

Hill Avenue Academy

Hill Avenue, Lanesfield, Wolverhampton, West Midlands WV4 6PY

Inspection dates

21 to 22 May 2019

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Leaders, trustees and governors have transformed every aspect of the school since it became an academy in 2017.
- Inspirational leadership has ensured that the ethos they have established has won the overwhelming support of those staff, parents and pupils who inspectors heard from.
- Leadership at all levels, including trustees and governors, provide extensive support, challenge and training for staff. The culture is one of always seeking to improve further.
- Standards and rates of progress in reading, writing and mathematics are exceptionally high in all year groups, including for the most able.
- All groups of pupils are doing very well, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils, as a result of the high quality of teaching and support.
- Teaching over time is of an exceptionally high standard and never less than good. Teachers are very effective in their questioning and challenge for pupils to do even better.
- The early years provision ensures children are very well prepared for the next stage in their learning despite their low starting points when they join in Nursery or Reception. Transition arrangements and relationships with parents are very strong.
- The extensive range of subjects offered through the innovative curriculum, and the rich extra-curricular opportunities, ensure that pupils are exposed to very challenging, subject-specific, academic language from an early age.
- The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including a widening of pupils' cultural horizons, is of a very high order.
- Pupils' work in other subjects, including art, design, computing, and humanities, is of exceptionally high quality and standard.
- Pupils' personal development and behaviour is outstanding. Many take on leadership roles and responsibilities in a mature fashion.
- Attendance is rapidly improving to be now above the national average.
- The school ensures that pupils feel safe and know how to keep safe outside of school.
- Occasionally, the additional support for some low-attaining pupils is either not enough to access the work fully or too much to enable them to show what they can do on their own.
- The depth of pupils' work in modern foreign languages is less evident compared to other subjects.
- Curriculum links with secondary schools are underdeveloped in French and computing.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the quality of additional support for low-attaining pupils is consistently high by ensuring that:
 - additional support and adapted materials are consistently pitched at the right level so that work is not too easy or too hard
 - the depth of pupils' work in modern foreign languages is the same as it is in other subjects.
- Expand transition links with secondary schools by sharing more widely curriculum information on what pupils have achieved, including in computing and French, so that pupils can be set the appropriate level of challenge when they join secondary school in key stage 3.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Leaders, trustees and governors have transformed the school. According to one parent, speaking for many, 'The school has risen from the ashes.'
- The ethos of the school is such that pupils enjoy coming to school regularly. Ofsted's staff survey revealed that staff are highly motivated and proud to work at the school. All parents responding to Parent View said the school is well led and managed and almost all said they would recommend the school to another parent.
- Every aspect of school life has improved significantly. Leaders have very high expectations of staff and pupils to do their best at all times and seek to improve further. A rigorous programme of staff support, challenge and training has led to significant staffing changes and improved teaching. Middle leaders have been trained very well to enhance their roles.
- Leaders know their strengths well and, where they have identified areas for improvement, they have tackled them with rigour successfully. For example, they have ensured that more pupils currently in school, including disadvantaged pupils, are working at a high standard in reading by the end of key stage 2 than in previous Year 6 cohorts.
- The impact of changes is seen clearly in the 2018 test and assessment results. These showed that Year 6 pupils maintained exceptionally high standards and made excellent progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Key stage 1 and early years have also seen a rapid rise in standards over time.
- No pupil group has been left behind. Leaders have ensured that additional funding is targeted very effectively. As a result, disadvantaged pupils are rapidly diminishing the difference in standards with all pupils nationally by the time they leave Year 6. Pupils with SEND are making exceptionally strong progress as a result of strategic leadership, high-quality teaching and effective support. Pupils who require additional support invariably receive this in lessons, in order to maintain access to the high-quality teaching. Those pupils taken off the SEND register are continuously monitored, and their progress checked as well.
- Leaders promote British values and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well. They look for every opportunity to extend pupils' cultural experiences through trips and visitors to the schools. Pupils are then able to talk and write at great depth from their own real-life experiences in humanities lessons, for example after a recent visit to London. Leaders expect all pupils to attend at least one extra-curricular club, and many participate in several activities. Pupils have an extensive knowledge of those with different faiths and backgrounds and show high levels of respect for each other in the diverse school community. Pupils' languages spoken at home are highly valued and celebrated. Pupils have a good understanding of democracy and the rule of law.
- The thematic curriculum based on key skills is highly ambitious and innovative. Pupils have the opportunity to study a range of subjects in great depth, including humanities, science, design and technology and art.

- As a result of highly knowledgeable and skilled teaching, pupils produce work of an exceptionally high standard. Examples of key stage 2 pupils' work in portfolios on art and design and technology show pupils are working well-above age-related expectations in these subjects. They can mix colours, use textiles to design clothes, have an understanding of three-dimensional shapes and can paint in a variety of artists' styles, including David Hockney. Pupils spoken to were especially keen on computing. Here, leaders are developing an innovative six-year programme based around the three key strands of computer science, digital literacy and information technology.
- The curriculum is carefully planned around key skills in every subject. It is interlinked across subjects, to ensure reinforcement of literacy and numeracy skills. For example, pupils experience extended writing in science and diary writing in geography. To develop their numeracy skills, they work on Venn diagrams in religious education and chronological timelines in history. Pupils are consistently exposed to challenging subject-specific vocabulary, for example pupils in a key stage one science lesson were able to say what 'translucent' meant.
- Although pupils study French regularly, alongside other subjects, there is insufficient evidence of the depth of pupils' work. There is further work to do in developing curriculum links with secondary schools, for example in modern foreign languages and computing.

Governance of the school

- Governors know the school well. They bring considerable expertise and experience to the school. This enables them to offer strong challenge to leaders, as well as supporting them fully in the changes implemented to improve the school. They have a very full knowledge of current pupil assessment information, which enables them to ask leaders searching questions about standards and progress.
- They also hold middle leaders to account for their areas of responsibility through meetings and regular focused visits to the school. Their notes of visits are highly incisive. They also ensure they get value for money from additional funding targeted at pupil groups and individuals. They are highly reflective and share leaders' vision in seeking to improve even further.
- Governors conduct regular safeguarding reviews to ensure that leaders meet all of their statutory responsibilities.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Designated leaders are well trained to carry out their roles effectively. They keep fully up to date with training and the latest guidance from the Department for Education (DfE). They ensure that all members of staff are trained well. As a result, those staff spoken to knew what to do if a safeguarding incident arose, what procedures to follow and who were the designated leaders they should inform.
- Leaders follow up all incidents reported with urgency and, where they need to, make referrals promptly. Information is recorded in a timely fashion and kept safely and

securely. Leaders are not afraid to challenge parents where necessary. Relationships with outside agencies are strong. Almost all pupils spoken to or responding to their survey said they felt safe in school. All parents responding to Parent View said their children are kept safe and looked after well. Almost all parents who responded in other ways agreed.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teaching is consistently strong in each year group over time, which has enabled pupils to make very rapid progress in their learning from their starting points.
- Teachers plan lessons effectively and with a significant level of challenge. They set high expectations. They set extension challenges, not only for the most able but to lower-attaining pupils as well. In reading, all pupils in Year 6 are regularly exposed to the language of Shakespeare through plays such as 'Macbeth' and 'Romeo and Juliet'. Lessons are highly engaging for pupils who respond to their learning with enthusiasm. Teachers challenge pupils effectively and expect spoken and written replies where individuals explain and justify their answers.
- Teachers have extensive subject knowledge, not only in reading, writing and mathematics, but also in wider subjects, so that more advanced concepts can be taught, such as chemical formulae in science and a wide range of techniques and styles in art.
- Teachers use questioning highly effectively to establish what pupils know and where misconceptions may still exist. During activities, they use regular whole-class 'pit stops' where they bring the whole class together to check or reinforce pupils' learning. Teachers provide numerous opportunities for pupils to speak, either in groups or to the whole class and to debate topical issues, developing their confidence as speakers.
- Teachers make very effective cross-curricular links with other subjects. They provide numerous opportunities for extended writing. For example, in the humanities topic on Mexico, pupils wrote about 'the day of the dead'. In science, pupils are expected to write-up their experiments accurately. Pupils spoken to said they found the extended writing tasks 'very challenging.' Pupils are given numerous opportunities to read from an early age, and they are regularly given high-quality texts across subjects which contain demanding academic and subject-specific vocabulary.
- Teachers and additional adults teach phonics consistently very well. This equips younger learners with the reading skills they need in tackling unfamiliar or challenging words.
- Teachers have adopted the school's policy consistently to ensure that pupils take responsibility for editing and marking their own work and that of their peers. There is a strong focus on improving pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar across all subjects where written work is required.
- Pupils with SEND receive highly effective support, almost always within the classroom. As a result, they benefit from the high quality of teaching as well. This enables them to make very rapid progress in their learning. Similarly, targeted support for disadvantaged pupils ensures they have full access to the lessons as well, to ensure their progress is significant also.

- Relationships between adults and pupils and between pupils themselves are very high. Teachers' very good classroom management skills ensure that lessons are hardly ever interrupted by low-level disruption. This means teachers rarely need to apply the behaviour policy.
- There are just a few times where the adaptations to challenging work set for low-attaining pupils are not sufficient to enable them to access the learning fully. Equally, there are a small number of occurrences where too much additional support is provided, rendering the task too easy.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils show a high level of respect for each other's differences, whether of race, faith or disability. They listen to each other's views and opinions and collaborate well together on tasks. All pupils take part in visits to places of worship and in celebrations in recognition of different festivals. The school has successfully engaged the support of all parents in encouraging their children's participation in these.
- Older pupils are handed significant leadership responsibilities, for example in the management of the school's computers. They apply in writing for posts, acquire references from their parents and then attend a formal interview. Those pupils successfully appointed as 'managers' then subsequently interview future applicants from Years 4, 5 and 6. This is preparing them exceptionally well for the world of work. Pupils can also take on responsibilities as peer mentors, house captains and sports leaders.
- Pupils spoken to said they feel very safe in school and know what to do in potentially dangerous situations. They knew that if they got lost outside of school and on their own, then they should seek out an adult in authority wearing a badge or uniform. They are very well prepared for keeping safe on the computer through lessons and assemblies. Some of these are led by the pupil leaders themselves, for example on e-safety. Pupils spoken to were very knowledgeable about the software that keeps them safe on the computer and in using social media. They know they will not be exposed to any inappropriate material or subjected to 'pop-ups' at school, and they know what to do if it happens on the home computer.
- Pupils reported that bullying is very rare. They are aware of the different forms bullying can take, such as cyberbullying. Almost all of those spoken to said that when it does happen, it is resolved well by adults or by other pupils. They felt confident talking to an adult if they were worried or concerned about anything.
- Parents and older pupils who expressed their views reported that they had seen a change of culture during their time with the school. This change was summed up by one pupil, speaking for many parents and pupils, who said, 'Before, adults didn't listen to us. Now they always do and take account of both sides.'
- Pupils' mental health and well-being is at the heart of the curriculum and is taken into account through lessons, including the personal, social, health and economic education

programme, and assemblies. The work of the school's educational psychologist was praised by parents responding to the Parent View free-text.

- Pupils are prepared well for healthy lifestyles, through the school's insistence on them only bringing healthy food and snacks to school. All pupils have access to more than two hours a week of physical education (PE). All pupils in key stage 2 have regular swimming lessons. The PE and sport premium is deployed well by leaders employing sports coaches to train teachers to deliver more effective PE and sport lessons.
- Pupils take great pride in their personal appearance and the presentation of their work. The latter is exemplified in books, portfolios and displays around the school. They were very proud of the certificates they received during a celebration assembly attended by parents, where pupils clapped each other warmly.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils conduct themselves in an exemplary fashion in lessons and around the school. All pupils, including the very youngest, walk in an orderly manner through the corridors. They are polite and courteous to visitors and articulate in talking about their work with relish.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. Those spoken to were highly positive about their lessons, especially mathematics and computing. They respond well to the challenges set by teachers.
- They attend school regularly and are punctual at the start of the day. When an inspector attempted to speak to parents at the gate in the morning, anticipating those parents bringing their children to school, every child was already in school and almost every parent had already left.
- The rate of absence, including persistent absence, was above average last year, including for pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils. However, as result of the school's actions, the rate of attendance has risen to be above average. The rate of persistent absence, which has now fallen significantly, is low for current pupils.
- There have been no permanent or fixed-term exclusions since the school opened in 2017. Leaders record and track any behaviour incidents, big or small, very carefully, looking for trends or patterns. There has been a significant fall in the number of recorded incidents since January 2019.
- All of the very small number of pupils, previously identified as persistent offenders, have turned their behaviour around positively.
- Pupils spoken to agreed that behaviour in lessons is very good and that pupils listen to teachers well. Any disputes on the playground, usually over football, are quickly resolved by pupils themselves or, if necessary, by an additional adult on duty.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Current pupils are making very rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics in each key stage and every year group. This is as a result of consistently high-quality teaching and support.
- All groups of pupils are doing well. Through regular half-termly tracking and assessments, which are rigorously moderated, leaders know how well each individual and group are doing. Across the school, pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils are making very rapid progress. This is enabling them to catch up with their peers from their previously lower starting points. The targeted additional support complements the high-quality teaching in the classroom.
- The proportion of pupils now working in greater depth, or at a higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 6, is now at a higher level than the previous year, including for disadvantaged pupils. This is because of teachers setting challenging work across the curriculum and providing opportunities to rehearse and practise learning in greater depth through other subjects as well. As a result, pupils become confident in interrogating data through charts, tables and graphs in geography and science as well as in mathematics. They are writing in a range of genres and styles in religious education and history as well as in English.
- Pupils' work is of an exceptionally high standard in other subjects, including science, art and design and computing. This is because teachers and additional adults have expert knowledge in these subjects to stretch and challenge all pupils further, not just the most able. In science, for example, pupils can hypothesise, make predictions, interpret results, and repeat experiments to ensure accuracy in the results obtained.
- In the most recent tests and assessments at the end of key stage 2 in 2018, pupils' standards were exceptionally high in reading, writing and mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils also made exceptional progress so that the proportion achieving the expected standard was above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of most-able and disadvantaged pupils exceeding the national average in writing and mathematics was also above the national average, but below in reading. There were too few pupils with SEND in Year 6 last year to report on their outcomes.
- Pupils for whom English is an additional language are also doing exceptionally well. They benefit from the language-rich curriculum where key skills, vocabulary and concepts are revisited again and again in greater depth. They also have many opportunities to practise their spoken and written language in the classroom where they are placed carefully with pupils who make good role models of spoken English.
- The proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in the Year 1 assessment in phonics in 2018 was significantly above the national average.
- The overwhelming majority of pupils achieved or exceeded the standard. This is despite many pupils having joined the school in early years with attainment below that typical for their age. Many were new to learning English as an additional language, when they first started school.

- By the end of Year 6, pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of education in secondary school, not only in reading, writing and mathematics but also in other subjects where they are working well above age-related expectations.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Children make very rapid progress from their low starting points when they join in either Nursery or Reception. By the time they start Year 1, they are well-prepared for the next phase of their education. The proportion achieving age-related expectations, including in literacy and numeracy, was above the national average in 2018. Most children currently in Reception have already caught up to where they are expected to be for their age. The outcomes they achieve are down to highly effective leadership and consistently strong teaching.
- Early years leaders and staff liaise very well with parents, who contribute to their children's assessments. Parents are regularly invited to workshops on phonics and reading. Staff hold regular transition meetings with parents both on joining and leaving the early years provision.
- Leaders set high expectations for parents, including that they will hear their children read at least three times a week. By the end of Reception, children have become confident and independent readers.
- The early years environment is rich both indoors and outside. There are clearly demarcated curriculum areas and there is a strong focus on literacy and numeracy in the free flow and structured activities provided. Children's rapid progress in writing is evident from their learning journals and writing books. Children move quickly on from mark making to writing legibly, using finger space, capital letters and full stops correctly. These journals and books also provide a wealth of evidence to support children's extensive progress and development across a wide range of other curriculum areas.
- During activities, children work well independently and cooperate well with their peers, taking turns and sharing resources. They behave well and are well established in classroom routines and expectations so that they are kept safe during their learning. They are fully engaged with their activities. Adults intervene effectively with appropriate questioning when required and they know when to step back and observe.

School details

Unique reference number	143151
Local authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	10092166

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	329
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Katy Morgan
Head of school	Elliott Hateley
Telephone number	01902 558 750
Website	www.hillavenueacademy.com
Email address	hillavenueprimaryschool@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Hill Avenue Academy is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND, including those with an education, health and care plan, is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is below the national average.
- The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above the national average.
- The school is one of seven primary schools which are members of the Manor Multi-academy Trust, having converted to become an academy in January 2017. The Manor Multi-academy Trust is overseen by a Board of Directors. Hill Avenue's local governing body was established in February 2018, replacing the previous, interim, executive board, which was inherited from the predecessor school, Hill Avenue Primary, and which had been placed in special measures in February 2015. The board delegates all responsibilities, other than finances for the governance of the school, to the local governing body. The local governing body is also responsible for staff appointments.
- The head of school and deputy headteacher were both appointed to their roles at the predecessor school in 2015, after it had been placed in special measures. The multi-academy trust started to support the predecessor school after it had been placed in special measures until it converted to be one of their academies.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a number of lessons or parts of lessons, of which, almost all were jointly observed with either the chief executive officer of the trust, the head of school or deputy headteacher. In addition, inspectors made short visits to other lessons and other activities.
- Inspectors heard pupils read during lessons and scrutinised their written work in a range of subjects.
- An inspector observed a celebration assembly attended by parents.
- Inspectors held meetings with the chief executive officer of the trust, the head of school, other leaders and members of staff and spoke to two groups of pupils from key stages 1 and 2. Inspectors met the chair and vice-chair of the trust and the chair and vice-chair of the local governing body.
- Inspectors took account of 23 responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View, and 16 responses to the Parent View free-text service. They also reviewed 35 responses to the pupils’ questionnaire from pupils in each year group from Years 1 to 6 and 16 responses to the staff questionnaire. They also followed up e-mail correspondence sent to Ofsted.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and scrutinised a number of documents, including those relating to the school’s self-evaluation, as well as governing body minutes, improvement plans and school information on pupils’ recent attainment and progress.
- Inspectors also considered behaviour and attendance information and policies and procedures relating to English as an additional language, special educational needs, pupil premium funding, the PE and sport premium, safeguarding and child protection.

Inspection team

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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