

Inspection of Hillside Primary School

Belstead Avenue, Ipswich, Suffolk IP2 8NU

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 October 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

The headteacher of this school is Lucy Wass. This school is part of Active Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Lynsey Holzer, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Vic Daniels.

What is it like to attend this school?

Hillside Primary School is a focal point of the local community. It is a diverse and happy place.

Pupils at Hillside have experienced significant changes in the school recently. Pupils feel safe and know that they can tell an adult if they are worried about something. A small number of pupils have experienced bullying. They have been called unkind names. School staff stop bullying when pupils report it to them.

Pupils do not always meet the standard that is expected of them in terms of behaviour or their learning. Many pupils know how to behave well, but some pupils do not follow the rules consistently. Pupils know their teachers want them to do well. Generally, they try hard in their lessons.

Pupils can be involved in a range of activities across the school, including extra-curricular clubs and leadership opportunities, such as school councillors. Many pupils enjoy being involved in a wide range of activities provided by the school at breaktimes and lunchtimes. Football is a popular choice at lunchtime, although this can sometimes lead to boisterous behaviour.

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

The school is ambitious for pupils to achieve well and has put detailed curriculum plans in place. The curriculum has been carefully considered and implemented. However, pupils' understanding is not checked effectively. This means that teachers do not always know what pupils have learned and remembered. Gaps in pupils' understanding are not always picked up and addressed. This prevents pupils from making the progress intended. In the early years, adults check what children know more effectively, and children's progress is tracked precisely. This information enables staff to support children to improve. Staff are well trained to support the younger children.

Pupils with special educational needs and or disabilities (SEND) typically receive a high quality of education. In lessons, pupils with SEND usually get the right help to join in learning with their peers. However, sometimes, they need more support with their writing or to achieve as well as they should.

The school focuses on early reading and has a clear scheme in place to ensure even the youngest children learn basic sounds well. Pupils read regularly in school. Where pupils fall behind, the school provides the right extra help. An increasing number of children make the expected level of reading progress.

Most pupils are respectful and kind to staff, visitors and each other. However, this is not always the case. Pupils do not always respond positively to the differences between themselves and others. There is an appropriate personal, social and health education curriculum. This enables most pupils to know how to keep themselves

safe online. Some pupils can also describe how to keep themselves healthy. Pupils can participate in leadership opportunities, such as the school council. Some pupils become anti-bullying ambassadors.

Pupils' attendance is not always regular enough. While most pupils attend school well and are on time, too many pupils miss learning because they are not at school. Pupils miss opportunities to learn, and they fall behind their peers. The school is working with the local community to improve attendance.

Behaviour around the school and in lessons is inconsistent. Most pupils behave well. However, where pupils' behaviour is poor, this has an impact on learning in the classroom and during social times. Pupils can sometimes use language that is not kind. Pupils comment that they have noticed behaviour has improved since the beginning of the term.

The school has experienced a period of turbulence that has affected the quality of education of the pupils. The leadership of the academy has recently changed significantly. Leaders at all levels are ambitious to ensure that the experience of the pupils improves rapidly. Trustees, executive leads and the headteacher have the tenacity and expertise to bring about change. While the impact of their actions is yet to be fully realised, there is evidence that improvements are beginning to have an effect. Staff are positive about the direction of the school. They feel supported and included. Parents comment positively about recent changes to the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Too many of the most vulnerable children do not attend school regularly. For younger pupils, this affects their progress with early reading. Older pupils miss out on studying the full curriculum. Leaders must ensure that they identify closely those individuals who are missing large parts of their education because of absence. Leaders must take action to improve the level of pupils' attendance.
- The delivery of the school's curriculum plan is not yet consistent across all subjects. Staff do not always have the same high expectations for pupils' progress. The quality of pupils' work is inconsistent because of this. Leaders need to provide appropriate training for staff to enable them to deliver the curriculum plans effectively and check these are in place as intended.
- Leaders do not always know how well pupils are progressing through the curriculum because assessment practice is not effective. As a result, teachers are not always able to identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge. Leaders must ensure that all staff can use assessment information effectively to enable pupils to catch up and keep up.

- The behaviour of some pupils is not appropriate. As a result, the learning for some pupils is disrupted. Leaders must ensure that the new behaviour policy is communicated well and implemented robustly to reduce incidents of poor behaviour.

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	140887
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10288531
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	421
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Vic Daniels
CEO of the trust	Lynsey Holzer
Headteacher	Lucy Wass
Website	www.hillsideprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	25 May 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Active Learning Trust.
- The school has undergone a significant change in leadership since the last inspection.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this 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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued 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 these subjects: mathematics, early reading, science and art. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the

curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- 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 inspection team met with pupils from different year groups to talk about their learning and experiences at school.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents provided by the school. These included the school improvement plan, curriculum documentation and school policies.
- Inspectors considered 31 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents and carers, Ofsted Parent View. This included 54 comments from parents in the free-text facility. Inspectors also considered the 37 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Jonathan Rockey, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Rowena Simmons

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Ofsted Inspector

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