

Inspection of a good school: Hillside Primary School

Rushey Way, Lower Earley, Reading, Berkshire RG6 4HQ

Inspection dates:

7 and 8 November 2023

Outcome

Hillside Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are kind and have great manners at this happy school. This is because the school's values are so important to pupils. These include respect, collaboration and independence. Everyone knows and shows them in their conduct. Inclusivity and diversity are also paramount at this school. For example, the school's 'Junior Leadership Team' (JLT) is highly representative of pupils at the school. They have a good say in the running of important elements of school life.

The school's curriculum is developing very well. Many subjects have a clear sequence of the key knowledge and skills that pupils learn. Staff teach the core subjects of English and mathematics effectively. Pupils enjoy the lessons they receive. Pupils appreciate how teachers use engaging ways to help them to learn.

Pupils' behaviour is very good. In class, they are eager to learn and help each other. Outside, older pupils interact seamlessly with younger ones. Pupils have a genuine understanding for those who need additional support to learn or behave. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, such as when they are cycling or online. This all helps create a purposeful environment for pupils to learn and play in.

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

The school has ambitions to provide the very best education to its pupils. Staff have made considerable improvements to the curriculum in recent years. Right from the early years, staff want pupils to succeed. Underpinning much of the curriculum is the desire to stimulate pupils' curiosity in people, places and events. The carefully sequenced curriculum in many subjects means pupils are learning well overall.

The school has embedded its early reading scheme. Skilled teaching and support staff ensure pupils learn their early phonics sounds. Should a pupil start to fall behind, teachers quickly provide focused support which helps pupils catch up. The books pupils read are very well matched to their reading ability. This means pupils enjoy reading because they

understand the books they are reading. Older pupils analyse and discuss texts in detail, while all ages love listening to their teachers read good-quality texts with enthusiasm.

Many other subjects are just as effective throughout the school, including in the early years. Mathematics, history and physical education (PE) are particularly strong, meaning that pupils learn very well. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities as staff make appropriate adaptations. However, in a few subjects, the school is still developing an effective curriculum. This means pupils' learning in these subjects is not as deep as it could be. In some subjects, teachers do not always identify and address gaps in pupils' learning, which means that pupils remember less.

The school is right to be proud of pupils' behaviour. Pupils of all ages listen intently in class, walk with pride around the school and appreciate the recognition staff give them when they do something right. Pupils say, 'Good morning,' and hold doors open instinctively. When talking in groups, pupils do not talk over one another, but listen and invite others to contribute. Occasionally, a pupil finds it difficult to behave as well as the school would like. Staff support these pupils with patience and care to help teach them how to do things differently next time.

The school's JLT helps the school to get even better. Pupils involved model the school's values perfectly. They help to develop the curriculum, enrichment activities, pupils' well-being and the environment. Pupils appreciate the various additional opportunities the school provides. These include a range of music, sporting and creative clubs and events. Sometimes, pupils request clubs themselves, such as chess, and the school does what it can to provide it.

Staff are clearly proud to be part of the school community. They want the pupils to achieve their very best, both academically and pastorally. Governors are firmly behind this effort. They know their roles and fulfil these diligently. The decision to enable a co-headship is working well for the school. Parents are also aware of the efforts staff make. Many reflected this in the Ofsted Parent View survey, with one saying: 'I could not be happier. The leadership team is strong and all staff are supportive. My child is treated as an individual and their personal needs are met. We would not want our child to go anywhere else.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few foundation subjects, the curriculum is not yet fully effective. Consequently, pupils are not as secure as they could be about what they can remember in these subjects. The school should ensure that the curriculum plans are all clearly sequenced to help pupils learn and remember important subject knowledge.

- In some foundation subjects, staff do not always use the information about how well pupils have learned the curriculum to help plan what to teach next. As a result, not all pupils achieve as well as they could in those subjects. The school should continue to develop its assessment practices to ensure that teachers use the information they gather to plan future learning opportunities more precisely.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in July 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.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	109930
Local authority	Wokingham
Inspection number	10287825
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	452
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Karen Mackin
Headteachers	Nicci Morris Dan Pearman
Website	www.hillside.wokingham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	2 May 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The long-standing headteacher currently supports the local Schools Learning Alliance. This means that, since September 2023, the school is under the co-headship of her and the long-standing deputy headteacher.
- The school runs its own before- and after-school wraparound care.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- 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 and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, history and art and design. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum 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.

- The inspector also looked at additional curriculum plans for PE, music and design and technology.
- The inspector met with the co-headteachers and other leaders in the school. The inspector also met with seven governors, including the chair of the governing body, and a representative from the local authority.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector reviewed a range of the school's documentation, including minutes of governing body meetings and behaviour incident logs.
- The inspector considered the views of parents shared through Ofsted Parent View.
- The views of staff were gathered through interviews and discussions conducted throughout the inspection, as well as the survey.
- The inspector gathered pupils' views throughout the inspection, including through discussions, during classroom visits and at lunchtime.

Inspection team

Chris Parker, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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