' ability to build knowledge progressively over time. While staff monitor pupils' understanding, they do not consistently use this information to guide future learning. Currently, the school is sometimes unsure if pupils are remembering essential knowledge and skills.

Staff show genuine care for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and prioritise creating a welcoming and supportive environment. The school has improved its approach to help these pupils achieve and succeed alongside their peers. Some pupils with SEND access tailored support through smaller lesson groupings, called 'SEND pods', and personalised interventions.

Recent changes to the reading curriculum are having a positive impact in the early years and key stage 1. This is helping pupils develop a stronger foundation in phonics and early reading. Pupils who struggle with reading receive additional support. However, there are also inconsistencies in how well the reading curriculum is implemented, which hamper pupils' achievement. The school has recently introduced strategies and tasks to improve fluency and reading skills. These initiatives have yet to show significant impact. Reading outcomes remain below national expectations, especially for disadvantaged pupils.

The early years provision is a strength. The school has developed a nurturing and stimulating environment that encourages children's curiosity and exploration. The

curriculum is well considered, allowing children to develop early literacy, numeracy and social skills. The exciting outdoor area has been carefully designed to develop children's large muscle strength and creative skills. The school has prioritised developing children's communication and language in Nursery and Reception. Children benefit from rich interactions with adults, who support them in building their understanding of the world. This foundation prepares children well for key stage 1.

Pupils behave well and understand the school's high expectations. Staff manage behaviour consistently. The reward systems and praise from staff encourage pupils to display positive behaviour. Pupils are polite and engaged in their learning. The school's calm and orderly environment helps pupils feel secure. Pupils are kind and welcoming to new pupils when they join the school. Staff sensitively provide targeted support for pupils who may need additional help in managing their behaviour. The school actively monitors and challenges any instances of poor attendance. Staff work closely with families to ensure that pupils attend regularly, with a sharp focus on improving attendance for disadvantaged pupils. As a result, pupils attend school well and on time.

The commitment to pupils' character development is evident throughout school. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) and 'character' curriculum helps pupils develop values such as resilience and empathy. The school has chosen to introduce programmes and workshops to teach pupils how to manage their emotions through understanding how the brain works. Staff are well trained to promote well-being and positive mental health for pupils across school. Pupils benefit from the regular opportunities to reflect on global news and equalities. Alongside the well-planned extra-curricular activities and educational visits, this is widening pupils' experiences and raising their aspirations.

The school is dedicated to creating a nurturing environment. However, the school does not strategically evaluate the impact of improvement actions. It does not check carefully enough to ensure that the changes being made are having a positive impact on pupils' achievement. Staff workload and well-being are well managed. Staff are proud to work in this school and serve the local community.

The school benefits from the development opportunities and networks provided by the trust. Trustees and governors provide a high level of support for leaders. However, they have not done enough to challenge the school to further improve 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, staff do not implement the curriculum in a way that consistently enables pupils to build their knowledge over time. As a result, pupils do not achieve as

well as they should. The school should ensure that staff are well equipped to support more consistent curriculum delivery to support pupils' knowledge progression and development of core skills.

- The school does not accurately identify gaps in pupils' knowledge or when pupils are ready to move on to new learning quickly enough. This means that pupils' attainment and progress is slower than it should be. The school should develop a system to identify what pupils know and remember and adapt the curriculum accordingly.
- The school's oversight and strategic evaluation of its curriculum development is not as robust as it should be. This contributes to a lack of prioritisation regarding the curriculum areas needing the most focus. The school should strengthen oversight of the quality of education and evaluating curriculum impact.

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	139392
Local authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number	10346486
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	297
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Delyse Turrell
CEO of the trust	Darren Holmes
Principal	Christopher Story
Website	www.hardwickgreenacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 May 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school provides nursery education for two- and three-year-old children.
- The school offers a free breakfast club.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, religious education and physical education. Inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons and spoke to teachers and teaching assistants. They spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors listened to pupils reading with a familiar adult. Inspectors met with leaders to discuss history and science.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: 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.
- Inspectors gathered the views of parents informally in person and formally through responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and free-text responses. The views of staff were considered through the staff survey and through meetings with them. Pupils' views were considered through pupil meetings.
- Inspectors spoke with representatives from the trust, board of trustees and the academy improvement committee.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in classes, at breakfast club and during breaks and at lunchtime.

Inspection team

Georgina Chinaka, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Lynn George	Ofsted Inspector
Helen Smith	Ofsted Inspector

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