

Inspection of a good school: Nether Hall School

Keyham Lane West, Leicester, Leicestershire LE5 1RT

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 June 2022

Outcome

Nether Hall School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils say that they are happy at Nether Hall School. Pupils use words such as 'caring', 'cool' and having 'impeccable students' to describe their school. A parent told inspectors that the school acts as a 'second family' to their child.

Leaders want pupils in the school to be the best they can be. Leaders have planned a curriculum that helps the pupils become more independent. Pupils learn about the world around them.

Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school. Sometimes, pupils disagree with each other, and adults help them to resolve this. Pupils and parents and carers say that there is little bullying in school. Adults solve issues quickly. They trust the adults to do the right things for them to keep them safe. Pupils want each other to do well. At the school sports day, pupils cheer each other on as they complete the different races.

Pupils are well behaved. Adults understand pupils' needs very well. They make sure that those needs are met in the classroom. Adults work hard to build good relationships with pupils. This means that pupils can feel less worried. Adults help pupils to manage their emotions and behave well.

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

Leaders have planned an ambitious curriculum for all pupils. Leaders have thought carefully about the knowledge and skills that pupils need to gain, and when. Pupils are placed on one of three curriculum pathways according to their needs. Leaders make sure that pupils learn the important knowledge they have set out in the curriculum. Each pupil has a weekly plan of what they will learn. Leaders check these plans to ensure that each pupil has a plan that is ambitious for them.

Reading is a priority in the school. Leaders have introduced a new phonics programme. If it is appropriate, phonics teaching starts in the early years. Teachers make sure that

pupils regularly repeat the sounds that they have learned. Teachers introduce pupils to new sounds in engaging ways. However, sometimes, teachers do not make sure that pupils remember the sounds they have learned before they learn new sounds. This means that pupils can struggle to remember what they have learned and learn new sounds at the same time. Leaders know this and have put in more training for the teachers.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe and make good relationships through the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum. Each pupil has individual priorities for what they will learn. Pupils can look at these priorities because they are available to them on their desk.

Pupils study mathematics as part of their daily lessons. For example, some pupils learn about different shapes by looking at leaves and natural objects during outdoor learning activities. Children in the early years learn about numbers and counting in free-play sessions.

There is a strong emphasis on developing children's communication in the early years. Staff develop strong relationships with children and families right from the start of Reception.

Teachers regularly check and assess pupils' learning. This means that pupils' progress can be captured as it happens. Parents can see these assessments on a daily basis. Parents can also record learning at home. All parents who spoke to inspectors said that communication between parents and school is good.

Pupils behave well in school. Leaders and teachers work hard to help pupils develop friendships with each other. Pupils use a communication book to help them to tell adults how they are feeling when they become overwhelmed. Teachers are well supported by leaders to support pupils with their behaviour.

Leaders and staff plan lots of opportunities for pupils to learn about the wider world. Pupils can go on trips and visits, for example to the Royal Opera House in London to see the 'Nutcracker' ballet. Pupils benefit from work experience to help them be more independent, for example at the local garden centre or with the local council. Leaders invite adults into school to provide music lessons and yoga classes.

Leaders listen to staff. Teachers appreciate that leaders will listen to them. They say that leaders make sure that their workload is fair and reasonable. Leaders have trained staff as mental health first aiders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school has strong systems in place to identify pupils who might be at risk of harm. Leaders make sure that staff are well trained to spot the potential early signs of harm. There is an effective recording system in place in the school. Staff know what they should do if a pupil is at risk of harm or if they are worried about the actions of an adult towards a child. Staff are very aware of how the additional needs of pupils can make them more vulnerable. Staff know how to escalate their concerns to outside agencies if they need to.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Phonics is not taught in a consistent way. Pupils do not learn to read as well as they should. The school should ensure that teachers consistently deliver phonics in the way the school prescribes. This will enable all pupils to acquire the intended knowledge of phonics appropriate to their age and stage of development as they move through the school.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good/outstanding, 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 second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2014.

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	120361
Local authority	Leicester
Inspection number	10227828
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	4 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	121
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	43
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of trust	Mr Adrian Keene
Headteacher	Ms Sarah Naylor
Website	www.netherhall.leicester.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	16 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school makes no use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke to the headteacher and other leaders.
- Inspectors met with those with responsibility for governance and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and PSHE. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions with leaders about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to pupils and their teachers from the

lessons visited, listened to pupils read and examined pupils' work in books and in other records.

- Inspectors met those with responsibility for safeguarding. They examined school safeguarding records, including referrals to other agencies, records of behaviour and records of when physical intervention had been used. Inspectors also spoke with teachers and pupils regarding behaviour and safeguarding.
- Inspectors spoke to a range of staff and pupils formally and informally. They took account of the responses to Ofsted's online surveys.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and as they moved around school.
- An inspector spoke with a representative from the local authority.

Inspection team

Steven Barnes, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Julian Scholefield

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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