

# Inspection of a school judged outstanding for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Hill Avenue Academy

Hill Avenue, Lanesfield, Wolverhampton, West Midlands WV4 6PY

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Inspection dates: 28 and 29 January 2025

## Outcome

Hill Avenue Academy has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The head of school is Dan Steventon. This school is part of Manor Multi Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Hayley Guest, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David Coles. There is also an associate headteacher, Alan Rogers, who is responsible for this school and one other.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy learning at Hill Avenue. In lessons they listen carefully, show determination, and support each other during group work. By the end of Year 6, most pupils achieve the school's high expectations. Pupils leave as knowledgeable and considerate individuals who are well-prepared for secondary school.

Pupils fully reflect the school values of 'happiness, achieve, respect and teamwork' in how they conduct themselves. They are kind and caring towards each other. At breaktimes, boys and girls like playing football and netball. Some pupils increase their step count by walking around the playground.

Pupils are happy. They feel safe and well cared for by staff. The school's outdoor learning programme helps the youngest children to move, walk and climb safely. Older pupils learn to use tools carefully and make campfires.

Pupils develop their leadership skills by serving on the junior leadership committee or by taking on the roles of head girl and boy. They develop their communication skills by taking part in the 'Have Hill Got News For You' project. Pupils present the latest news and

interview teachers and classmates. Pupils can also access a range of clubs. These clubs develop and nurture pupils' musical, artistic and sporting interests.

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

The school, in partnership with the trust, has designed an ambitious curriculum. It identifies the important knowledge, skills and vocabulary pupils need to learn in each subject. In Reception, for example, children learn to use mathematical vocabulary such as 'full', 'half full' and 'empty' as they prepare a crumble for 'The Gruffalo'. Activities like this help children develop a secure understanding of mathematical concepts in readiness for Year 1.

Adults typically use questioning well to check what pupils have learned and remembered, as well as to address any misconceptions. During 'review and explore' sessions, pupils revisit previous learning and deepen their understanding. Year 6, for instance, were enjoying thinking like historians to find out about life during Anglo-Saxon times.

Pupils' achievement in reading is particularly strong. Pupils enjoy reading a wide range of texts, including stories and non-fiction books. The school ensures that staff receive the training they need to teach reading well. Pupils who struggle with reading catch up because they receive targeted phonics support. Older pupils become confident and fluent readers. In contrast, pupils at the early stages of writing, particularly in key stage 1, do not write as well as they should. This is because the school has not ensured that some pupils have secured their basic writing skills. As a result, some pupils' written work contains errors in handwriting, spelling and punctuation.

The school identifies the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) quickly. The school works well with external specialists to ensure pupils get the help they need. In English and mathematics, staff modify activities carefully and make effective use of technology. This helps pupils with SEND to access the same learning as their peers in these subjects and to achieve well over time. However, some pupils do not make as much progress as they could in a few of the wider curriculum subjects because the curriculum is not sufficiently adapted to pupils' needs.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. The school has developed a therapeutic approach to manage pupils' behaviour. It is working successfully. Well-trained staff encourage pupils to reflect on their behaviour. Staff manage the occasional incidents of dysregulated behaviour sensitively.

Pupils have a well-developed understanding of values such as democracy and equality. They demonstrate a mature understanding of mental health. Pupils benefit from initiatives that help them to talk about and manage their emotions. Older pupils know how their brain responds to anxiety and how to manage their feelings during times of change. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe online. They understand the importance of keeping personal information private.

The school promotes the importance of attendance to parents and carers as soon as their children join the school. The school tracks attendance closely. Prompt and decisive action is taken where attendance is a concern. As a result, pupils' attendance is improving, and rates of persistent absence are reducing.

School leaders, Manor Multi Academy Trust (MAT) leaders and trustees make decisions in the best interests of pupils. They all have an accurate picture of the school because of robust quality assurance systems. Staff appreciate the strategies in place to reduce their workload. They value professional development opportunities in the school and across the MAT. The staff team work together well and are proud to work at Hill Avenue.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- The school does not ensure that key stage 1 pupils who are at an early stage of writing become fluent writers. As a result, some pupils' writing contains errors in letter formation, spelling and sentence construction. The school should make sure that pupils develop, practise and embed basic writing skills and learn to write legibly.
- In a few wider curriculum subjects, the adaptations made for pupils with SEND are not closely matched to their needs. As a result, some pupils with SEND do not achieve as well as they could. The school should ensure that in these subjects, the curriculum is suitably adapted so that pupils progress well through the curriculum.

## **Background**

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be outstanding for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 outstanding for overall effectiveness in 21 and 22 May 2019.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	143151
<b>Local authority</b>	Wolverhampton
<b>Inspection number</b>	10344094
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	363
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	David Coles
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Hayley Guest
<b>Head of school</b>	Dan Steventon
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.hillavenueacademy.com">www.hillavenueacademy.com</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	21 and 22 May 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is part of Manor Multi Academy Trust.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 met with the head of school, deputy headteacher, other school leaders and a group of teachers. The inspector also met with the chief executive officer, the chief executive adviser, two associate headteachers, the chair of trustees and another trustee.

- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- 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 considered a range of documents, including leaders' self-evaluation and plans for improvement. The inspector checked records of attendance and behaviour. The inspector also observed pupils' behaviour at playtime and lunchtime and talked to them about different aspects of the school's work.
- The inspector considered the responses to the pupil and staff surveys. The inspector also took account of the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View and parents free-text comments.

### **Inspection team**

Usha Devi, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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