

Inspection of a good school: Black Horse Hill Junior School

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

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 June 2022

Outcome

Black Horse Hill Junior School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to Black Horse Hill Junior School. The motto 'everybody is different, everybody is welcome' is truly at the heart of everything that leaders do. Pupils successfully learn to get along with each other and differences are celebrated. They learn about important values, such as honesty, kindness and respect. Pupils appreciate the 'star awards' that leaders give them when they demonstrate any of these values.

Pupils are happy. Leaders have high expectations for pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils achieve well. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive and supportive. Pupils appreciate the support that staff give them to help them learn.

In lessons and during breaktimes, pupils' behaviour is impressive. Pupils have a positive attitude towards education and they take pride in their work. Pupils understand what bullying is and they know that staff will resolve any bullying incidents quickly if they should occur.

Pupils value the range of clubs and activities on offer that cater for their interests and talents. Many pupils take part in after-school clubs. They especially enjoy dodgeball, drama and archery. Year 6 pupils are looking forward to their upcoming residential visit to Wales. They explained excitedly to the inspector that they would be taking part in outdoor adventure activities.

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

Leaders have reviewed the learning offer over recent years and have designed a curriculum that is suitably ambitious and broad. For the most part, the curriculum ensures that teachers are clear about what pupils will learn and the order in which subject content will be taught. Pupils build knowledge on their previous learning. This helps them to learn and remember more over time.

Teachers check on what pupils have learned previously. Staff adapt their lessons to help pupils, including those with SEND, overcome any misunderstandings or gaps in their knowledge. As a result, pupils progress well through the school's curriculum.

Most pupils remember the knowledge that they gain and use this successfully in future learning. For example, pupils recalled facts about the Viking, Anglo-Saxon and Roman invasions of Britain in detail. They were able to talk about the reasons for the invasions and then link this with the current conflict in Europe. However, a small number of subject curriculums are not as well developed. Leaders have not ensured that teachers are as clear about what they want pupils to learn. As a result, pupils do not achieve as well as they should in these subjects.

Reading is a high priority across the school. Pupils explained how staff use displays about books and authors to encourage them to read widely and often. Many pupils choose to read in their leisure time. Leaders have ensured that teachers carefully select texts that link to the topics that pupils will study. Teachers read to pupils frequently. This helps pupils to develop a love of reading and extends their vocabulary.

Most pupils achieve well in reading. However, a minority of pupils do not read as fluently as they should. At times, these pupils read books that contain sounds that they have not learned. This knocks their confidence and slows their progress in gaining a secure phonics knowledge. Added to this, a very small number of staff have not received the training that they need to support pupils at an early stage of reading.

Leaders ensure that pupils learn in a calm environment. Pupils listen carefully and readily contribute during lessons.

Leaders ensure that everyone is welcome at this school. Staff receive training that helps to deepen their understanding of autism spectrum disorder and social, emotional and mental health needs. Staff identify pupils' additional needs quickly and accurately. Leaders have ensured that pupils with complex SEND have their needs well met. This has included the development of 'the nest' classroom. Here, pupils with complex SEND receive personalised and effective support to access the curriculum.

Parents and carers of pupils with SEND value leaders' commitment to ensuring that school is a positive experience for their child. Parents also appreciate how leaders promote diversity. For example, they valued the work that took place during an 'autism awareness week'.

Leaders provide many opportunities for pupils to develop personally and to develop a deeper sense of social responsibility. The carefully designed personal development curriculum promotes pupils' wider development effectively. This includes opportunities for pupils to learn about a range of cultures that are different to their own.

Staff appreciate leaders' support with their workload. They feel that they are listened to and valued.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff receive suitable and regular safeguarding training. Teachers understand how to identify and report concerns about pupils. Leaders take appropriate and timely action if they have concerns about pupils' safety or welfare. They work well with a range of external agencies in order to provide support to pupils and their families.

Pupils learn about personal safety, respectful relationships and consent. They understand online risks that they may face, including when gaming, using the internet and social media and when using mobile phones. They talked confidently about staying safe and are happy to report any concerns that they have to staff.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A small number of staff do not have the skills or knowledge that they need to deliver the phonics curriculum with confidence. This means that these staff do not support pupils at an early stage of reading as well as they should. Leaders should make sure that staff receive appropriate training so that they deliver the phonics programme effectively.
- At times, the books that pupils read are not closely matched to the sounds that they know. This causes some pupils at an early stage of reading to lose confidence. It also slows their progress in gaining secure phonics knowledge. Leaders should check that pupils read books that closely match the sounds that they securely know.
- In a small number of subjects, leaders have not clearly identified the knowledge that pupils will learn. Therefore, pupils do not learn the knowledge that they need to build a strong foundation for subsequent learning. Leaders should ensure that, in these subjects, teachers are clear about the knowledge that pupils should learn and when this content should be delivered.

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

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	105032
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	10226154
Type of school	Junior
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	204
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Karen Ellson
Headteacher	Paul Hindle
Website	www.blackhorsehill.andrewgreenhalgh.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The current headteacher was appointed in September 2018.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision for any pupils.

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 held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, subject leaders and other members of staff throughout the inspection. She also spoke with governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and some pupils about their learning and looked

at samples of pupils' work. She also listened to pupils read to a familiar member of staff. The inspector also considered other subject curriculums.

- The inspector held telephone conversations with a representative from the local authority and the school improvement partner.
- The inspector scrutinised a wide range of documentation relating to leaders' work to safeguard pupils. This included reviewing relevant safeguarding policies and reviewing the school's single central record and safer recruitment procedures. She also discussed safeguarding with pupils and staff.
- The inspector observed behaviour around the school, on the playground and in lessons.
- The inspector considered a wide variety of school documentation, including the leaders' school improvement plan.
- The inspector considered the views of pupils and staff expressed in Ofsted's surveys. She considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. She also met with a group of boys and a group of girls to find out what it is like to be a pupil at this school.

Inspection team

Michelle Beard, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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