

Inspection of a good school: Airy Hill Primary School

Waterstead Lane, Whitby, North Yorkshire YO21 1PZ

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 May 2022

Outcome

Airy Hill Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love the outdoor space at school. They speak with excitement about the adventure trail, the large field, chill-out benches and the garden project. Pupils appreciate the way teachers get everyone to try their best. During lessons, teachers explain work clearly and give pupils the help they need. Pupils work hard because teachers expect them to do so. Pupils know they could be chosen at random to answer a question by the 'lolly stick' names. This means they must always listen and pay attention. They say learning is fun. Favourites include outdoor learning in the forest area and when a teddy bear launched into space with a weather balloon.

Pupils like the simplicity of the school rules. They explain how they can say 'stop it, I don't like it' before there is any trouble or falling out. Pupils say if someone looks upset, others will help. Teachers are on hand to sort out disputes. Pupils are adamant that bullying does not happen. The inspector agrees. Anti-bullying ambassadors spot and report any issue that arises at breaktime. Pupils know that their mental health is important. They let adults know how they feel by attaching a 'feelings peg' to one of four 'emotions boards'. Pupils say they feel safe in school.

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

In subjects such as mathematics and design technology, learning is well planned and sequenced. The essential knowledge pupils need to learn is clearly identified. Regular checks are made on whether pupils have remembered what they have been taught. This helps pupils to make connections between new knowledge and what they have previously learned. As a result, pupils know more and remember more. Leaders know that their curriculum thinking in some wider curriculum subjects, including music and physical education, is less clear. Leaders are changing the curriculum in these areas to ensure that all subjects support pupils to build learning progressively.

Leaders have made reading a high priority. A love of stories and books starts in nursery as children listen to stories throughout the school day. Daily phonics teaching is systematic,

following the same consistent approach in both Reception and Year 1. Pupils quickly learn to blend sounds together to read unfamiliar words. Pupils read regularly at home. Teachers choose books that pupils can read without a struggle. This helps them become fluent, confident and expressive readers.

Daily phonics is taught well in the Nursery. The two-year-olds enjoy listening to stories. Children are happy and settled, most playing cooperatively with their friends. There is a similar buzz of excitement in the Reception class. Children's secure skills in number and reading mean they are well prepared to start key stage 1. Leaders recognise that further work is needed to make clear the essential knowledge pupils need to get them ready for some of the other subjects they will meet in Year 1.

Teachers make regular checks on pupils' learning as they teach. As a result, teachers are quick to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge. Where this happens, adults give pupils extra help, usually on the same day. Strong assessment systems also help to identify any pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Additional help and support for pupils with SEND is appropriate and timely.

Pupils' enjoyment of their lessons is apparent. They maintain a good work ethic, behave very well in class and strive to do their best. There are no disruptions to learning. Leaders also aim to help pupils develop into well-rounded citizens of the future. Pupils talk openly about respecting the rights of others. They explain that stereotypes based on gender, race or religion are wrong. Pupils are generous in their acceptance and tolerance of others. They speak of how the achievements of everyone are celebrated, especially those pupils identified as having SEND. Leaders aim to raise the ambition and aspiration of all pupils. They are being successful in doing so.

School staff appreciate the way in which leaders look after their well-being. They speak of how well leaders manage their workload and remove unnecessary tasks and paperwork.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Regular training and updates inform all staff at school on how to spot a concern. Adults have the skills they need to identify anything unusual or out of the ordinary with pupils. Staff note all issues and pass them on to the leaders with responsibility for safeguarding. Leaders always find the necessary help for pupils. This can be from the attendance and engagement leader or other safeguarding partners.

Staff know that small concerns add together to build a bigger picture of a situation. An ethos of vigilance prevents any safeguarding issue slipping through the cracks. Staff know how to report concerns on senior staff should any arise. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. They have learned about road safety and keeping safe online. This extends to water safety in this coastal area.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, such as music and PE, pupils' learning is not well planned and sequenced. The curriculum does not detail what pupils will learn in Reception to prepare them for Year 1. The curriculum is not helping pupils to know and do more over time because new learning does not build on what pupils already know. Leaders need to review their wider curriculum plans to ensure that pupils' learning builds progressively from Reception to Year 6. It is clear from leaders' actions that they are in the process of bringing this about. For this reason, the transitional arrangements have been applied.

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 as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Airy Hill Community Primary School, to be good in April 2016.

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	144679
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	10227624
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	200
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Matthew Brown
Headteacher	Catherine Matthewman and Chrissy Yates
Website	www.airyhill.n-yorks.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Yorkshire Endeavour Academy Trust.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- At the time of this inspection, the role of headteacher was being shared.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- Meetings were held with the co-headteachers, special educational needs coordinator, teachers, the attendance and engagement leader and the school administrator. The inspector met the chief executive officer of the trust and also met three members of the local governing body including the chair.
- Deep dives were carried out in reading, design technology and mathematics. For each deep dive the inspector met with leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample

of lessons where available, spoke to teachers and teaching assistants, spoke to some pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector listened to a range of pupils read from different year groups.
- The inspector also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about other curriculum subjects.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour during lesson visits and at breaktime. He spoke to pupils about their views of behaviour and a group of pupils gave the inspector a tour of the school.
- The inspector looked at the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks and spoke to leaders, teachers and pupils about safeguarding.
- The views of the parents who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, were considered. This included all written comments.
- The inspector met with staff to discuss their well-being and workload. He considered their responses from Ofsted's staff survey and the responses from Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

Phil Scott, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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