

Inspection of Bleak Hill Primary School

Hamilton Road, Windle, St Helens, Merseyside WA10 6HG

Inspection dates: 30 April and 1 May 2024

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils flourish in the caring environment of this happy school. They thoroughly enjoy learning and value their education. Pupils work with tenacity and resilience to meet the ambitious goals that the school sets for them. They achieve highly.

Pupils build incredibly positive relationships with one another and with staff. In lessons and during social times, pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They listen attentively, show respect and give their utmost when completing work. Classrooms buzz with purposeful learning. Pupils celebrate their poetry and the art that adorns the walls around school with tremendous pride and enthusiasm.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), participate fully in school life. For instance, the school provides an extensive variety of sports and creative activities. It ensures that pupils have the chance to seize every opportunity to learn something new.

Pupils relish the many opportunities to develop their talents and interests. For example, they take part in a range of clubs, attend career events as part of the science fair and enjoy cooking a wide variety of foods in the outdoors. Pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6 as thoughtful and knowledgeable individuals. They are extremely well prepared to embrace the challenges of the next stage of their education.

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

The school is determined to provide an exceptional education for pupils. The school and the governing body work strategically to ensure that this vision is realised in every aspect of its work. As a result, pupils not only achieve well, but their time at school is filled with rich and memorable experiences.

The school's curriculum is designed around their bespoke approach to learning. This provides a clear and effective structure to how learning will be taught and remembered. The curriculum is designed with great care to ensure that pupils' understanding of each subject develops securely over time. Consequently, staff know exactly what pupils need to learn and how this connects to their prior and future learning.

Reading is central to the curriculum. The school prioritises teaching pupils to read. Books are a golden thread that run through each aspect of school life. The phonics programme starts at the beginning of the Reception Year. The school has ensured that this programme is well ordered and delivered successfully. Pupils learn to read fluently and confidently in readiness for key stage 2. The school has highly effective strategies to identify and support pupils who find learning to read difficult.

Pupils' love of reading shines through. Many pupils are enthused to read new books when they win them from the 'venda-bus'. Older pupils discussed with delight their

favourite authors and the different types of books that they enjoy reading. Pupils said that they are inspired by these authors and use their ideas and vocabulary to powerful effect in their own writing.

Staff have strong expertise across the curriculum. They design inspiring learning that is highly effective in furthering pupils' understanding. Staff regularly check that pupils understand and can recall what they have been taught. Any misconceptions are addressed swiftly and successfully. In the early years, staff know the children well. They skilfully develop children's knowledge and vocabulary through targeted interactions and well-designed opportunities for play.

From the early years onwards, the school identifies the additional needs of pupils with SEND swiftly. Staff work closely with outside professionals and with parents and carers to provide the right educational support for pupils at the school. Pupils with SEND learn subject curriculums very well and achieve highly.

The school expects the highest standards of behaviour from pupils. During lessons, pupils are exceptionally well focused on their learning. They show great care for each other and work together harmoniously. Levels of attendance and punctuality are excellent. Pupils take pride in winning the attendance bears that are presented by pupil 'attendance activists' each week during collective worship.

The programme to promote pupils' personal development has been carefully constructed. Pupils take on leadership roles, such as subject ambassadors and house captains, with great eagerness. They recognise that these opportunities, alongside their learning about diversity and difference, prepare them well for the world outside of the classroom. The school's rich offer provides the knowledge and skills that pupils need to become successful and active citizens of modern-day Britain.

Great consideration is given to workload and well-being across the school. Staff recognise that the school's leaders prioritise them and ensure that they are well equipped professionally to do their job well. The governing body provides the school with equal measures of support and challenge. This assists the school to ensure a continual journey of improvement and development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	104773
Local authority	St Helens
Inspection number	10226118
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	553
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Diane Kenny
Headteacher	Antony McCoy
Website	www.bleakhill.st-helens.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new headteacher and deputy headteacher have been appointed since the last inspection.
- A new chair of governors has been appointed since the school was last inspected.
- The school does not use any alternative provision 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 received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The 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 early reading, mathematics, science, history and physical education. They met with subject leaders and with teachers.

Inspectors visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work and talked with groups of pupils about their learning.

- Inspectors considered the curriculum in other subjects. They met with leaders, spoke with pupils and reviewed pupils' work in these subjects.
- The lead inspector observed pupils from Years 1 to 3 reading to a familiar adult.
- 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.
- The lead inspector spoke with members of the governing body, 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.
- 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. They took account of the responses to Ofsted's pupil survey, including the free-text comments.

Inspection team

Helen Friend, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sally Aspinwall

Ofsted Inspector

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