



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR HARTLEY PRIMARY ACADEMY

Name of School:	Hartley Primary Academy
Headteacher/Principal:	Nicole Galinis
Hub:	Leigh Hub
School phase:	Primary
MAT (if applicable):	Leigh Academies Trust

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	Leading
Date of this Review:	04/05/2022
Overall Estimate at last QA Review	Not applicable
Date of last QA Review	Not applicable
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Outstanding
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	02/02/2022

1. Context and character of the school

Hartley Primary Academy is a large primary school with two-form entry and its own nursery provision. It is situated in a semi-rural location to the northwest of Kent. The school is consistently over-subscribed, and the majority of pupils live in fairly close proximity to the school.

Most pupils are of White British heritage, although the school has small numbers of pupils from 14 out of the 17 ethnic groups. The percentage of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is below the national average, as is the proportion of disadvantaged pupils. The number of pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) is similar to the national picture, which reflects the changing demographic.

The school is a member of the Leigh Academies Trust and was accredited as an International Baccalaureate World School in December 2021. Their work in establishing the Primary Years Programme (PYP) has provided opportunities for leaders to work with other schools across the trust and more widely. This has built on the outreach work carried out over recent years whilst ascribed as a National Support School.

This is the school's first Challenge Partners review.

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- The principal has been in post for three years, although has worked at the school for seventeen years. She leads the school with passion and enthusiasm and is ably supported by an experienced senior leadership team. Leaders speak with credibility about the commitment that all staff have for pupils to achieve to the best of their abilities. This is reflected in the school's vision of **happy, positive achievers** creating a better world together, which incorporates a mnemonic of the initial letters of the academy name.
- Notably, all senior leaders have grown and developed their practice throughout their many years at the school, having joined in earlier years of their careers. The leadership team liaises with trust colleagues and the governing body to develop strategic planning through the academy performance agreement. The high expectations apparent in the whole-school aims are reflected in the practice seen.
- Leaders at all levels work closely together in the strong staff team, with subject leaders and class teachers being heavily involved in the development of the curriculum. Subject leaders have been selected because of their particular interests and qualifications in relation to their respective subjects; this has enabled them to take a research-based approach to continue to drive their particular subjects forward. They show much autonomy and ownership of their

areas of responsibility, and benefit from close networking with colleagues in other trust schools.

- Teaching assistants and other support staff are highly valued members of the school team. They are deployed effectively and receive regular, bespoke professional development opportunities to build their practice constantly.
- Positive relationships between pupils, and between adults and pupils, are a consistent feature of school life. All adults are clearly committed to upholding the school's ethos, and pupils are encouraged to discuss their learning at every opportunity. This has secured a stimulating and productive climate for learning to which pupils respond very well.
- The curriculum is enriched by many activities that help prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. Pupils are encouraged to take on leadership responsibilities, including the head boy and girl team, wellbeing ambassadors, assembly monitors, school photographers (who will upload their work to the school website), play leaders, school council, librarians and sports leaders. Pupils are also actively involved in many fundraising activities throughout each year. Furthermore, leaders strive to expose pupils to a broad range of cultural diversity experiences which are celebrated throughout the PYP framework. Due to the lines of inquiry explored, pupils are confident when public speaking and presenting to an audience.
- Pupils enjoy a variety of extra-curricular activities which are popular and well-attended. The wide range of after-school clubs have been updated recently, following parental and pupil survey feedback, and include activities such as musical theatre, football, playground games and Bhangra dancing. The curriculum is further enhanced by a commitment to regular school trips linked to the themes, theatre visits and residential trips for Year 6 and Year 4 pupils.

2.2 Leadership at all levels - Even better if...

... subject leaders further built their confidence when articulating their leadership practice.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- Leaders and teachers have worked hard to design a purposeful and bespoke curriculum within the PYP framework. The curriculum is structured around six transdisciplinary themes explored each year, with meaningful and progressive connections made to all subject areas of the National Curriculum. The wide-ranging themes help pupils to become aware of the world, whilst enjoying their learning, including aspects such as 'how we express ourselves' and 'sharing the planet'. For instance, in two exciting Year 4 science lessons, pupils explored how clouds were formed, linking this with the water cycle, evaporation and

condensation, sound and light speeds, and geography. Pupils showed high levels of engagement and spoke confidently about their learning.

- Pupils often select their own inquiry through each transdisciplinary theme, clearly valuing this autonomy through the carefully guided methods adopted. Investigations typically include opportunities for collaborative work as they develop key learner attributes, such as risk-taking and reflection, whilst developing an international dimension to their studies.
- The curriculum gives a particular emphasis to embracing the outdoors. The extensive grounds are used effectively, with every pupil experiencing exciting and relevant outdoor learning each week. For example, during the review Year 1 pupils enjoyed a cross-curricular exploration lesson in which key vocabulary was reinforced to consolidate and complement prior learning.
- Teachers and leaders value the broad range of focused continuing professional development. This includes a balance of in-house and external training, with subject leaders closely involved in building the subject knowledge and confidence of other staff. The trust also offers many opportunities for networking and monitoring, including working with specialist teachers from partner secondary schools. As a result, the subject knowledge of teachers and other adults is strong.
- A key feature of lessons was the high quality of questioning, by both adults and pupils alike. This promoted a challenging and stimulating learning climate to which pupils responded very positively, showing excellent attitudes to their learning.
- Very positive interactions are evident between children and adults in the spacious and richly resourced Early Years Foundation Stage provision. During the visit, children were seen to be actively engaged in building wooden cars, with expertly supervised use of real hammers and nails, whilst others were taking part in a bug hunt or enjoying a range of inspiring creative activities.
- Pupils benefit from the consistent and carefully planned delivery of the systematic phonics programme. As a result, outcomes in phonics have been well above national averages for many years which provides a strong basis for pupils to develop their reading and writing skills as they move through the school.
- Pupils are encouraged to develop a love of reading, with many initiatives designed to celebrate and encourage reading, including reading corners, class displays highlighting favourite books and reading challenge incentives. Pupils can talk about a wide range of favourite authors with confidence.
- A mastery approach is taken to the teaching and learning of mathematics, which is supported by the agree, build, challenge (ABC) responses which reinforce learning and provide a clear structure for pupil feedback. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils used talk partners proactively to discuss their learning and they responded very well to the high levels of challenge.
- Leaders and teachers ensure that pupils are prepared effectively for the next stages of their education. In recent years, attainment outcomes have almost all been above, and often significantly above, national averages in all key stages.

3.2 Quality of provision and outcomes – Even better if...

- ... the very strong practice seen in the vast majority of classes was further built on across the school.
- ... learning time in lessons was always maximised so that pupils of all abilities make the best possible progress.

4.1 Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs - What went well

- The leader with current responsibility for both SEND and disadvantaged pupils is an assistant principal. This reflects the importance that the school places on supporting these vulnerable groups. She also works with the local authority, being closely involved in local inclusion team meetings, and liaises with colleagues in the trust special schools and supports SEND needs in other local schools. The leader is currently mentoring the assistant SEND co-ordinator to take on the overall responsibility.
- In addition to the SEND co-ordinators, the wellbeing team includes a family liaison officer, a pastoral support officer, the designated safeguarding leads and a team of highly experienced teaching assistants who lead on specialist programmes. This cohesive team works together very well and shows passion in its commitment to supporting vulnerable pupils, their families and the staff team.
- The school has forged strong links with many external agencies, and a number of specialists work with small groups and individual pupils on a regular basis.
- The curriculum is successfully adapted to target the most vulnerable learners, with a balance of timely interventions and teaching assistant support within lessons. For example, in a Year 2 writing lesson, SEND pupils benefited from additional support and the scaffolding of small steps of learning. This typical approach helps to improve quickly individuals' confidence and self-esteem, as well as their learning and understanding.
- Assessment records, personalised plans and case studies show that SEND pupils generally make significant progress, both academically and pastorally, from their individual starting points.
- The attainment outcomes of disadvantaged pupils are similar to, and often higher than, other pupils in the school. These outcomes are significantly higher than achieved by all pupils nationally.
- All extra-curricular activities are inclusive and disadvantaged pupils will receive funded places on trips and visits, when attending any clubs offered by outside providers and at the daily breakfast club.
- The behaviour and attitudes of all pupils, including the most vulnerable, are very positive. This is due to the high expectations and consistent approaches

embedded. All pupils feel valued and report being very happy to be part of the school.

- The school's consistently high expectations of pupils and families are reflected in the high levels of attendance, including for disadvantaged pupils. The persistent absenteeism of a small number of SEND pupils is being managed as effectively as possible.

4.2 Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs - Even better if...

... the newly appointed SEND co-ordinator becomes fully established in the role.

5. Area of Excellence

Not applicable.

6. What additional support would the school like from the Challenge Partners network, either locally or nationally?

The school is very happy with the Challenge Partners review process so far and works very closely within the local hub. Leaders plan to look for opportunities to attend additional reviews outside of the hub, and to visit schools with relevant areas of excellence.

This review will support the school's continuing improvement. The main findings will be shared within the school's hub in order that it can inform future activities.

Schools can access the School Support Directory; the Challenge Partners online tool that enables schools to connect with other schools in your hub and across the national network of schools.

Schools can also attend Sharing Leading Practice events where schools showcase excellent and/or innovative practice. Sharing Leading Practice events allow school leaders with specific improvement needs to visit a school or attend an online webinar hosted by a school, with outstanding provision in that area.



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Both the School Support Directory and the Shared Leading Practice events can be accessed via the Challenge Partners website.