

Inspection of Black Horse Hill Infant School

Saughall Massie Road, West Kirby, Wirral, Merseyside CH48 6DR

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 February 2024

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy being part of this caring and welcoming school family. Each morning, they arrive at school happy and ready to learn. Pupils know that staff look after them and help with any problems that they may have.

The school has high aspirations for pupils' achievements. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), work hard to rise to these ambitions. Typically, they achieve well. Pupils realise the school's vision for them each day. They are 'learning for life'.

Pupils behave exceptionally well during lessons. There is a calm atmosphere throughout the school. Pupils show high levels of consideration and respect for others, such as by carefully listening to each other's points of view. They enjoy the variety of equipment that is available to them, especially for sports games during lunchtimes. Pupils enjoy their role in making the friendship bench a special place for those who need it. Pupils are kind, considerate and extremely well mannered.

Pupils benefit from a range of trips and activities that enrich the curriculum. They spoke highly about roles in the school parliament. Recently, they helped to choose what games they could play at lunchtime. Pupils develop a strong understanding of diversity and equality. This helps them to become resilient and independent.

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

The school ensures that pupils benefit from a well-ordered and suitably ambitious curriculum. The school has worked effectively with the local authority and other external professionals to improve the quality of education that pupils receive. In early years, the essential knowledge and skills that children require for future learning are well thought out. This means that children are well prepared for their learning in future years. Pupils, including those with SEND, acquire a rich body of knowledge across most subjects.

Staff present new learning to pupils clearly. In most lessons, they use assessment strategies well to identify any gaps in pupils' knowledge. Nevertheless, in a small number of subjects, some staff do not make best use of assessment information when designing new learning. This means that, on occasion, pupils do not get enough opportunities to deepen their knowledge in these subjects.

The school has prioritised reading. Pupils enjoy listening to stories and reading from a wide range of books. The school has established an effective phonics programme that children learn from the beginning of Reception Year. In the Nursery class, children develop their love of books through playing out stories with their character spoons. Children in early years relish taking the 'star bear' home to share a book with him and their families. Pupils learn sounds and the letters that they represent in a logical order. They use their phonics knowledge to read new and unfamiliar words accurately. Pupils read from books that contain the sounds that they already know.

This helps most pupils to read with confidence and fluency. Older pupils spoke with excitement about their current reading books. They recognise that finding an enjoyable book is positive for their mental health.

The school identifies the additional needs of pupils with SEND quickly and accurately. Staff successfully adapt the delivery of the curriculum to meet the needs of these pupils. They work effectively with a range of external specialists and parents and carers to help pupils with SEND to achieve well.

Children in early years quickly learn to follow well-established routines. Their behaviour is impeccable. Pupils show exemplary behaviour across the school during lessons and at playtime. They relish the many awards that they receive to celebrate their behaviour and eagerness to learn. For instance, pupils get to join the headteacher for 'Milkshake Monday' if they have been demonstrating the school's values. Attendance is a high priority. The school works well with families to make sure that pupils' levels of attendance are high. There is a strong offer of support and guidance. This includes removing any barriers that might stop pupils from coming to school regularly.

The school ensures that pupils have rich experiences that extend beyond the academic curriculum. Pupils enjoy trips and welcoming visitors into school. They talk positively about their recent visit to Liverpool and how this added to their learning about local landmarks. Pupils learn about diversity and the many differences and similarities that they have with others. They understand how to demonstrate school and British values in their daily lives. This prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.

Governors understand their statutory duties and fulfil their responsibilities diligently. They routinely challenge and hold the school fully to account. Staff value working at this school. They appreciate the school's actions in helping them to carry out their roles effectively. For example, staff value high-quality professional development that supports them to do their roles well.

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 small number of subjects, staff do not make the best use of assessment information when designing new learning. From time to time, this means that pupils do not deepen their knowledge in these subjects. The school should support staff in checking that pupils learn all that they should.

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	105027
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	10289879
Type of school	Infant
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	135
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Corrie Brierley
Headteacher	Julie Morris
Website	www.blackhorsehillinfant.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	11 and 12 February 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school runs a before- and after-school club for pupils.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English and early reading, mathematics and geography. They met with subject leaders and teachers. Inspectors visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work and talked with groups of pupils

about their learning. The lead inspector observed pupils from Years 1 and 2 reading to a familiar adult.

- Inspectors considered the curriculum in other subjects. They met with leaders, spoke with pupils and reviewed pupils' work in these subjects.
- The lead inspector spoke with members of the governing board, including the chair of governors. She also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. They also took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- Inspectors met with leaders who are responsible for attendance, behaviour and pupils' personal development.
- Inspectors looked at a range of policies and documentation relating to pupils' welfare and education. They observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and around school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: 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.
- Inspectors met with parents at the start of the school day. They took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school. There were no responses to consider from Ofsted's online survey for pupils.

Inspection team

Helen Friend, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

David Woodhouse

Ofsted Inspector

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