

Inspection of a good school: Windmill Hill Academy

Windmill Hill, Launceston, Cornwall PL15 9AE

Inspection dates:

13 and 14 December 2022

Outcome

Windmill Hill Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

At Windmill Hill, staff make everyone welcome. Pupils arrive each day eager to learn. They experience a well-planned, broad and balanced curriculum.

Pupils behave well. In classrooms, they listen to each other considerately. Pupils show high levels of engagement in their lessons. At social times, they play together well. Staff promote respect and tolerance. Pupils say that bullying is rare. However, if it happens staff resolve it quickly.

Leaders have meticulously crafted a curriculum beyond the academic. This means pupils enjoy a range of experiences that they may not otherwise have. For example, older pupils visit London to gain an experience of modern Britain that is different to their locality. They develop their understanding of democracy with a visit to the Houses of Parliament.

Pupils develop their interests through a range of clubs, such as bowls, guitar, computing and football. They talk with pride about how they represent the school in sports competitions. Leaders promote the arts. For example, older pupils speak enthusiastically about their participation in the Christmas production held at the town hall.

Parents have highly positive views of the school. They say their children enjoy school and staff are warm and friendly.

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

Leaders have created an ambitious curriculum, including in the early years. It is carefully designed to reflect the school's context. Staff have worked together to identify the small steps of knowledge that pupils need to know and by when. This hard work has paid off. The curriculum has a clarity which means that pupils build on their knowledge well over time. For example, in mathematics, older pupils learn to solve increasingly complex reasoning problems. They use the correct mathematical vocabulary when explaining their answers.

Staff know their pupils well. The curriculum is adapted well for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and for those who speak English as an additional language. As a result, pupils learn the intended curriculum well, regardless of their background.

Staff value the improvements made by leaders to the quality of education. They say leaders consider their workload. They appreciate leaders' efforts to provide training that meets their individual needs. Staff feel proud to work at Windmill Hill.

Leaders want to strengthen the curriculum further. They, alongside governors and the trust, check the impact of the curriculum regularly. Consequently, leaders know the school's strengths and weaknesses. Leaders then act decisively to address areas in need of improvement. For example, they identified a need to increase the number of pupils who can swim by the end of Year 6. As a result, leaders swiftly made changes to the order pupils learn the physical education (PE) curriculum. Many more pupils now achieve this milestone.

Leaders have introduced a new curriculum to help younger pupils learn to read. They have implemented it with speed and urgency. Its impact is evident. Staff have raised the expectations of what pupils can learn, including in the early years. Pupils have risen to this. Staff ensure that pupils embed previous learning before moving to new content. They check the books pupils read closely match the sounds they know. This means pupils develop a high level of fluency. They learn to read quicker than in the past.

Leaders have effective systems to identify those pupils who fall behind in their reading, including those with SEND. Staff have strong subject knowledge. This means they can quickly spot gaps in pupils' learning, including any sounds they struggle with. As a result of this support, pupils catch up quickly.

Pupils enjoy reading. Teachers read to them regularly. Pupils talk excitedly about these sessions. They can talk about a range of authors and books they like to read. Older pupils learn to read and understand increasingly complex texts.

While leaders have established systems for checking what pupils know, this is not welldeveloped consistently across the curriculum. On some occasions, teachers do not identify precisely enough what pupils have learned and can do. This means they sometimes miss opportunities to deepen pupils' knowledge further.

Leaders have established a personal development curriculum in line with the school's values. They give pupils a voice through the school parliament. Leaders ensure they make meaningful decisions. For example, pupils chose the charities the school raises money for. Visitors such as the police and local firefighters promote the importance of keeping safe. Pupils take on responsibilities such as librarians and house captains. This develops their leadership skills.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a culture of vigilance. Staff report any concerns they have about pupils' welfare, however small. Leaders act upon these swiftly. They produce follow up actions and record these. This ensures there is a complete picture of pupils. Leaders make referrals to the local authority as appropriate. However, they also challenge outcomes if they feel these are not in the pupils' best interests. They work with a variety of agencies to ensure pupils get the support they need.

Leaders make thorough recruitment checks before appointing staff. Trust representatives oversee these checks regularly.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, assessment is not well developed. Staff sometimes do not check precisely enough what pupils have learned. This means they miss opportunities to deepen pupils' knowledge even further. Leaders need to ensure that staff check more precisely what pupils have learned across the curriculum to build on pupils' knowledge further.

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 Launceston Community Primary School to be good in February 2012.

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	140514
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10206978
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	179
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Stephen Tavener
Headteacher	Abby Bassett
Website	www.windmillhillacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	22 November 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The head of school took up her post in 2019.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

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 his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the executive headteacher, head of school and other senior leaders, groups of staff, groups of pupils, trust executive leaders and members of the local governing body.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and PE. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, looked at samples of work and spoke to pupils about their learning.
- The inspector listened to pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 read to an adult.

- The inspector considered how well the school protects pupils and keeps them safe. He met with the designated safeguarding lead to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding. The inspector also scrutinised the school's single central record.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- The inspector considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and took into consideration responses to the staff and pupil survey.

Inspection team

Jason Edge, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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