

Hemlington Hall Academy

Briscoe Way, Hemlington, Middlesbrough TS8 9SJ

Inspection dates

23–24 November 2016

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The headteacher's evaluation of the school's effectiveness is too generous. It does not reflect the more realistic evaluations of governors and of the external consultant working with the school.
- A new assessment system introduced in September 2014 is not being used consistently enough to track pupils' progress from their starting points effectively.
- Newly appointed middle leaders are not yet holding staff to account for the progress made by all groups.
- Standards in reading fell in 2016 because there was a lack of focus on teaching reading skills explicitly. This resulted in too few pupils reaching the expected standard at the end of key stage 2. Interventions at key stage 2 are in place to help pupils catch up.
- Teaching in English is not consistent. As a result, standards in reading and writing are not high enough throughout the school.
- Pupils from average starting points do not make enough progress in reading and writing.

The school has the following strengths

- The early years provision is good because children receive well-thought-out activities. These help them to build on their skills to become confident learners.
- Personal development promotes British values well and is a strength. Pupils show respect and tolerance for each other and their teachers.
- Pupils are keen to learn and try hard in all lessons. Their behaviour is good and attendance is improving.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress in mathematics and writing.
- Staff care for the pupils well. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe.
- The teaching of mathematics is good. Pupils are able to use their knowledge to apply it to everyday situations.

Full report

- Improve leadership and management to ensure that:
 - senior and middle leaders hold their teams to account robustly and lead rapid improvements in understanding and using data to improve their areas of responsibility
 - assessment information is accurate and enables leaders to monitor attainment and progress and make accurate evaluations in order to improve progress for all groups rapidly.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to further improve pupils' outcomes by:
 - ensuring that accurate assessment information is used to plan lessons which develop understanding as well as skills
 - making sure that work is matched consistently to pupils' needs, especially for the middle- and higher attaining pupils.
 - sharing best practice in the early years in the teaching of phonics more widely across the school
 - embedding regular activities, including basic skills for reading, in daily classroom teaching so that gaps in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are addressed quickly.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Senior leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness is over-generous. There is a mismatch between governors' and the external consultant's view of outcomes and that of the senior leadership. Information on outcomes provided by the senior leadership is inaccurate. As a result, governors cannot challenge this and are not able to hold leaders to account sharply enough.
- The headteacher introduced an assessment system to meet the needs of the new curriculum in September 2014. However, teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment are not consistently accurate. As a result, internal pupil tracking information is not reliable and does not, on its own, provide leaders and governors with an accurate view of pupils' progress.
- Not all middle leaders have a comprehensive overview of the quality of teaching in their subject areas and are unable to identify the strengths and precise areas for development to be shared with colleagues. Senior leaders have started to strengthen middle leadership. As a result, middle leaders are beginning to lead their subjects, including developing the curriculum.
- Leaders and governors are fully committed to improving the school. A robust and detailed school development plan sets out the improvements to be made, actions to be taken, professional development required for staff and targets by which success will be measured. However, recent action plans clearly identify the strengths and areas for development but it is too soon to measure their impact on pupils' outcomes and progress.
- The school's promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is not effective enough because opportunities are not systematically built into lessons. Pupils are taught about other cultures and religions and beliefs in religious education, but opportunities are limited for pupils to develop such learning in other subjects.
- British values are promoted effectively through assemblies, the work in the nurture room and displays. As a result, pupils speak confidently about tolerance, democracy and respect. For example, pupils were able to describe the democratic elections of school councillors who report to the governing board.
- Leaders are focusing on improving teaching. Information gathered by the school shows that bespoke professional development, linked to performance management, is making a difference to teachers being able to better meet the needs of all their pupils.
- The Discovery Alliance, which is a partnership of local schools, provides high-quality professional development opportunities for staff as well as support through subject network meetings. Staff benefit from sharing good practice and, as a result, provision is improving.

- The school provides a creative curriculum which provides breadth and depth. Pupils learn about many different subjects through a combination of discrete lessons and topic-based learning. The teaching of personal, social and health (PSH) education is strong and classes include a weekly yoga session: 'Yogabugs' is improving pupils' well-being. A variety of visits and trips and other enrichment activities helps to broaden pupils' learning and helps them to develop a wider range of skills and knowledge which they use in other areas of the curriculum. These include wilderness visits, 'Big Sing' and participation in local events such as the Middlesbrough Christmas Parade. Pupils are encouraged to read widely and have opportunities to work with authors in residence. As a result, current pupils' progress is improving because the curriculum engages and excites them.
- The curriculum is enhanced by the wide range of extra-curricular activities offered to pupils. These include sports clubs and a homework club alongside creative and music opportunities. Pupils spoke highly of the brass club and talked about looking after the animals and the beehive in the school.
- Leaders use the additional sport funding effectively. Teachers' skills are developed by specialist coaches. Leaders evaluate the funding in terms of increased participation through opportunities to take part in a wide range of sports including dance. There is a close link to healthy lifestyles and pupils speak confidently about how their fitness has improved.
- Leaders and governors use the pupil premium funding well to support educational visits, school uniform and reading incentives. For example, the implementation of a new reading programme has had a positive impact on disadvantaged pupils. The appointment of a dedicated family liaison officer has seen improvements in attendance and progress for some disadvantaged pupils. The most able pupils in receipt of the pupil premium funding have improved outcomes over time because the funding is targeted and helping pupils improve, especially in their reading. The link governor is knowledgeable about the interventions in place and questions the school's monitoring and the impact on pupils' progress.
- Parents are positive about the school and talk about the focus on reading for pleasure since September as being a particular strength.
- Funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is used well. As a result, these pupils show improvements in writing and mathematics because the additional support is helping them catch up. Pupils in the high-needs base make good progress from their starting points.

Governance of the school

- Governors have a good understanding of the quality of education provided by the school, including understanding what the school needs to do to improve further. They check for themselves that information given to them by leaders is accurate. For example, they visit the school and take into account the views of pupils and parents.

- Governors have actively reviewed their effectiveness annually. As a result, they produce a well-focused action plan every year. This has led to strengthening the board through the appointment of the right people to serve as governors and providing good-quality and relevant training to members. A new parent governor said that the induction programme was thorough and all governors are supportive.
- Governors give priority to improving the performance of all pupils in the school. They recognise that strategies in the current development plan will eventually improve outcomes. However, the school's self-evaluation is over-generous. Governors are not secure in their evaluation of the impact of actions to improve progress because the assessment information shared by the headteacher is not accurate.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school has a strong ethos of safeguarding. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are well maintained and secure.
- Staff are kept up to date about safeguarding issues through regular training delivered by an external provider. Safeguarding policies are well understood by all staff who know what to look for and what to do should they have any concerns about safety or safeguarding. They are clear about how to report their concerns and records show that they do this appropriately.
- As designated teacher for child protection and safeguarding, the headteacher is well informed about individual cases. Referrals are acted upon in a timely manner and concerns are followed up with rigour.
- Partnership working with parents and external agencies is effective in making sure that all pupils are supported and feel safe.
- Parents, through the online questionnaire (Parent View), school surveys and those who were spoken to during the inspection, agreed that their children are safe and well cared for.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching across the school is variable. Some teachers do not focus enough on making sure that all pupils in the class understand their learning and can use their improved understanding to make their work better.
- Reading is not strong for all groups of pupils because some middle-ability pupils do not use their knowledge of sounds and letters to read words. This is because they are not secure in the sounds linked to letters and blends. Some of the less able pupils struggled to work out which words were real and which made up. In addition, they cannot put some of the real words into sentences as they do not understand their meaning.

- Basic skills are not consistently well reinforced and some misconceptions are not addressed at the point of learning. Work is not broken down enough to help pupils write longer sentences or use different vocabulary to say what they mean clearly enough. A number of pupils struggled to use their knowledge of sounds and letters because the writing task was set and they had not learned the sounds and letters to help them work out a word. As a result, they became reliant on adult help.
- Middle-ability pupils also make limited progress because they are not confident in the basic understanding of how to construct sentences and build them into paragraphs. As a result, their work is often hindered by being given structures that they do not understand. For example, adverbial openers were given to the group but they could not explain what they meant and how they altered the meaning of a sentence. Pupils struggled to use their knowledge of sounds and letters to help with their writing. Progress of middle-ability pupils is not good because they cannot always apply their learning to different contexts.
- Work does not always challenge and stretch the most able pupils. In looking at most-able pupils' books, their writing was accurate in spelling and grammar but opportunities were often missed for pupils to develop their writing style and ideas more creatively. Pupils can edit and improve their work, especially in spelling and grammar. However, they are not able to improve their writing style and develop their ideas effectively without adult help.
- In some lessons, teachers use good questions which allow pupils to think about, and build on, each other's answers. This means that they understand ideas and can apply their skills in different activities. For example, in a key stage 1 mathematics lesson, pupils were required to 'buy' their morning fruit snack having learned addition and subtraction of money in the lesson.
- Class teachers plan to meet the needs of most pupils. Most pupils are well focused and resilient and most workbooks show that they take pride in their work.
- Pupils in the high-needs base make good progress from their starting points. Work is matched well to their needs and there are opportunities for pupils to take part in lessons in the main school. This results in supporting the well-being of the high-needs base pupils as well as offering them some alternative teaching and learning with a wider range of pupils.
- Pupils are calm and orderly in lessons. They work well together and are enthusiastic about their learning. Good relationships within the classes mean that they willingly support each other.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. It is not yet outstanding as some pupils' attitudes to learning are developing.

- Pupils are polite, friendly and courteous to each other and adults. They are interested in talking to visitors and listen respectfully. There is a strong culture of tolerance within the school and pupils are empathetic to the needs of the children in the high-needs base who have different learning needs. They have a sense of fairness and accept and abide by the school rules.
- Pupils who spoke with inspectors were clear that they felt happy and safe in this school. They said that bullying was extremely rare, knew about the different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying, and whom to talk to if it occurred. Pupils commented on the 'Respect Room', saying that few pupils needed to be in there as most were well behaved.
- Pupils talked to inspectors knowledgeably about how to keep safe and healthy. They were proud that the school council had influenced the improvements in healthy options for school dinners. They also talked about 'Yogabugs' and Tai Chi, which they said helped their fitness and relaxation.
- The school environment supports and promotes welfare. The 'safety street' corridor and display encourage pupils to know and understand responsibility and increase their awareness of danger.
- Groups of pupils who spoke with inspectors said that they feel safe in school and they know that staff care for them. The learning opportunities through the curriculum help pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. The 'PANTS' project in conjunction with the NSPCC helped pupils discuss inappropriate touching sensitively and in an age-appropriate way.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. In classes, pupils settle quickly and are eager to work. They know the routines, take responsibility for setting out and putting away equipment, and help each other. For example, pupils were helping each other to improve their writing by suggesting alternative words to use instead of 'said'.
- Peer mentors explained their role to help children at breaks and spoke warmly and openly about how this was helping build their confidence. They thrive on this additional responsibility. The peer mentors said that it was good to be a friend to children in the school.
- At playtime and lunchtime, pupils are calm and orderly. Play is meaningful, for example, pupils playing 'tig' ran with care, ensuring that they did not run into other children. Pupils playing on the equipment and a game of football allowed all to join in and there was no over-boisterous behaviour. At the end of play, pupils collect equipment and return quietly into school.
- Pupils enjoy coming to the school and attendance has improved and is at the national average, especially for boys. School leaders know the families who struggle to get their children to school regularly and are working with them. As a result, attendance for this group of pupils has improved, with attendance near to the national average for most of these pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Over time, the progress of pupils' reading across the school is below national expectations. Pupils do not make good enough progress in this subject, particularly middle-ability and most-able pupils. Pupils currently at the school are improving in writing but too few middle-ability pupils make expected progress and more than expected progress. The school's focus on writing, over time, shows that progress in this area has improved to national averages.
- Standards at key stage 1 remain just below the national average for the current groups of pupils in the school. Overall, attainment is just below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- At key stage 2, outcomes in 2016 meant that pupils were not well prepared for their next stage of learning as only 32% were at age-related expectations. The current information for pupils in key stage 2 is more positive, with progress for the middle-ability pupils showing improvements. Hence, their attainment is closer to the national expectation.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics over key stages 1 and 2 is improving. Over time, the less able and the most able pupils apply their skills effectively to solve problems. As a result, they are making better than expected progress.
- Most pupils attained the expected standard in phonics at the end of key stage 1.
- Reading is a whole-school priority and much is now in place to develop a love of reading. Pupils' attainment in the national phonics check is above the national average. Most pupils read confidently and some use strategies to work out the meaning of unfamiliar words in a sentence. The less able pupils' insecure phonic knowledge means that they are not as confident in sounding out words. All pupils, however, enjoy talking about and sharing books.
- The most able disadvantaged pupils' progress is close to the national average, although few made more than expected progress. Assessments of current pupils in the school show that their progress is improving more rapidly because work is matched to their needs and encourages pupils to try more difficult work. As a result, work in books shows that they are developing their ideas more fully.
- The pupils in the high-needs base make good progress from their different starting points in a range of subjects. Some pupils have opportunities to work with children in different classes. This means that they have access to the full range of activities on offer in the school.

Early years provision

Good

- Early years children make good progress from their starting points and the majority achieve a good level of development. This prepares them well for key stage 1. However, too few children exceed the good level of development.
- Many children enter the early years with skill levels that are below what is typically expected for their age. Nursery and Reception staff quickly address this, making sure that children are provided with opportunities to acquire the skills they need.

- By the end of Reception, the number of children gaining a good level of development is improving and is above the national average. However, too few children exceed the good level of development. Children make good progress in the early years and improve well from their starting points. Consequently, they are well prepared for Year 1.
- The early years leader makes sure that teaching and well-developed practical activities help children to increase their numeracy awareness and writing skills. For example, the children in the 'elves workshop' were counting the number of stockings filled and writing lists of toys they needed to make.
- Adults' careful planning and organisation of interesting and challenging activities encourage children to be curious and to engage well in solving problems. One child was able to explain that she knew it was baby Jesus because the star was shining on his head.
- The early years leader and other adults ensure that children are safe and well supervised. The outdoor play area offers a range of well-planned activities and children are encouraged to take risks and try out new experiences. As a result, their enjoyment is tangible.
- Children behave well, take turns and share. They listen attentively and sustain concentration for a considerable time because they enjoy and are secure in their work.
- Phonics teaching is effective and is reinforced through other activities that children undertake during the day. Adults use their interactions with the children to strengthen their language development. They use good questioning to extend children's vocabulary and increase their knowledge and understanding.
- Teachers use assessment information to ensure that subsequent activities help children to develop skills in areas where they are less secure.
- Differences in the progress made by boys and girls or children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are diminishing. Targeted funding is used effectively to help disadvantaged children, including the most able disadvantaged, to make good progress.
- The early years staff develop strong links with parents. The weekly 'stay and play' is forging good relationships with parents, because they are involved in understanding the progress their child is making through learning journals.

School details

Unique reference number	140541
Local authority	Middlesbrough
Inspection number	10019680

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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	352
Appropriate authority	Discovery Alliance
Chair	David Elliott
Headteacher	Karen Edmenson
Telephone number	01642 591171
Website	www.hemlingtonhallacademy.co.uk
Email address	karen.edmenson@mcschools.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	19–20 September 2012

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average.
- The large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.

- The school has a high-needs base for 15 pupils across the borough. Pupils remain in the base until the end of key stage 1, when they either transfer to special school or return to their home school. This is funded by the Middlesbrough collaborative through the local authority.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed lessons and part-lessons taught by 12 teachers, some of which were joint observations with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. The inspectors looked at pupils' books, listened to pupils read and talked to them about their work and views of school.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, middle leaders, early years leader and 10 members of the governing body including the chair and vice-chair. The inspectors also met with the special educational needs coordinators, family liaison officer and teachers. The lead inspector spoke with representatives from the Discovery Alliance, an independent consultant and a national leader of education (NLE), who has been supporting the school, from a neighbouring local authority.
- Parents' views were taken into account, including 28 responses to the online Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View.
- The inspectors listened to the views of staff and evaluated 22 staff questionnaires.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including information about safeguarding, school policies including complaints, self-evaluation and improvement plans, the most recent information on pupils' achievement, pupils' records, and information relating to teaching, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Jen Cave, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Michael Wardle	Ofsted Inspector
Juliet Demster	Ofsted Inspector

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