Inspection of a good school: Air Balloon Hill Primary School

Hillside Road, St George, Bristol BS5 7PB

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 November 2023

Outcome

Air Balloon Hill Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Air Balloon Hill Primary School is a friendly, nurturing and welcoming school. The school has created an atmosphere where 'everyone can achieve, everyone can learn and everyone belongs'. It has high aspirations for all pupils, as reflected in its vision that pupils should 'look to the stars'.

Pupils feel safe in school and learn how to stay safe online. They feel confident to share any worries with trusted adults in school. Pupils know the school's values well and demonstrate these in their interactions. There is a culture of support and kindness to others, which all at the school model well.

The school has high expectations for how pupils behave. Pupils meet these expectations and understand, appreciate and respect difference. They report, 'In this school it doesn't matter what you look like or your culture, we are one big family.' There are strong relationships between pupils and staff.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of trips and external visitors, which enrich the curriculum. They contribute to their local community, for example by collecting for the local food bank and picking up litter. Pupils recognise the impact their work can have on others beyond their school.

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

The school has developed a curriculum that it is relevant and ambitious. It focuses on the important knowledge that pupils need to learn over time. The curriculum is designed to develop pupils' curiosity. Pupils learn why the world is like it is and explore how they can make it better. Pupils learn about significant people, for example Rosa Parks and Charles Darwin. They consider their impact on the world as pioneers, creators or influencers. Consequently, pupils expand their understanding of the world they live in.

Pupils revisit learning regularly and link this knowledge to new ideas and concepts. This helps them to deepen their knowledge and understanding. Where this is successful, the school uses information about what pupils know and can do to further pupils' understanding and build their knowledge well. However, some learning is not adapted quickly enough to enable some pupils to develop a deeper understanding. As a result, these pupils do not build on their knowledge as well as they could.

The school has implemented an effective reading programme. This starts in the early years and continues into key stage 2. Teachers assess pupils regularly to ensure they build their phonics knowledge well. Pupils become fluent readers. Staff are well trained to deliver phonics effectively. The school ensures that pupils practise their reading regularly, both in school and at home. Pupils enjoy the books their teachers share with them. The school has developed a reading list to widen pupils' cultural understanding.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are accurately identified and supported. Information about how to support these pupils is shared effectively with teachers. This means that pupils with SEND are supported well to learn and progress through the curriculum as well as their peers.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. As a result, pupils behave well and respect each other. They show positive attitudes to learning and conduct themselves well around the school. The atmosphere in the school is calm and purposeful. Pupils reflect on their behaviour and how they become successful learners. They are proud to develop their 'gem powers', such as resilience, independence and empathy.

The school places pupils' wider development at the heart of what it does. The curriculum, along with wider opportunities, supports pupils to develop a strong moral code. Prejudice and inequality are not tolerated at the school. Pupils are well prepared to contribute positively to society as responsible, active citizens. They gain age-appropriate knowledge about healthy relationships. Pupils learn the importance of mutual tolerance and challenging any form of disrespectful behaviour. They enjoy the extra-curricular opportunities available to them. However, they would prefer more choice and would like to have more of 'a say' on how the school could improve.

Governors know the school's strengths and areas for improvement well. They provide appropriate support and challenge to the school. Staff feel well supported to manage their workload and well-being. The school recognises the pressures that policy changes can cause. It balances the speed of implementation with supporting staff to manage the changes.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Learning is not always adapted quickly enough to enable some pupils to deepen their knowledge and understanding. As a result, these pupils do not build their knowledge as well as they could. The school needs to ensure that learning is adapted when necessary to ensure all pupils progress as well as possible through the curriculum.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in April 2018.

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	135867
Local authority	Bristol City of
Inspection number	10297971
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	761
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Nikki Jackson
Headteacher	Tim Browse
Website	www.abhps.com
Dates of previous inspection	18 and 19 April 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school runs its own breakfast and after-school provision.
- The school currently uses one registered alternative provider.

Information about this inspection

- 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, assistant headteachers and the special educational needs coordinator for the school. Inspectors also met other school leaders and with a range of teaching and support staff.
- The lead inspector met with representatives of the governing board.
- The lead inspector held a phone conversation with a representative from the local authority.

- The lead inspector held a phone conversation with the alternative provider.
- 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 inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors also discussed the curriculum in other subjects.
- The inspectors listened to pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 read to an adult.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- The inspectors gathered parents' views by considering the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and by talking to parents before and after school. The inspectors also evaluated the responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Matt Fletcher, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Marcia Northeast	Ofsted Inspector

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