

Inspection of Hartismere School

Castleton Way, Eye, Suffolk IP23 7BL

Inspection dates:	25 and 26 February 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The headteachers of this school are Sarah Gray and Geoff Luxton. This school is part of Hartismere Family of Schools, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Jim McAtear, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Marion Ravenhill.

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since November 2014. The school received an urgent inspection under section 8 of the Act on November 2018. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school is a calm, harmonious and welcoming community. Staff prioritise the well-being of pupils, providing timely and tenacious support for them, including students in the sixth form. Staff ensure that pupils are happy, respectful and well cared for in line with the school's ethos of 'learn and serve'.

Pupils rise to the school's high expectations about what they can achieve. Most pupils are enthused about the wide range of lessons that they access, especially in subjects, such as mathematics, music, art and physical education (PE). Pupils develop a thorough understanding across their curriculum. Many pupils achieve very well in a range of subjects by the end of Year 11 and Year 13.

Pupils access an exceptional range of trips, visiting speakers and extra-curricular clubs. Many pupils take part in the extensive competitive sports programme. Pupils take on many roles and responsibilities, including through the expansive and precisely planned charity work of the school's 'Hartsmere-200' campaign. This helps to promote their confidence and self-esteem.

Pupils value the importance of kind behaviour. Most pupils behave well. Many pupils say that staff deal with any issues of poor behaviour and bullying quickly and effectively.

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

Leaders have invested in providing pupils with an extensive curriculum. This curriculum includes a wide range of qualifications, including for students in the sixth form, and a well-aligned programme, which develops pupils' talents and interests. Most teachers are skilled, knowledgeable and confident about the subjects and qualifications that they teach. They use a range of information to identify and support pupils to learn effectively. As a result, pupils achieve high standards, including in subjects, such as mathematics and science.

In a few subjects, teachers do not precisely check how well pupils are learning. Pupils who need extra help find the work too hard. Some pupils who are ready to apply their learning in more complex ways, can find the work too easy. Consequently, these pupils do not develop their knowledge or learn as well as they could.

The school identifies and supports pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) effectively. Staff work closely and seek external professional specialist expertise, where needed. Most pupils with SEND develop high levels of resilience, enjoy their lessons and learn and achieve well. In the few subjects where teaching does not precisely check on how well pupils are learning, pupils with SEND do not always develop their knowledge as well over time.

Pupils who are in the early stages of learning to read or who need extra help to catch up, are efficiently and precisely identified. Leaders invest in a range of well-considered

additional support to help pupils develop essential phonics, comprehension and fluent reading skills. Staff are well trained to deliver these programmes. Pupils significantly improve in their reading skills through this support.

The wealth and quality of the school's provision for pupils' personal development is exceptional. Pupils are taught the importance of respect for different faiths, beliefs and lifestyles. Pupils learn, in an age-appropriate way, about healthy lifestyles, sex and relationships and safety, including online. They access a well-planned economic education, including how to manage their finances for older students as they move into adulthood. A large proportion of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, undertake a role or responsibility. This includes through an extensive charity work programme, or through the vast array of clubs, visits and competitive sporting events that they engage in. Pupils, including students in the sixth form, are prepared well for their next steps.

Pupils access a high-quality careers education, including that related to work experience and work-related learning. They go on to appropriate next-step destinations, including appropriate post-18 apprenticeships, employment and further education.

Most pupils value their education and the school community. They attend and behave very well. This includes during lessons, at breaks and at lunchtimes. They interact with each other and staff in a friendly and respectful way.

A high proportion of parents, carers and staff are effusive in their praise for the school. Staff say that the school is considerate of their well-being and workload. Despite this, in some aspects of their work, leaders and governors do not review precisely where they could be more effective over time, for example, for a small number of disadvantaged pupils who do not always attend, behave or achieve as well as their peers.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, the checks that teachers make on pupils' learning are not as effective as they should be. This means that some pupils do not build their knowledge well enough over time. The school should ensure that all staff use assessment effectively, so that pupils are well supported and helped to deepen and apply their learning effectively.
- In some areas, the school does not have an accurate overview of the impact of its actions. As a result, it is unable to fully evaluate the impact these actions are having on pupils, particularly those pupils who are disadvantaged. The school needs to ensure

that all aspects of its work are evaluated effectively, so that it can quickly address any short comings and build on the strengths that already exist.

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	136271
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10345297
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1063
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	180
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Marion Ravenhill
CEO of the trust	Jim McAtear
Co-headteachers	Sarah Gray and Geoff Luxton
Website	www.hartismere.com
Dates of previous inspection	25 and 26 November 2014 under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- There has been a change in the headteacher since the previous inspection. The two co-headteachers took on the role in 2022.
- The school currently uses one registered and one unregistered alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

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 met with the co-headteachers, senior leaders, the leader for special educational needs, the chair of the local governing body and the CEO of the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, modern foreign languages, history, music and PE. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning, and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also considered other aspects of the curriculum, including in the sixth form.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 reviewed the responses to Ofsted's survey for pupils. To gather evidence about pupils' experiences, inspectors observed them at different times during the school day, spoke to them during social times, and met with groups of pupils across all key stages.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents submitted via the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. They also reviewed the responses to the Ofsted staff survey.

Inspection team

Kim Pigram, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Diana Fletcher	Ofsted Inspector
Karen Kerridge	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Fowler	Ofsted Inspector

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