

Inspection of Hawkes Farm Academy

Hawks Road, Hailsham, East Sussex BN27 1ND

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 November 2024

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is Isobel Miskelly. This school is part of the STEP 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, Paul Glover, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Ross Gardner. There is also an executive headteacher, Alun Evans, who is responsible for this school and four others.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a happy and nurturing school where pupils thrive. Relationships between adults and pupils are caring, and pupils feel safe. The school's core values are 'passion, urgency, positivity, aspiration and commitment'. These values foster a sense of pride in pupils and help to ensure that all feel part of a community.

The school has high expectations for all. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and or disabilities (SEND), are encouraged to try their best. Pupils respond positively to this and achieve well. Staff expect pupils to behave well, and they do. Pupils are considerate, and they show kindness to one another. Children in the early years settle quickly into school life. They learn the routines and importance of sharing and taking turns from the start. Children enjoy having their parents come in to see them during the 'pop-in and play' sessions.

The school aims for pupils to be aspirational. In Year 2 for example, pupils learn, 'You are never too small to make a difference.' Pupils make a strong contribution to the life of the school. They relish the responsibilities that leaders give them, such as being eco-warriors or members of the pupil parliament.

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

The school's curriculum is ambitious and well structured. It sets out the important knowledge that pupils will learn and when they should learn it. This builds, step by step, on what pupils have learned before and allows them to apply their learning to more difficult ideas. Teachers take time to revisit previous learning with pupils before moving on to new learning. However, in some subjects, the school has only recently introduced systems to check what pupils know and remember. This means that, in these subjects, staff are not sure where pupils, including those with SEND, have gaps in their knowledge.

Reading takes a high priority in the school. Skilled staff deliver the school's phonics programme to a high standard. The programme precisely targets where each child is in their learning. Pupils quickly gain the skills that they need to become accurate and fluent readers because books match the sounds that they know. Pupils enjoy listening to a wide range of books, such as the story of Oliver Twist. Each class has an appealing reading area. The exciting library, run by pupil librarians, stocks an interesting range of books that encourages pupils' love of reading.

The school has clear processes in place to quickly identify the needs of pupils with SEND. Appropriate adaptations are made to support pupils, including for pupils who need help in regulating their emotions. Staff work well with specialist external agencies.

Children in the early years quickly learn to trust the adults they work with, and this helps them to feel safe. The school is keen for children to develop their own interests in their learning. For example, the children were excited about comparing different leaf shapes they found in the school playground. However, in some learning activities, the school has

not thought carefully enough about how children will develop their language and vocabulary knowledge.

Pupils behave well, both in class and at breaktimes. The school has implemented well-established routines. Pupils said they like making their own class-behaviour-charters because, 'We all help to create them, so we will all stick to them.' The school works hard to instil positive attendance habits. It provides tailored support to help any parents who may need assistance. This ensures that most pupils attend regularly.

There is good support for pupils' personal development. Pupils benefit from a range of after-school clubs, such as singing in the choir or multi-sports. Pupils learn about the importance of keeping healthy, for instance why they need to eat a well-balanced diet. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They understand why it is important to respect everyone, including those who are different to themselves. Pupils are confident to express their own views while respecting the views of others.

The trust acted quickly to put in place an experienced staff team in the school, following a period of significant change. This decisive leadership has had a positive impact on pupils' achievement. Those responsible for governance, including trustees, provide rigorous oversight of all aspects of the school. Staff are well supported to manage their well-being; however, a few did consider that some recent initiatives had increased their workload in the short term.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In the early years, planned activities lack clarity about the language and vocabulary that children should be learning. This means that children do not develop these essential skills as well as they could. The school needs to ensure that planned opportunities for children to develop their communication skills are clear and concise.
- Assessments of pupils' knowledge and skills is new in some subjects. This means that gaps or misconceptions in pupils' understanding, including those with SEND, are not consistently identified. The school needs to ensure that staff check that learning is firmly embedded before moving on to new content so that gaps are swiftly addressed.

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	143119
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10341812
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	365
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ross Gardner
CEO of the trust	Paul Glover
Headteacher	Alun Evans (Executive Headteacher) Isobel Miskelly (Headteacher)
Website	hawkesfarmacademy.org
Dates of previous inspection	30 April and 1 May 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of STEP (Striving Together for Excellence in Partnership) Academies Trust.
- A new headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection. They took up post in September 2024. There has been a significant change of staff since the last inspection.
- The school provides a breakfast club for pupils.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision for any of its pupils.

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.
- The inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher, the headteacher and other staff. In addition, they met with the CEO of the trust, trustees and a member of the local academy committee.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, art and design, history and science. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, discussed the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils’ work. Inspectors observed pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also spoke to parents at the end of the school day. The responses from the Ofsted surveys for staff and pupils were also considered.

Inspection team

Liz Bowes, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Catherine Hylands	Ofsted Inspector
Martin Hacker	Ofsted Inspector

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