

Inspection of Hartest Church of England Primary School

The Row, Hartest, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP29 4DL

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 March 2024

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

The executive headteacher of this school is Amanda Woolmer, who is responsible for this school and one other. This school is part of the St Edmundsbury and Ipswich Diocesan Multi-Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Jane Sheat, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Andrew Blit.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils attend a small school that sees itself as a big family. They feel safe, seeing how staff spot and swiftly solve issues with them. Many pupils trust that kind behaviour is the norm in their school. Such kindness means pupils feel comfortable being themselves. This puts pupils in a positive state of mind from which to listen and learn.

Close ties with the pre-school on site mean pupils typically flourish from the moment they start the Reception Year. The progress they make academically and personally is strong. It shows in younger pupils readily reading the books they receive, wanting to succeed in the school's 'reading challenge'. Older pupils expertly explain what they learn, particularly in geography. For example, pupils recall facts about the longest river in the world or what constitutes a dormant volcano.

Generous patrons, including the parish council, add to pupils' learning and play resources. Pupils access some of these, such as the trim trail, outside the school day. There are cross-school activities too with the other primary school which leaders oversee. Having adults who foster opportunities for pupils to socialise ensures pupils become confident, happy and polite individuals.

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

Leaders have seen the school through some difficult times. Their resilience and communication skills mean pupils, parents and staff rightly trust in leaders' ability to improve the school. Staff, for example, appreciate the personal and professional support leaders provide. Such support from the whole community keeps the school going from strength to strength.

The school is steadfast in ensuring pupils learn to read. Reception-aged children quickly learn the sounds letters make. For older pupils, regular reading practice means they read fluently using an engaging voice. Pupils rarely fall behind. Still, for those who do, effective use of assessment to inform tuition ensures they catch up fast.

The trust facilitated school access to expertise and funding for learning resources. It supported leaders in bringing about change to the curriculum. In all subjects, the curriculum specifies the words, concepts and skills pupils should learn. This helps teachers to plan and teach clear lessons. Consequently, pupils achieve well. Simple adjustments, including the flexible use of additional adults, supports pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities in accessing the same curriculum as their peers.

Leaders are in the process of having staff adopt research-informed approaches to check what pupils know. For example, the 'three heads' activity encourages pupils of all ages to explain why statements are true or false, referring to what they learned in and across lessons. It shows in pupils' suitably strong recall of what they learn.

Still, some staff need to strengthen how they use their observations and questions to inform their teaching. There are occasions when staff are slow in spotting and quickly resolving pupils' mistakes.

Leaders cultivate a caring community. They treat staff with dignity, so staff treat pupils with respect. Pupils treat each other with kindness. Pupils enjoy learning about the school's values. They particularly like nominating a peer to receive recognition for demonstrating a value. This, along with a breadth of pastoral support, means pupils learn how to behave and manage their feelings well.

Most pupils attend school regularly. However, too many disadvantaged pupils are persistently absent. When they do return to school, they see how others know and can do things they cannot. It does not make them feel good about themselves. This sometimes leads to further absence, making it even harder for these pupils to catch up. The school has clear procedures in place, including how they liaise with and support families. However, more needs to be done to tackle this issue.

Being a small school does not limit the personal development programme. Pupils foster their creative and sporting prowess through the curriculum and clubs. Clubs include band academy, board games, gardening and multi-skills sports. The 'curriculum enrichment passport' capture the extra-curricular offer. It includes snapshots that, in time, Year 6 pupils will receive as a reminder of all they achieved 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)

- A few staff are still getting to grips with recent staff training about how best to routinely check pupils' understanding to inform teaching. As a result, there are occasions where staff skim over pupils' mistakes or pose confusing questions. Leaders should continue their work to revisit and monitor the training staff received, providing suitable support to those few staff who need it.
- Persistent absenteeism for disadvantaged pupils is higher than the school would like. Time away from school leads to gaps in pupils' knowledge. This stops them from achieving their very best which also affects their well-being. The trust and school should consider how best to enhance current policy and procedure. Doing so will ensure all pupils benefit from what the school offers through regular school attendance.

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	144215
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10288553
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	40
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Andrew Blit
CEO of the trust	Jane Sheat
Headteacher	Amanda Woolmer
Website	www.hartest.suffolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 and 29 March 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich. The school has a religious character, Church of England, and was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 on 27 June 2019. The school's next section 48 inspection will be within eight school years of that date.
- When the school was inspected in September 2021, it was judged to require special measures. Subsequently, the school received two monitoring inspections, one in June 2022 and one in March 2023. At the last monitoring inspection, leaders were judged to have made progress to improve the school, but more work was necessary for the category of concern to be removed.
- The school is registered to have children in the early years. However, at the point of inspection there were few children on roll in this phase. Therefore, due to insufficient evidence, amnesty has been granted for the judgement of the early years provision.
- There is a separately registered and inspected early years provider on the school premises: Hartest Pre-School.

- There is before- and after-school childcare for pupils attending the school. It is run by school staff and managed by school leaders.
- The school makes use of one unregistered alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

- 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 trust leaders, including the chief executive officer, head of school improvement, and the chair of the trust board. Inspectors also held meetings with school leaders, including the executive headteacher, head of school, special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, and five local governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to staff, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult.
- To further inspect the curriculum, the lead inspector met with leaders to review curriculum plans, pupils' workbooks and documentation for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The lead inspector also spoke with staff.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record; examined safeguarding records; 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 reviewed a range of documentation, including school policies, the school development plan, and minutes from meetings of the trust board and the local governing body.
- Inspectors gathered pupils' views by holding discussions with many of them, as well as talking to pupils at lunchtime. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school and took account of the 15 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- Inspectors gathered parents' views by reviewing the 24 responses, including 17 free-text responses, submitted to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. An inspector also spoke to some parents at the start of a school day.

- Inspectors gathered the views of staff by speaking to several of them and reviewing the 12 responses to Ofsted’s staff survey.

Inspection team

Daniel Short, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Benjamin Axon

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024