

Inspection of a good school: Ley Hill School

The Green, Ley Hill, Chesham, Buckinghamshire HP5 1YF

Inspection dates:

25 and 26 January 2022

Outcome

Ley Hill School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Ley Hill is a caring and nurturing school. Pupils are kind to each other, show respect and are proud of their school. They are happy and confident, and speak highly of the staff. Leaders set high expectations for pupils' learning and behaviour, and they rise to the challenge.

Pupils behave well in lessons and when moving around the school. They are friendly, well mannered and supportive of each other. Pupils report that staff will quickly deal with any incidents of poor behaviour if they occur. They value the lunchtime drop-in wobble club, where they can talk with staff members if they need help or reassurance. Pupils say that bullying is not an issue. They are clear that if it did happen, adults would deal with it straightaway.

Pupils play well together on the playground. There are various activities and resources to make playtimes interesting, including a giant chess set, an adventure playground and walking with stilts. Teachers plan events that extend and enrich the school's curriculum, such as theatre visits, bicycle training courses, working with a children's author and visiting local museums.

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

Subject leaders have reviewed and adapted the curriculum to identify the key knowledge that they want pupils to learn. The curriculum is broad, well sequenced and ambitious for pupils. Leaders need more time to fine tune and embed the planning across all year groups to ensure that the quality of education is even stronger. This will enable leaders and governors to have a more precise evaluation of the knowledge and skills pupils need to build over time.

Across the school, pupils are motivated and keen to learn. For example, in early years, well-planned activities enable children to learn and play together in the new outdoor space. Teachers ensure that learning matches the needs of pupils. They check pupils'

understanding in lessons and offer extra effective support when needed. Pupils are confident to talk about what they are learning and confidently recall knowledge learned in previous lessons. For example, in geography, when pupils consider the polar regions, they recall and use their knowledge of continents and oceans. Consequently, pupils secure deep understanding in geography.

Leaders ensure that pupils can use what they have learned in one subject to help them understand other subject areas. For example, in early years, children are learning about how animal characters can be portrayed differently in books. Teachers link this work to mathematics by enabling children to weigh plastic jungle animals on scales to calculate the heaviest ones.

Leaders prioritise the teaching of early reading, including phonics. They have established a well-structured approach to teaching reading across the school. This is successful. Pupils use their phonics knowledge with strong determination to sound out unfamiliar words. Those who need extra help with phonics are identified quickly and receive well-chosen support that helps them to catch up. Teachers encourage pupils to read widely and often. Staff bring reading to life to make it exciting through choosing books carefully and reading to pupils regularly.

Staff know pupils well. Through ongoing assessments, teachers identify any gaps in learning that pupils might have. Staff use this information to adapt the learning to match pupils' needs. Staff support all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. This helps pupils with SEND to access the same learning as their peers. This support ensures that they grow in self-confidence and resilience when learning becomes more challenging.

Leaders have thought carefully about the mathematics curriculum. They have adapted a commercial scheme to meet the needs of their pupils. It is ambitious and well planned. Consequently, they have identified what pupils need to know in mathematics. Pupils can explain their reasoning when solving problems and remember what they have been taught before. Leaders provide well-chosen training for staff, so that pupils are best supported in their learning.

Leaders prioritise providing for pupils' wider development through involvement with the local community. Pupils enjoy attending a wide range of school clubs. The personal, social and health education curriculum is carefully planned so that pupils learn about relationships, being healthy and staying safe. Pupils understand British values such as democracy through the work of the school council. Leaders provide effective support for pupils' well-being and mental health, including through the young carers group. There is a well-planned programme of activities to help develop pupils' understanding of life outside Ley Hill.

Leaders and governors have high expectations. They have an accurate understanding of the school's priorities for improvement. Governors are very committed to this community school. Staff appreciate the consideration leaders take towards helping them manage their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong safeguarding culture in the school. Leaders and governors give safeguarding the highest priority. Staff and governors receive regular training. Governors check that leaders keep thorough records on the suitability of staff to work in school. Leaders work well with outside agencies to ensure that families get the support they need.

Pupils say that they feel safe, and parents and carers agree. Leaders have ensured that the curriculum enables pupils to understand risk, including how to stay safe online. Leaders provide a comprehensive safeguarding plan for existing and new staff to ensure that all adults know how to identify and report concerns.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have strengthened the curriculum so that pupils can secure the important knowledge and skills they need before moving on to the next step. The changes to the curriculum need to be securely embedded across all subjects. Leaders have not yet fully evaluated the impact of these changes. Governors and leaders should ensure that the curriculum changes build pupils' knowledge and skills securely, enabling pupils to learn and remember more.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in February 2017.

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	110243
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10211405
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Number of pupils on the school roll	236
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jenni Denial and Charlotte Edwards (co-chairs)
Headteacher	Eve Roberts
Website	www.leyhillschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 February 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher joined the school in September 2019.
- Ley Hill is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school has a breakfast club operating on the site, which is managed by the school.

Information about this inspection

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.

- During this inspection, the inspector met with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. He spoke with members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire and free-text comments were considered. The staff and pupil surveys were available to the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the safeguarding arrangements in the school, the inspector spoke to members of staff and pupils. He met with the designated safeguarding lead to discuss the school's policies and procedures. During these meetings, records were scrutinised, including those relating to the safer recruitment of staff. The inspector also spoke with a range of pupils and staff to evaluate the school's safeguarding culture.

Inspection team

Darren Aisthorpe, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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