

Inspection of Horsmonden Primary Academy

Back Lane, Horsmonden, Tonbridge, Kent TN12 8NJ

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 October 2023

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

The principal of this school is Hayley Sharp. This school is part of the Leigh Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Simon Beamish, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Frank Green, who is responsible for this school and 30 others.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at Horsmonden Primary academy. A clear set of learning attributes help pupils recognise what they need to do to be successful. The highly prized 'Horsmonden Heroes' awards motivate pupils and identify when these behaviours are demonstrated. This includes being 'principled', which one pupil explained as 'doing the right thing because it is the right thing'. This exceptionally well-developed aspect of the schools' work helps develop pupils' character. A culture of personal growth permeates and supports all aspects of school life.

Pupils feel safe at school. They know that adults will help to keep them safe. Relationships throughout the school are good natured and warm. Any problems pupils have are quickly resolved. The school provides effective support that helps pupils to attend regularly. Any barriers that may prevent pupils from attending school are successfully removed to ensure pupils do not miss out on important learning.

Pupils are kind to each other. Right from the start in Reception and across the school, they work and play well together. Outside, pupils enjoy using the well-resourced play areas and supporting each other to learn games. Pupils also benefit from a wide range of additional activities to develop their interests and talents. This includes growing plants in the school's polytunnel.

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

The school is highly ambitious for its pupils. There is a relentless focus on improving standards and provision. Since joining the trust in 2019, the school has rapidly redeveloped the curriculum. Staff benefit from high-quality ongoing training that helps them to expertly deliver interesting and exciting learning. The school has utilised training and support opportunities provided by other schools in the trust. Teachers feel highly supported. They appreciate that their workload is considered as the school continues to strive for the very best for all pupils.

The curriculum is clearly structured from Reception to Year 6. Staff appreciate how this helps them to know what to teach and when. Teachers systematically recap on key concepts to help ensure pupils understand vital knowledge before building on new ideas. For example, in art, teachers check pupils understand primary colours and colour mixing before going on to explore warm and cool shades. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have their needs clearly identified. Teachers then ensure that learning is adapted and supported, so that pupils with SEND can learn well.

The curriculum is helping pupils to strengthen their knowledge and understanding. As this builds, teachers are beginning to be able to strengthen and deepen pupils thinking. In some subjects, the school recognises that pupils still have some gaps in their understanding. They are focusing on rectifying these as the curriculum embeds across every subject.

Reading is of central importance to the school. Pupils develop their phonic knowledge right from the start in Reception. Daily sessions help them to recognise sounds and build words. Regular assessment identifies any pupils who need additional practice or help. This is quickly put in place. Most pupils are keen to read and they read well. They enjoy the stories that are read to them in class or in assembly. Well-selected texts help pupils build their curriculum knowledge. Pupils talk excitedly about how stories and texts help them to learn about life in the Stone Age or about inspirational figures, such as Rosa Parks.

The school's clear behaviour policy supports everyone in knowing what is expected. Staff apply this consistently and pupils respond well. The school is calm and orderly throughout. In Reception, children settle in quickly and are polite and considerate of each other. This continues and builds throughout the school, so that courtesy and respect are the norm.

The personal development curriculum helps pupils understand more about society and the world around them. For example pupils learn about the fundamental British value of democracy, linked to the elections of the pupil body representatives in the 'Horsmonden Huddle'. Pupils know that their voice is heard through this system and are keen to put their views into the suggestion box for consideration.

Those responsible for governance ensure that they have the right information to hold the school to account. They share the high ambitions of the school and work highly effectively with them to help secure rapid improvements. Parents are supportive of the school. They recognise the improved facilities and provision for their children. A parent, echoing the views of many commented that, 'My child has blossomed at this school and enjoys attending every single day.'

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 of the foundation subjects, there are gaps in pupils' prior knowledge. Sometimes they have insufficient understanding of some of the key knowledge. They, therefore, find it more difficult to make connections to new learning. The school should continue to support teachers in adapting the curriculum to help pupils deepen their knowledge and skills across the whole curriculum.

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	147280
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10296535
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	188
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Frank Green
CEO of the trust	Simon Beamish
Principal	Hayley Sharp
Website	https://horsmondenprimaryacademy.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school joined Leigh Academies Trust in September 2019.
- The school is governed by the trust and by a local academy board with delegated powers.
- The school is authorised as an International Baccalaureate World School and teaches the Primary Years Programme.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors 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. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in the evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the inspectors met with school leaders. The inspectors also met with the chief executive officer of the trust, the academies director, and members of the local academy board.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, art and design and history. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector listened to pupils read.
- 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.
- The inspectors reviewed responses to Ofsted's parent, pupil and staff surveys.
- The inspectors talked to staff to gather their views about the school, including their workload and well-being. The inspectors met with several groups of pupils, as well as speaking to pupils during lessons and at lunchtime.

Deborah Gordon, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Paul Bateman

Ofsted Inspector

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