

Inspection of Hartsdown Academy

George V Avenue, Margate, Kent CT9 5RE

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 December 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Staff and pupils agree that Hartsdown has improved greatly. One parent said: 'My daughter has grown in confidence, her level of learning has risen, the support from her teachers is brilliant.'

Pupils are proud to belong to the school community. They know that staff want them to aim high, so that they leave with the qualifications and experiences they need to be successful. Pupils enjoy receiving reward points for demonstrating scholarship, teamwork, resilience, integrity, vision and excellence. These are encompassed in the school's 'STRIVE' ethos.

The school is a warm and welcoming place. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about how much diversity is valued. Pupils enjoy working together and relationships between pupils and staff are very strong.

Pupils behave well. Lessons are not often disrupted, meaning pupils can get on with their learning. Pupils have confidence in their teachers to help them deal with any problems they have. Bullying happens sometimes, but pupils know that staff or the anti-bullying ambassadors will step in to help.

There are lots of extra-curricular clubs for pupils to enjoy such as sports clubs, science club, film club, LGBTQ+ club, and choir. Many pupils also participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's award scheme.

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

The headteacher has a clear and ambitious vision for the school. Leaders, with the support of the multi-academy trust, have focused on improving the right things. Staff feel well supported. Early career teachers say how much they value the guidance they have received.

Leaders have carefully considered the curriculum. At key stage 3, pupils are taught a wide range of subjects by a small group of teachers. This means that staff get to know pupils well and can tailor the work to their needs. Pupils have a wide range of subjects to choose from at key stage 4. Increasing numbers of pupils are studying humanities subjects, but not enough pupils are currently studying a modern foreign language. This means that too few pupils are able to achieve the English Baccalaureate (EBacc). However, leaders have clear plans in place to address this. Sixth-form students study a programme which combines vocational, academic and core skills work and is equipping them well for their next steps in education, employment or training.

Leaders have focused on reviewing curriculum planning. Subjects are well designed and sequenced. Planning details what pupils are going to learn and the key knowledge they need to remember. Teachers follow these plans carefully. In some

subjects, such as English and mathematics, pupils can talk clearly about what they are learning and can remember things they have learned in the past. However, in some other subjects, such as science and humanities, pupils' knowledge is not so well embedded in their long-term memory. Leaders are developing strategies to address this.

Regular written assessments help teachers identify where pupils have gaps in their knowledge. In lessons, some teachers are very skilled at checking how well pupils have grasped key ideas. They adapt their teaching to support or challenge pupils as needed. Sometimes, though, teachers do not check carefully enough. This means that some pupils do not have the knowledge they need to start the work, while for others the work given needs to be more demanding.

Leaders have ensured that pupils know the importance of focusing on reading so that they can build their vocabulary. Teachers encourage pupils to read regularly and often. Time is set aside specifically for reading in scholarship lessons. Those who need extra help have more intensive programmes with specialist staff.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders carefully identify pupils' needs and guide them onto the right curriculum pathway to help them learn best. For example, some pupils with SEND in Years 7 to 11 benefit from an adapted curriculum in the 'Ark' provision, while some pupils in Year 12 follow the 'Futures' programme which is tailored to their needs. Some pupils have extra help in speech and language and social skills, which are delivered by highly trained intervention coordinators.

The school's personal development programme is comprehensive. Leaders make sure that pupils learn about issues that are important for young people growing up in the local community. For example, pupils learn about consent in relationships and how to protect their mental health. The careers programme is well organised and is helping to raise pupils' aspirations. These aspirations are reflected in the places in further education, employment or training that students are securing.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a strong safeguarding culture. Staff and governors are well trained and have a detailed understanding of the local risks and challenges that pupils face. There is a dedicated safeguarding team which monitor the school's referral system daily. Members of the team swiftly follow up any concerns and work hard with other agencies to make sure pupils get the help they need as fast as possible.

Staff know their pupils well and teach them how to protect themselves from danger, such as online abuse. Pupils feel well supported by staff and know they can turn to them if they feel anxious.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Currently, very few pupils study a modern foreign language to GCSE. This means that not enough pupils have the opportunity to study the full set of subjects within the EBacc. Leaders need to ensure that they continue to strengthen the teaching of modern foreign languages so that more pupils can do this. This includes carefully monitoring the actions already taken to increase the teaching time for languages from next year, as well as supporting pupils to continue to study a language. For this reason, the transitional arrangements have been applied.
- In some lessons, the curriculum is not implemented consistently well. In particular, teachers do not always check how well pupils have grasped key knowledge and adapt their teaching accordingly. Leaders need to ensure that the implementation of the curriculum is consistently strong across all subjects, especially with regard to assessment processes, so that pupils are challenged to know more and remember more.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	136571
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10203129
Type of school	Modern (non-selective)
School category	Academy sponsor-led
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	745
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	35
Appropriate authority	The board of trustees
Chair of trust	Robin Curtis
Headteacher	Matthew Tate
Website	hartsdown.org/
Date of previous inspection	20 October 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Coastal Academies Trust.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision at one registered alternative provider.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide students in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, staff, pupils and sixth formers, the chair of the governing body and one other governor, and a representative of the trust. An inspector had a telephone call with a member of staff at the alternative provider.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, geography and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also visited lessons in some other subjects.
- Through discussions with leaders, governors, pupils and staff, inspectors considered how effectively pupils are safeguarded. They also viewed the school website and policies. They looked at records related to safeguarding, including checks on adults working at the school.
- Inspectors spoke to staff, including early career teachers, about behaviour and their workload in school.
- Inspectors considered the views of pupils and staff through the responses to Ofsted's confidential surveys. The views of parents were considered through the 32 responses to Ofsted's Parent View, as well as through the consideration of two parental letters submitted during the inspection.

Inspection team

Paula Sargent, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
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Chris Ellison	Her Majesty's Inspector

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