

# Black Horse Hill Junior School

Saughall Massie Road, West Kirby, Wirral, Merseyside CH48 6DR

## Inspection dates

21–22 March 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Leaders and governors have taken decisive action to reverse the decline in standards. As a result, the school is back on track and provides a good quality of education.
- The prominent school values are upheld by all. They are considered by pupils to be values 'for life, not just school'.
- Raised expectations and improvements in the quality of teaching throughout the school have resulted in the vast majority of pupils making good progress.
- The strong governing body holds leaders to account and makes an important contribution to the drive for improvement.
- Assessment information in English and mathematics is used well by leaders and staff to check progress and plan for the needs of pupils.
- The provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is very effective.
- The curriculum offers opportunities for pupils to benefit from 'real life' experiences to develop understanding and purpose. The large majority of pupils play a musical instrument.
- Pupils are polite, well-mannered and conduct themselves well around school.
- The way that pupils work in pairs and small groups is a strength. They love to discuss, share their knowledge and solve problems together.
- Achievement in mathematics is not high enough. A few pupils are not reaching the higher standards that they are capable of in English and mathematics.
- Pupils are not always asked questions that challenge them to think more deeply about their work.
- Pupils' misconceptions are not always explored sufficiently to help them move on in their understanding.
- Occasionally, opportunities are missed to extend pupils in their learning, particularly the most able pupils.
- Assessment information in subjects other than English and mathematics is not robust. Leaders and governors cannot easily check on the progress of pupils across these curriculum areas.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to raise achievement in mathematics. Ensure that pupils achieve the higher standards that they are capable of in English and mathematics.
- Further improve the quality of teaching and learning, by ensuring that all teachers:
  - are as confident as the strongest teachers at delivering mathematics
  - ask questions that challenge pupils to think more deeply about their work, including the most able
  - tackle pupils' misunderstandings of a concept in such a way that supports them to move on in their understanding
  - maximise opportunities to extend and challenge pupils in their learning, particularly the most able.
- Develop the gathering of assessment information for subjects other than English and mathematics, so that it is easier for leaders and governors to check achievement and progress across the curriculum.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Black Horse Hill is a good school. A decline in standards has been responded to effectively through the decisive action of the headteacher, senior leaders and the governing body by radically changing their teaching approach. Together with staff, their hard work has turned the school around and led the way to provide good opportunities for pupils to achieve and develop as well-rounded individuals.
- The school's values are an important part of all that the school does. Pupils and staff talk frequently about attributes such as 'politeness' and 'working hard'. These qualities were much in evidence during the inspection. This has resulted in pupils who are caring, considerate and respectful of each other and the wider community.
- Leaders have the commitment of staff, parents and pupils. Staff are encouraged to work together to develop the school and are motivated to make sure that there is continuing improvement. Relationships between staff are positive; they are proud to work at Black Horse Hill. The school benefits from a stable, happy and dedicated team.
- Senior leaders know their school well. The strengths of the school and areas for improvement are clearly identified in their self-evaluation and development plans, which are accurate, honest and reflective. Checks on the quality of teaching and learning are regular, focused and have contributed to the swift impact on pupils' recent progress. Leaders are aware that a very small number of staff are less confident than others at delivering some aspects of the curriculum changes.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to reduce barriers to learning that may be experienced by disadvantaged pupils, including the most able. This enables disadvantaged pupils to be successful and be part of everything the school has to offer. The progress of pupils supported by this funding is monitored well. The impact of the funding is evaluated regularly by the headteacher and the governing body.
- The primary school physical education (PE) and sport funding is also used well. Pupils benefit from good-quality specialist sports coaching and an increased number of sport-related clubs. Pupils say how much they enjoy sport. Pupils recognise the value of physical activity as a part of being healthy.
- Senior leaders have developed a clear, straightforward system to assess pupils and to check frequently on their progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This information is reviewed regularly by leaders and governors. It is also used to discuss pupils' learning with teachers and to plan opportunities to help pupils catch up if needed. However, assessment information is not collected as rigorously for subjects other than reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, it is not as easy to check the progress and achievement that pupils are making in other subjects.
- The leadership and organisation of, and the deployment of funding for, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is a strength. Identification of need is thorough and resources are of a good standard; funding is used effectively. Staff have a very good understanding of these pupils' learning and welfare needs. This ensures that these pupils succeed in their learning and their personal and social development. Good-quality systems and procedures are in place to check regularly on the progress of

individual pupils.

- The school offers a broad curriculum that engages pupils and contributes to their enjoyment of learning. Art, history, music and pupils' personal, social and health development are the strongest elements. These can be evidenced in the high quality work that is displayed in the classrooms and corridors around school. Music is a strength. The oversubscribed school choir is testament to the enthusiasm that pupils have for singing. A small number of parents expressed a concern that Year 6 were not being offered the breadth of curriculum because of the pressures of national testing. Leaders are very aware of this issue and are actively seeking to ensure that this is not the case.
- Pupils appreciate the opportunities they have to gain a range of experiences, including visitors in school, trips to museums and localities. The school has regular theme days which immerse pupils in experiences that they have been reading and writing about. For example, in Year 6 pupils have been studying the book 'Street Child' by Berlie Doherty. During the inspection, they had the opportunity to dress up as Victorian children and experience life as a Victorian school child: writing in chalk, rote-learning and participating in 'drill' on the playground.
- Well-promoted spiritual, moral and social development means that the school is a calm and considerate environment where pupils mix together happily. Pupils learn about the local community through assemblies and the curriculum, raise funds for charities and learn about tolerance, respect of differences and the rule of law. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities such as being members of the school council, house captains or classroom monitors.
- The school is a member of a local network of schools. They support each other, for example by providing opportunities for curriculum leaders to meet and discuss teaching and learning. They have also worked together closely to develop checks regarding assessment.

## **Governance of the school**

- The governing body is a strength. Governors know the school well and are confident and skilled to ask challenging questions. The attributes of the governing body have been utilised very well to ensure that their expertise benefits the school. Governors are confident to be involved in aspects of the school's development and monitoring of improvement.
- Governors have a good understanding of performance management procedures. They ensure that the management of teachers' pay is effective and hold teachers and leaders to account.
- Governors have good levels of understanding about the progress that pupils are making and have challenged the school to improve. They make sure that the pupil premium and the PE and sports grants are spent effectively and make a difference to pupils.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils have a safe and secure environment by promoting

the message that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Safeguarding arrangements are in place and records are appropriate and kept securely. Regular and appropriate training for staff and governors is undertaken and is up to date, including that related to keeping pupils safe from radicalisation and extremism.

- The care and welfare of pupils is effective. There are appropriate relationships with other agencies in cases where vulnerable pupils or families need additional support.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- The flexibility of leaders and staff to significantly change the way they teach subjects, particularly mathematics, has led to substantial improvements in the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. This has led to a noticeable acceleration in pupils' progress. For example, an approach that immerses pupils in problem-solving activities and encourages them to talk about the strategies that they have used has resulted in pupils now being back on track and making good progress.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are positive. Staff model a good level of expectation for pupils' learning and behaviour. Pupils rise to this by working hard and behaving well. As a result, pupils have a good attitude to learning. Pupils say that they enjoy their lessons and it is fun to be at school. They say that they particularly like coming to school because they 'like their teachers' and because teachers help them 'learn things for everyday life'. When they struggle, they say that adults will always help them to 'sort it out'.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good. They explain new ideas clearly, relating difficult concepts to prior learning or the pupils' own experiences. Some teachers ask the right questions to aid pupils' thinking, draw out learning and help them move on. However, sometimes teachers do not ask questions that are demanding. In these situations, pupils are not challenged to develop their thinking and deepen understanding of what is being taught. As a result, some pupils are not always learning as much as they could, particularly some of the most able.
- Leaders use assessment with teachers to check on pupils' learning regularly and effectively. This makes an important contribution to the progress that pupils make. Good-quality and practical learning resources make lessons exciting. Activities are often linked to other curriculum areas and topics, which gives pupils a sense of purpose and added interest.
- Where pupils struggle with their learning, an effective range of learning opportunities helps them catch up. As a result, pupils make good progress.
- For those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, the support they are offered is good. It is broad, clearly targeted and of a good quality. Additional support is planned well, resulting in these pupils making good progress.
- In line with the school's policy, teachers insist on good standards of presentation, particularly in upper key stage 2.
- The development of reading and writing is a priority. Leaders have implemented a consistent approach throughout the school and this has had a positive effect on pupils' progress. Reading texts are used effectively in classes to create a range of interesting and stimulating activities that help pupils to learn and practise their skills. In Year 6,

readers are also supported to develop their skills to think more deeply about characters' feelings and intentions, and enable them to interpret the meaning in different texts.

- Good-quality reading and picture books also provide pupils with a stimulus for writing. For example, in Year 4, pupils were enthralled by the book 'The Firework-Maker's Daughter' by Philip Pullman, and as a result, wrote imaginative 'ransom notes' that were full of rich and vivid language.
- The development of mathematical skills has been a very high priority in school. The recognition that pupils were not achieving as well as they should in this subject promoted huge changes in the way the subject is taught. As a result, pupils now apply their learning to daily problem-solving activities, which allows them to extend their understanding of mathematical ideas. Pupils have risen to this approach well and relish chances to discuss ways that they might tackle problems. They do this with confidence. Pupils' books and the school's in-year checks confirm the impact of these improvements.
- The approach the school has adopted in mathematics has been very successful and is speeding up the progress of the vast majority of pupils. However, a small number of teachers are still not as confident as they could be in delivery. Where this is the case, some pupils do not learn enough from the mistakes or misunderstandings that they have in their learning. Also, a few pupils are not offered enough challenge to deepen their understanding and learning.
- The very large majority of parents who responded to Parent View or spoke to the inspector in the playground felt that their children were taught well and also felt that their children made good progress in school. However, a small number felt that the quality and timeliness of information given to them about their children's learning and events going on in the school could be improved. This is something that leaders are aware of and are keen to address.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare are woven into the curriculum and all aspects of the school's daily life. Staff and governors work hard to ensure that the school provides a safe, nurturing environment in which pupils in their care can thrive and succeed. As a result, pupils are friendly, thoughtful and caring citizens.
- The school's values are a prominent feature around school and pupils feel a strong sense of responsibility to uphold them. For example, when asked, pupils explained how important it is to be 'kind' and 'honest', to have 'good manners' and 'respect for others'. One pupil concluded by saying, 'We try to do these things in life, not just in school.'
- The vast majority of parents who spoke to inspectors, and those that responded to Parent View, expressed praise for the school and the work of the staff. The very large majority of parents felt that their children were happy, safe and well looked after.
- Pupils told inspectors how proud they were of their school. The school has fostered a

'can do' attitude to learning, developing attributes such as relishing challenge and not giving up. As a result, pupils are confident learners who are eager to tackle any learning opportunity that is offered to them.

- A very small number of parents expressed a concern about bullying in school. However, most parents who shared their views either did not consider bullying an issue that they were aware of or, if they did, stated that bullying was uncommon and followed up swiftly by the school. Pupils confirmed that although bullying had been a problem in the past, it is now rare and adults deal with any situation quickly.
- Pupils were unanimous in their view that they felt safe in school. They talked about assemblies and lessons where they had been taught how to keep themselves safe, both personally and online. Pupils could also share with inspectors examples of how the school taught them about being healthy. For example, they talked knowledgeably about how to have a healthy lifestyle, including not eating too much sugar and exercising regularly.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' conduct in the corridors and in the dining room is orderly and responsible. In the playground they play well together and adults support them appropriately in playing games. Pupils are polite and well-mannered, often greeting adults and visitors with a smile and a 'hello'. Staff and pupils know each other well and are friendly, supportive and encouraging. As a result, the school is a calm and orderly place.
- A purposeful atmosphere in classrooms means that pupils have a very positive attitude and enjoy their learning. They take pride in their work and always try to present it neatly. A strength is how well pupils collaborate with their peers. They work extremely effectively in lessons, in pairs and small groups, to support each other, sharing their knowledge and skills and coming up with ideas and solutions to problems.
- Leaders have worked successfully to revise the behaviour policy. They have done this with pupils and adults in school and also included colleagues in the local feeder infant school. Pupils consider behaving well to be very important and are recognised regularly for their good conduct. As a result, they are fully aware of how to behave and the consequences of poor behaviour. They say that incidents of inappropriate behaviour do happen but are rare, dealt with quickly by teachers and responded to by pupils sensibly.
- Pupils' attendance compares favourably with national averages. Good attendance is rewarded and the systems for checking absence are suitable and applied regularly. Leaders monitor absence closely. They are aware that small pockets of persistent absence remain among some pupils in school. However, they are working hard with this group of pupils and their parents to improve the situation, including involving outside agencies as appropriate. Leaders continue to seek ways to promote good attendance with the more vulnerable families.

**Outcomes for pupils**

**Good**

- Pupils' achievement at the end of key stage 2 dipped in 2016, particularly in mathematics and grammar, spelling and punctuation. However the dynamic actions of the senior leaders and the response by staff have resulted in rapid improvements. As a result, the vast majority of pupils are now back on track and making good progress.
- At the end of key stage 2 in 2016, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in writing was above the national average. In reading, it was similar to the national average. However the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics and grammar, punctuation and spelling was below the national average. Other than in grammar, punctuation and spelling, the proportion of pupils achieving higher standards was comparable to that of other pupils nationally.
- The school's in-year checks on progress and the work in pupils' books confirm a positive picture of accelerated progress throughout school, particularly in mathematics.
- The most able pupils are identified and checked to ensure that they make good progress through school. At the end of key stage 2 in 2016, the most able pupils made at least the progress expected in reading, writing and mathematics and some attained higher levels. Leaders are aware, however, that more pupils could achieve these higher standards across key stage 2 in all subjects, including the most able disadvantaged pupils. To this end, leaders have put strategies in place to ensure that the school's most-able pupils make the further gains of which they are capable.
- Overall, pupil premium funding is used effectively to support disadvantaged pupils. As a result, over time, the vast majority make good progress by the end of key stage 2. Disadvantaged pupils' attainment is similar to other pupils in school and often above others nationally, although like all pupils in 2016 there was a dip in mathematics. The school monitors the progress of these pupils effectively and regularly and ensures that they are supported well to improve.
- Pupils enjoy reading and talk excitedly about books. Pupils that struggle with reading have good support to practise skills and catch up. Pupils are proud of the progress that they make.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points. The good-quality support offered by teachers and teaching assistants is effective and ensures that pupils succeed in their learning.



## School details

Unique reference number	105032
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	10024369

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	205
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Karen Ellson
Headteacher	Stuart McCartney
Telephone number	0151 625 8446
Website	<a href="http://www.blackhorsehill-junior.wirral.sch.uk">www.blackhorsehill-junior.wirral.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:headteacher@blackhorsehill-junior.wirral.sch.uk">headteacher@blackhorsehill-junior.wirral.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	5–6 June 2013

## Information about this school

- Black Horse Hill is a smaller than average-sized junior school.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the assistant headteacher and the special educational needs coordinator, the people responsible for safeguarding and middle leaders.
- Inspectors looked at the work in pupils' books.
- An inspector listened to a number of pupils read.
- An inspector met with four members of the governing body, including the chair. A meeting was also held with a representative of the local authority.
- A group of pupils discussed their opinions about the school and their learning with an inspector and inspectors also spoke informally with pupils in the playground and around school.
- Inspectors took account of 24 responses to a staff questionnaire and six responses to a pupil questionnaire.
- Inspectors also took account of 47 responses to the online Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, and talked briefly with a number of parents before school.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including: minutes from meetings of the governing body; information on pupils' attainment and progress; the school's evaluation of its own performance and its development plan. Behaviour and attendance records and information relating to safeguarding were also scrutinised.

## Inspection team

Sue Eastwood, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Moira Atkins	Ofsted Inspector
Jennie Platt	Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

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. [www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings](http://www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings).

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted).

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2017