

Inspection of Hillary Primary School

Hillary Street, Pleck, Walsall, West Midlands WS2 9BP

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 June 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Hillary Primary leaders and pupils share the same high aspirations. A rapid change in culture and expectations is enabling these aspirations to be realised. Pupils understand and follow the leaders' values of 'respect, reflection, reciprocity, resourcefulness and resilience'. Pupils speak positively about the support they receive. Typical parent comments are that teachers are 'kind and caring' and pupils 'love to learn at the school'.

Leaders have developed a broad and ambitious curriculum. Pupils study a range of subjects. However, some subjects are not as fully developed as others. Despite this ambitious curriculum, some pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Current learning is improving. There is more to do to ensure that all subject leaders consistently develop every subject.

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are respectful and positive. In a few lessons, a minority of pupils can become distracted. Staff understand the precise needs of these pupils. They act quickly and efficiently to address any behaviour issues.

Leaders place a strong emphasis on pupils' personal development. Pupils develop their leadership roles. Reading ambassadors in Years 5 and 6 support younger pupils. Some pupils take part in a range of enrichment opportunities such as sports and music.

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

There has been significant change within the leadership since the last inspection. Leaders are working rapidly to review and design a highly ambitious curriculum for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Many staff have recently joined the school, or changed their subject leadership roles. This means that some subject leaders are still developing expertise in their subjects. Some leaders check and evaluate what is working well in their subjects. However, this is not consistent in all subjects. Some subjects are developing more quickly than others.

In all classes, including the early years, positive relationships between teachers, pupils and parents help pupils to be confident and happy. Children in the early years have an extremely strong start to their school life. Leaders encourage children to learn more and to develop a curiosity about the world. Children and teachers make the most of the special environment they have created.

Most teachers have secure subject knowledge. Some teachers carefully check what pupils know and remember. Some pupils remember their previous knowledge well to help them understand new learning. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 could remember their learning from Year 4 to explain how authors use similes and metaphors to develop

their writing. However, in some subjects, teachers do not check what pupils remember regularly enough. Some pupils do not remember the key knowledge sufficiently well. Pupils then struggle to build on their previous learning. This leads to gaps in pupils' knowledge in these subjects.

Leaders quickly identify any pupil who may need additional support, including pupils with SEND. All pupils follow the same curriculum. A few pupils with specific SEND needs have effective teaching in a separate 'rainbow room'. Teachers use information about pupils' additional needs to adapt their teaching well. This means that pupils with SEND can successfully access learning in line with other pupils.

Newly appointed leaders focus rapidly on pupils' literacy and numeracy. Leaders identify any pupil with weak literacy skills when they join the school. The precise sequencing of phonics teaching helps pupils learn the right sounds at the right time. Those pupils who need help to catch up receive support quickly. However, not all pupils read regularly and with enthusiasm at home. Leaders seek ways to engage all parents in supporting their children to read.

Absence from school is preventing a significant number of pupils achieving their potential. There are too many pupils who miss school unnecessarily. This means that they miss out on too much learning. Leaders need to continue to engage with pupils and parents further.

Leaders' work to promote pupils' personal development is effective. Pupils understand about healthy relationships and respecting the views of others. Pupils voice their opinions about the school. This encourages a strong sense of belonging. Pupils appreciate trips and visits which enhance the curriculum, as well as the Year 6 team-building residential each September.

Governors do not know their school well enough. Previously, governors did not demonstrate challenge or support to senior leaders. More recently, governors have developed a clearer understanding of their duties and expectations. However, this has meant delays in many areas of school development. Governors do have a secure awareness of safeguarding and the quality of SEND provision. Leaders carefully consider staff workload and staff welcome this.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding is well embedded in the culture of the school. Leaders are visible in person and their photographs are on display around the school. Leaders know the pupils and their local context extremely well. They use this knowledge to plan support and help for pupils and their families. Leaders contact external agencies quickly when families require early help. All staff recognise that keeping pupils safe is everyone's responsibility. Where staff have concerns, there are clear and swift processes to record and inform leaders.

Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe. This includes online safety, and when talking to unfamiliar people and visiting new places

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, teachers do not consistently check that pupils understand what has been learned and what pupils can remember. This means that gaps in pupils' knowledge are not always identified and addressed effectively. Leaders must ensure that teachers consistently check pupils' understanding and recall at regular points in their learning and adapt their teaching accordingly to close any gaps.
- Some pupils do not read widely and regularly at home. This means that they do not make sufficient progress in their reading and lack an understanding of what they are reading. Leaders should carefully monitor and support pupils and parents in engaging with regular and wide reading.
- Some pupils miss too much school. This holds back their progress and achievement. Leaders must continue to work closely with parents and external agencies to support pupils and parents in engaging with regular attendance for all pupils.
- Some subject curriculums are less well developed than others. These curriculums do not consistently enable pupils to learn the key knowledge and skills, compared to other subject curriculums. Leaders should continue their development of these subjects so that pupils access a wide range of subjects and learn the key knowledge and skills within the planned curriculum.
- Those responsible for governance do not have a sufficiently clear and accurate view of their school. They do not have a secure understanding of all aspects of governance. As a result, they do not have the expertise to fully challenge and support leaders to improve the school. Governors should ensure that they receive training to build their capacity to fully support and challenge leaders.

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

Unique reference number	131511
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	10278837
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	694
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair of governing body	Philip Damms
Headteacher	Alison Taylor
Website	www.hillary.walsall.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	30 and 31 January 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.
- The current headteacher took up her post in April 2022. Previous to this, she joined the school as deputy headteacher in 2017.
- A new deputy headteacher joined the school in September 2022.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors focused on the following deep dives: early reading, mathematics, science, history and music. Inspectors looked at leaders' curriculum planning, visited lessons, heard pupils read to a familiar adult, looked at pupils' work and

talked with pupils about their learning. Inspectors also looked at the curriculum in other subjects.

- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents. These included information about pupils' behaviour, attendance, the school's curriculum and improvement planning. The school's website was also checked.
- Inspectors talked to staff and leaders about safeguarding arrangements. They examined how leaders make employment checks on staff and scrutinised further safeguarding records. They also looked at how incidents that are reported by pupils are recorded and analysed.
- Inspectors observed informal times of the day to evaluate safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors held meetings with a representative of the local authority, school improvement partner, governors, headteacher, teachers, learning support assistants and pupils. Inspectors also talked informally to pupils and staff to gather information about school life.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, and the free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey and pupil questionnaires.

Inspection team

Stuart Clarkson, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Rebecca Nash	Ofsted Inspector
Nadeem Bhatti	Ofsted Inspector
Sue Parker	Ofsted Inspector

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