

# Inspection of a good school: West Hill Primary School

High Mount Street, Hednesford, Cannock, Staffordshire WS12 4BH

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Inspection dates:

9 and 10 November 2022

## **Outcome**

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a graded inspection.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Leaders have high expectations for pupils at West Hill. They put pupils at the centre of all decisions. West Hill pupils are 'thirsty' learners who enjoy their learning and are keen to learn more. Most pupils achieve well. However, some of the support provided for some pupils does not always help them to catch up.

Pupils enjoy holding roles of responsibility, such as being a digital leader or a playground buddy. They know why these roles are important and carry them out with confidence. Clubs including French club and forest school develop pupils' wider interests. Topics learned across the curriculum such as slavery, provide pupils with an opportunity to recognise how attitudes have changed. This helps them to develop skills for life in modern Britain.

Pupils appreciate that hard work and good behaviour bring rewards. This might be through earning individual reward points or spending time with the school dog, who also supports pupils to build positive relationships. Pupils enjoy coming to school and feel safe. They say that bullying sometimes happens but that adults always deal with it.

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

Leaders have set out a broad and balanced curriculum, which has ambition for all pupils. Leaders have a clear vision for what they want pupils to achieve during their time at West Hill. What pupils should learn is set out in every year group, starting in the early years.

Most subject leaders know what is working well in their subject and what needs to improve. They check that staff are confident in what they teach. Leaders provide staff with additional support and training where needed, especially teachers in the early stages

of their career. Staff appreciate this. They say that changes to the curriculum have increased their workload, but leaders take on board their views and support them.

Phonics teaching starts as soon as children join the early years. Staff teach phonics in a logical order. Most staff teach clearly and follow the phonics programme. They identify any pupils at risk of not keeping up with reading and put support in place. However, the support is not as helpful as it could be. Leaders have not ensured that all staff have been recently trained to become experts in early reading. As a result, some pupils do not make as much progress as they could when learning to read. Leaders provide a range of books, including non-fiction texts, to spark pupils' interest to read for pleasure. Pupils talk positively about these books.

Pupils enjoy learning and talked enthusiastically about the current topics they are learning about. However, some pupils find it hard to remember what they have learned in the past. Most teachers carefully check what pupils know and understand. However, some teachers do not always check what pupils know and understand well enough in all subjects. This means that some pupils are not able to build successfully on what they already know and can do.

Staff identify the additional needs of pupils quickly. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive support to access the curriculum. These pupils talk positively about their learning and achieve well. However, some pupils with SEND rely upon the support of adults working with them to access the curriculum too much. This does not support them to be independent learners.

Staff provide support to the small number of pupils who find it difficult to meet leaders' high expectations for behaviour. Staff feel well supported by leaders to deal with pupils' behaviour. Pupils say that teachers always deal with inappropriate behaviour, so that learning is rarely disrupted. Most pupils behave well at West Hill.

Pupils speak positively about the different opportunities offered to them, such as trips to the zoo and after-school football club. They enjoy the range of roles offered to them, such as digital leaders and house captains. Pupils who are playground buddies take their responsibilities seriously. Pupils say it is 'ok' to be different as 'we are all the same on the inside'.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff receive up-to-date training and guidance. This means that staff are confident to identify any pupils who may be at risk from harm. Staff know how to deal with any concerns. Leaders respond to concerns quickly and work with a range of agencies to support pupils and families in need.

Pupils know that adults are there to help keep them safe. They name many adults who they can share worries with and know that they will help them. They feel safe at school and know how to keep themselves safe online.

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

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Subject knowledge for some staff in early reading is not secure. This is because not all staff have received the training they need to help them to support pupils in learning to read. As a result, some pupils do not develop their reading skills as quickly as they could. Leaders should ensure that all staff are trained to enable them to support pupils to catch up in their reading.
- Some teachers do not use assessment precisely to check what pupils know and understand in all subjects. This means that pupils do not build on their prior learning as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that all teachers use assessment information accurately to identify what pupils know and can do, so they can plan subsequent learning to build on what pupils understand.

## 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 an ungraded inspection and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in September 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.

## 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

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| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 124072   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Staffordshire  |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10240924   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary  |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Community  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 3 to 11  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 381  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body   |
| <b>Co-Chairs of governing body</b>         | Sue Searle and Tom Truby   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Kelly Bracebridge  |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.westhill.staffs.sch.uk">www.westhill.staffs.sch.uk</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>         | 19 September 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005               |

## Information about this school

- West Hill primary school is part of The Hednesford Hills Federation.
- The school makes use of one alternative provider.

## 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 leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other senior leaders. The inspector also met with representatives from the federated governing body, including the co-chairs. She also met a range of other staff, including early career teachers.
- Deep dives were carried out in early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the subject 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.
- A range of documentation was also scrutinised, including the school website. Minutes from federation governor meetings were also reviewed.

- When inspecting safeguarding, the inspector considered the school's safeguarding policy and spoke with staff and pupils about safeguarding. The inspector spoke with school and federation leaders about how safeguarding concerns and incidents are reported.
- The inspector took account of the parent comments and responses in Ofsted Parent View. Comments in pupil and staff surveys were also considered.

### **Inspection team**

Michelle Bishton, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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