

Ash Hill Primary School

URN: 110261 | Inspected: 02 December 2025

Safeguarding

standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

Achievement Urgent improvement

Pupils do not progress through the curriculum well enough. They are not well prepared for their next steps

in education. For the past 3 years, pupils' attainment, including for disadvantaged pupils, has been significantly below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. This is also true for the Year 1 phonics screening check and the multiplication tables check that pupils take in Year 4. Gaps in pupils' foundational knowledge are not identified quickly enough or remedied swiftly. Recent improvements mean that pupils' success in phonics and reading is moving closer to the national average, but this is not the case in writing. In subjects beyond English and mathematics, pupils are not making secure gains in knowledge and skills as set out in the curriculum. They are not able to consistently recall the key knowledge that they have been taught.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Leaders have made some positive improvements to the design and delivery of the curriculum. However, these are too recent to have any demonstrable impact on pupils' long-term learning. For too long, many pupils, including the most disadvantaged and vulnerable, have not achieved as well as they should at Ash Hill Primary School. Staffing and leadership instability has meant that leaders' actions have not been rapid enough, and pupils have suffered academically as a result. Pupils at this school are safe and well cared for. The school is welcoming to all families, and pupils confidently say that everyone is treated with respect. Pupils are proud that their school is a kind place where all families are welcome. This ethos is creating a genuine sense of belonging among the community. Pupils know that adults will help them if they have a problem and they trust staff to deal with issues, such as bullying, quickly. Pupils of all ages enjoy breaktimes because they can play with their friends, share games and have healthy snacks. Older pupils like being monitors and having responsibilities because it makes them feel valued and helpful. They also find learning about different religions and fundamental British values interesting, and they can explain how they vote for school council members. Pupils are suitably prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils' behaviour is typically calm and orderly. Many pupils are interested in the well-considered broad and balanced curriculum. However, they sometimes disengage from their learning. At times, teachers do not extend pupils' knowledge, skills and vocabulary well enough. The work that some pupils receive is not well matched to their starting points. When this happens, pupils struggle to progress well through the curriculum in reading, writing and mathematics.

Next steps

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- Leaders and governors must ensure that they improve the achievement of all pupils, and especially those who are disadvantaged, so that they learn the knowledge, skills and vocabulary that they need to be ready for the next stage of education.
- Leaders should build on their recent work to identify pupils' needs and ensure there are consistent approaches to helping all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils, to overcome barriers to their learning and wellbeing.
- Leaders should ensure that the curriculum, including the newly introduced phonics programme, is taught consistently well across different classes and subjects, so that pupils build their knowledge securely, achieve well and are better prepared for their

next steps

in education.

- Leaders and governors should ensure that they implement their plans for improvement to teaching swiftly so that the pace of change increases and pupils' achievement improves.

Curriculum and teaching Needs attention

The teaching of the curriculum is variable across classes and subjects. Leaders have begun to develop teachers' subject knowledge and skills, but this has not had sufficient impact. Recent developments, such as the introduction of a new phonics programme, reflect leaders' ambition and commitment to improvement. However, it is not being delivered as consistently as leaders expect. Leaders have designed a well-sequenced curriculum that sets out what knowledge and skills pupils will learn and when this will happen. Staff sometimes prioritise the importance of pupils completing a task over ensuring that pupils learn the key curriculum knowledge leaders want them to gain. This limits the opportunities for pupils to embed core learning and apply key skills in reading, writing and mathematics. For example, when pupils find reading a text difficult, staff sometimes provide the answers rather than developing the skills that pupils need to complete it independently. For other pupils, teachers' expectations of what they can achieve are not high enough. For instance, some teachers do not demonstrate ambitious language choices, or explain more complex mathematical methods clearly. As a result, some pupils do not make the progress that they should through the curriculum.

Early years

Expected standard

Leaders have a secure understanding of what children need to learn in the early years to be ready for the next stage of their education. The curriculum is thoughtfully sequenced and built around high-quality texts, which successfully engage children and promote positive attitudes to learning. Leaders and staff know the children's needs well and, as a result, focus on enhancing children's vocabulary. Teachers identify gaps in learning early, and ensure that children receive support to help them overcome their difficulties with communication and

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language, phonics and handwriting. Leaders have recently introduced a new phonics programme, which staff typically deliver well. In the Nursery class, children are encouraged to be independent at this earliest stage. For example, if children should tumble during play, they typically dust themselves off and carry on without any fuss. Adults prioritise children's personal, social and emotional development, ensuring that children feel cared for and safe. Across the early years, staff typically ensure that their interactions with children who are less confident to speak are clear and purposeful. This is rapidly helping these children to integrate into school life. Children know the routines well; they are confident to talk about their learning and they demonstrate enthusiasm for the activities provided.

Inclusion Needs attention

Leaders are in the early stages of ensuring a shared understanding and a consistent approach to how pupils' needs, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are known and met. Leaders' work to sharpen the procedures to identify and support vulnerable pupils is developing. Leaders work closely with families and external agencies to secure additional help to break down barriers to pupils' learning and wellbeing. They also have a clear strategy for the use of the pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils. For pupils' learning, the resources and adaptations to teaching during lessons are not matched closely enough to pupils' particular needs. This lack of precision limits pupils' progress in overcoming gaps in their knowledge. For example, in English and mathematics, some pupils are given the same work as their peers without sufficient alterations to meet their individual needs. This leads to incomplete work and insecure understanding over time. Leaders ensure that pupils with SEND, disadvantaged pupils and other vulnerable pupils are fully included in school life so that they feel an integral part of the school community. Leaders also make sure that these pupils access the same curriculum as their peers.

Leadership and governance Needs attention

In recent years, there has been instability in leadership as well as issues with staff recruitment and retention. This has slowed the pace of leaders' work and means that over time, pupils do not achieve well. Leaders are fully aware of what needs to improve and are aware that the pace of this change needs to increase. They have introduced a range of initiatives to tackle the school's shortcomings. However, many of these are in the early stages of implementation. Staff training is prioritised by leaders and valued by staff. There is now a coherent and effective strategy for staff development that combines whole-school training, subject-specific sessions and individual support. This is leading to an improvement in the delivery of the curriculum in some classes and subjects. Governance has undergone significant change. Almost all members of the governing body are new since the previous inspection. This new group has the skills to take decisions in the best interests of pupils and hold leaders to account. Governors acknowledge that pupils' achievement, particularly for the most disadvantaged and vulnerable at the school, needs significant improvement. They are working well to contribute to leaders' drive to improve the school's provision. Governors fulfil their statutory duties. For example, they are mindful of staff's workload and wellbeing and make considered approaches to support staff in carrying out their roles. Urgent improvement

Ash Hill Primary School

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Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard

Leaders have implemented a clear personal development curriculum that builds pupils' knowledge progressively. The curriculum is also adapted when the need arises. As a result, pupils understand how to keep themselves safe online and when crossing roads. They typically talk confidently about how to have a healthy lifestyle. Pupils have purposeful opportunities to take on responsibilities, such as acting as a school councillor or a reading ambassador. This helps to promote pupils' independence and leadership qualities. It also enhances pupils' understanding of right and wrong and 'doing the right thing'. Pupils learn about fundamental British values and the differences between themselves and others through a range of texts, assemblies and school council activities. Pupils recognise and show respect for different families and cultures in their diverse community. They understand democratic processes, such as voting to give a person a responsibility. Pupils also learn about different faiths, and some can articulate thoughtful insights about different religious symbols and practices. Cultural engagement is promoted through assemblies, themed events and music activities. Leaders have made some recent positive changes to improve pupils' wellbeing. Staff provide effective and sensitive pastoral support when pupils have difficulties, whether these are short- or long-term challenges in pupils' lives. Pupils also look out for one another. If someone falls on the playground, friends are very quick, whether they know the pupil or not, to go over and help. The school provides a broad range of clubs and other opportunities. Almost all disadvantaged pupils and a significant proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities access clubs, including sports, arts and wider academic opportunities. Needs attention

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard

Pupils' attendance is typically in line with national averages. Leaders monitor attendance information effectively and put clear, targeted support in place when pupils' absence levels cause a concern. This work has had a notable impact on some individuals, whose attendance rates have risen significantly. Pupils generally demonstrate positive behaviour in lessons, enabling learning to take place without disruption. They typically display good manners and are respectful towards one another. Occasionally, some pupils do not pay enough attention to their teacher. On the whole, the school is a harmonious blend of ethnicities and cultures. Staff do not tolerate any kind of bullying or unkindness and pupils are very confident that their teachers will help them if they are worried. The behaviour management processes have improved notably after renewed staff training. The introduction of 'The Nest' and the 'Ready to Learn Room', along with external support when necessary, has strengthened staff's confidence and their ability to support pupils with more complex needs. This has led to a more consistent approach to dealing with incidents of behaviour that does not match expectations. As a result, suspension rates, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils, have reduced markedly.

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For detailed performance data including disadvantage gap analysis, historical trends, and comparison tables, visit the school's profile on WhatSchool:

<https://whatschool.ai/en/school/ash-hill-primary-school-high-wycombe>