

Inspection of Hill View Infant Academy

Helvellyn Road, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear SR2 9JJ

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 June 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Children at Hill View get off to a flying start in nursery. Staff have high expectations of them, quickly establishing routines and building up their social skills. There are excellent relationships between children, families and staff.

All pupils enjoy learning through play every day. They independently access the wide range of learning activities including the outdoor classrooms and the new 'nature school'. The 'innovation sheds' attract pupils who want to understand more about everyday objects. In nursery, children learn what the objects are for and how they work. Reception children 'tinker' and take objects such as computers apart, and in key stage 1 they design and make their own items.

Pupils are well behaved and feel safe in school. The 'opal' areas at lunchtime give them lots to do. Pupils enjoy reading in the caravan and role playing on the staging. Bullying is rare and pupils are confident that should it happen, it will be dealt with by staff.

The school excels in personal and social education (PSED). A specially trained member of staff provides support for pupils and families who need it. This has helped to improve the attendance of some pupils. There are many after-school clubs catering for a broad range of interests and talents.

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

Leaders have ambitious curriculum goals and have identified the core knowledge and skills that they want pupils to learn in all subject areas. Careful consideration is given to the way the curriculum is taught. Leaders have shaped a creative, cross-curricular topic approach, with high-quality learning through play. Staff include pupils' interests in the curriculum to make the learning more relevant to them. Leaders regard the school as 'early years throughout'.

In subjects such as science, learning is carefully sequenced in small steps. Staff teach the science curriculum well. Pupils learn to think like scientists and record their findings. Pupils enjoy searching for mini beasts, making observations and comparing insects with other creatures.

In other subjects there are inconsistencies in the way the curriculum aims are delivered. The history curriculum does not have the same tight focus, and what pupils should learn in each topic is not as clearly defined as some subjects. There are few independent learning activities featuring history for pupils to access. In mathematics there are many practical areas set up but pupils seldom choose to learn in them. Pupils prefer to choose construction and creative areas instead.

Leaders have made reading a high priority. A love of reading is fostered through storytelling and the imaginative reading areas in each class. A structured phonics programme is in place from Reception onwards. Reading books match the letters and sounds that children have already learned. Adults check that pupils are keeping up and provide additional phonics sessions for those who need them. However, some teachers do not have the same high expectations in phonics, so there are differences in what pupils learn within year groups. A small number of pupils are not reading at the level they should, to be best prepared for their next stage in education.

Leaders prioritise support for pupils with complex special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) so that they access a highly tailored curriculum. Other pupils with SEND do not have the specific steps they need to take identified as clearly. Individual plans are broad and the curriculum is not always adapted well enough to ensure these pupils learn the curriculum alongside their peers.

Pupils have positive attitudes to learning, they enjoy coming to school and attendance is high. When they independently choose their learning activity pupils stay focused for long periods of time. Pupils show respect for each other by sharing and taking turns. Pupils behave well for adults, who have high expectations of them. During playtimes a few pupils become excitable and this can result in boisterous play, which is dealt with effectively.

PSED is an absolute strength of the school. The dedicated family liaison officer has created a school hub to support 25 families. This includes mental health training for parents and pupils, support with attendance and family check-ins. The school looks to innovate practice in this area. Staff from the NHS mental health support team work alongside school staff. This speeds up access to therapeutic support for pupils with emotional needs. Skilled staff run play therapy to support pupils with adverse childhood experiences.

Pupils proudly take on leadership roles and grow in self-confidence. The 'green ambassadors' are developing an allotment and spreading the message to the school community about 'saving the earth'. The 'little leaders' and 'anti-bullying crew' make lunchtimes more enjoyable, setting up games and the 'buddy benches'. Pupils benefit from the vast array of school clubs on offer such as choir, art club and sporting clubs. Specialists teach music and French to broaden pupils' cultural understanding. The 'nature school' and collective worship offer times for stillness and reflection.

Governors and trustees have a wide skillset and have a strong strategic vision for the school. Leaders are passionate and highly knowledgeable but they have not ensured that the stated curriculum aims are consistently applied in all subject areas.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders prioritise pupils' welfare. They make sure that staff know what to do if they have concerns about a pupil. Leaders ensure that pupils get the right support when they need it. This includes support from the family liaison officer, who is part of the staff team, staff and external agencies when necessary.

Leaders ensure the appropriate checks on staff are undertaken before they are appointed. Staff and governors are kept up to date with regular safeguarding training.

Pupils learn about online safety and how to keep themselves safe. Pupils feel safe in school and know how to raise concerns with adults.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The intent and ambitions of the curriculum are clear. However, teachers are at different stages in implementing the desired curriculum. This means that some pupils learn more than others. Leaders should ensure that all staff are well trained in delivering the curriculum so that all pupils receive the highest quality of education and the ambition of the curriculum is fully realised.
- The individual plans for some pupils with SEND are not specific enough and the curriculum is not always adapted well enough to meet their needs. Leaders should ensure that the small steps to be taken for each pupil with SEND, and the teaching strategies to support them, are clearly outlined so they can make the best possible progress.

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	144222
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	10199349
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	437
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Malcolm Snaith
Headteacher	Claire Smith
Website	www.hillviewinfant.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Hill View Infant Academy is part of the Vision Learning Trust.
- The school uses one alternative provider.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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 held meetings with the headteacher, deputy and assistant headteachers, early years leader and the special educational needs coordinator.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in four subjects: reading, mathematics, science and history. To do this they met with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work, listened to pupils read and met with teachers and pupils. Inspectors also looked at curriculum documentation.

- The lead inspector met representatives of the local governing body and representatives of the trustees, including the chair.
- The lead inspector met with the education adviser who supports the school.
- Responses to the pupil, parent and staff surveys were also taken into consideration.

Inspection team

Mary Cook, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Andrew James

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