

Inspection of Harrow Gate Academy

Piper Knowle Road, Hardwick, Stockton-on-Tees, Cleveland TS19 8DE

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 June 2024

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

The principal of this school is Victoria Galt. This 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, Darren Holmes, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Delyse Turrell.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and safe in this caring and inclusive school. Strong relationships are central to school life. Pupils have confidence in adults to help and support them. They know that they have a voice in school and will be listened to through, for example, their class council.

The school has high expectations for all pupils. This applies to both their behaviour and their academic achievement. Most pupils behave very well. They are polite and well-mannered and show respect for both their peers and adults. Children in the early years are very familiar with the school's routines and expectations. They listen carefully to adults and follow instructions well. Pupils say that incidents of bullying are unusual. They are confident that if bullying did happen, adults will deal with it quickly.

Pupils appreciate the opportunities they get to make a difference to the life of the school. They are currently very proud to be working on a school garden and have thought about how they could volunteer as part of Volunteers' Week. Pupils' achievements outside school are celebrated through the Harrow Gate Heroes awards. There is a wide range of opportunities for pupils to develop their talents and interests by attending one of the many extra-curricular clubs.

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

The school has put an ambitious and well-planned curriculum in place for all subjects. Leaders consider how the curriculum in the early years prepares children effectively for Year 1. Staff receive comprehensive training that ensures the curriculum is taught consistently well. In lessons, teachers respond quickly to pupils' misconceptions. This contributes to pupils understanding and remembering what they have learned.

The school has recently introduced a new behaviour policy. Staff and pupils appreciate the simplicity of the new rules 'ready, respectful, safe'. While many pupils behave very well, incidents of suspension are high. When pupils are suspended, the school puts appropriate and effective support in place to prevent it from happening again.

Since the last inspection, the school has further strengthened its provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school is meticulous in its approach to the provision for these pupils. Staff identify pupils with potential SEND quickly. The school acts swiftly to put support in place. This support is wide-ranging and includes drawing on the expertise of external agencies where necessary.

Teachers make frequent checks on pupils to ensure that they learn the key knowledge identified in curriculum plans. Lessons include opportunities for pupils to revisit past learning. Pupils talk confidently about their learning in a range of

subjects. For example, pupils in Year 1 could explain what primary and secondary colours were following their lessons in art and design. Many pupils achieve well. However, published outcomes show that pupils do not make consistently strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

Children in the early years get off to a strong start. They enjoy positive relationships with adults. Children feel safe and secure in the setting which is reflected in their levels of confidence. Many children were keen to share their learning with inspectors. Through adult-led activities, children learn to tune into different sounds, join in with songs and to recognise rhyme. This helps to prepare them for formal phonics teaching in Reception.

All staff are trained in how to teach phonics. There is a positive reading culture in the school. Pupils understand the importance of learning to read. Many soon become competent, fluent readers. The school supports those who struggle with reading to catch-up with their peers. High-quality books are used to support the teaching of English. These books are carefully chosen to inspire pupils and to teach them about certain issues, such as racism.

The school provides exceptional opportunities for pupils' personal development. Through the school's global curriculum, pupils learn about themes such as social justice and equality, peace and conflict and power and governance. These themes are woven through curriculum plans so that pupils encounter them frequently. Pupils can give examples of discrimination and know why it is wrong. They have a secure understanding of different faiths, fundamental British values and the protected characteristics. Leaders use funding wisely to enable vulnerable pupils to access opportunities that they wouldn't otherwise get. For example, some pupils attend clubs in the community at the weekend.

Those responsible for governance are passionate about the school and the community it serves. The trust has put strong systems in place to ensure that they have oversight of the school. Staff are well supported. They know that they can ask for any training that they require and appreciate the efforts leaders make to alleviate workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- While many pupils achieve well, they do not make consistently strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This means that pupils are not achieving as highly as they potentially could do. The school should continue to further embed

the changes made to the curriculum to ensure that pupils make consistently better progress.

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	141301
Local authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number	10297405
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	435
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Delyse Turrell
CEO of the trust	Darren Holmes
Principal	Victoria Galt
Website	www.harrowgateacademy.org
Date(s) of previous inspection	13 and 14 December 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has a nursery which admits children from the term after their third birthday.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- A breakfast club operates daily. This is run by school staff and managed by the board of trustees.

Information about this inspection

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the principal, vice principal and trust leaders, including the CEO and school improvement lead. They also met with the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator and subject leaders.

- Inspectors spoke to those responsible for governance, including members of the academy improvement committee and the chair of the trust board.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, English, art and design and history. 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.
- The inspectors considered how the school caters for pupils' personal development, including reviewing the curriculum for PSHE and undertaking a tour of school with the school council.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school.
- 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 considered the responses made by parents to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. This included any free-text comments. An inspector also spoke with some parents at the beginning of the school day. The responses to the staff and pupil questionnaires were reviewed.

Inspection team

Philippa Kermotschuk, lead inspector His Majesty's Inspector

Simon Ward Ofsted Inspector

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