

Inspection of The Python Hill Academy

Kirklington Road, Rainworth, Mansfield NG21 0JZ

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 January 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

One of the school's key aims is to provide a 'warm, welcoming environment where pupils feel safe and well cared for.' Leaders and staff certainly ensure that this positive ethos is felt throughout the school. Parents and carers and pupils are full of praise for the school. Many parents say that their children are 'happy, secure and confident' learners. Pupils are proud to be hard-working 'Pythonites'.

Staff expect pupils to behave well. Pupils understand what is expected of them and respond sensibly. Lessons are calm and busy, reflecting pupils' positive attitudes to their learning.

Pupils enjoy earning rewards for attendance and good behaviour. They helped to design the space-themed classroom 'values charts'. Older pupils can take on roles such as those of class ambassador or play leader. This helps them to develop a sense of responsibility and kindness.

When occasional issues arise, such as bullying, pupils say that the adults sort things out. Parents agree. Staff encourage pupils to share any worries they may have. Pupils can talk to someone in school or post a message online via the virtual 'worry monster'. The care and pastoral support offered to pupils and families are especially strong.

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

In recent years, leaders have driven improvements in all aspects of the school. There has been a strong focus on the curriculum, starting with the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Leaders have ensured that the curriculum sets out precisely what pupils should know and be able to do in these subjects and in some others. As a result, standards of achievement in English and mathematics have improved significantly. The focus is now shifting to other subjects. Partly due to the pandemic, this work is not yet complete across all areas of the curriculum, including in religious education.

In subjects such as mathematics, history and geography, the curriculum is well sequenced. Pupils enjoy interesting lessons and develop secure knowledge and skills. It is clear that pupils know and remember more in these subjects year on year.

Leaders prioritise reading across the school. They are ambitious for all pupils to develop a love of reading. Children in early years begin learning to read as soon as they start school. Staff ensure that pupils of all ages receive daily, systematic phonics teaching. Pupils read from books that match the sounds they know. They develop very well as fluent, confident readers.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to achieve as highly as possible. Staff are quick to identify these pupils' needs. They liaise effectively with parents and external specialists. Leaders are

currently reviewing some of their systems to ensure that they have a clear overview of the support provided for all pupils with SEND. The aim is to ensure that pupils with SEND can continue to access the full curriculum.

The early years curriculum is strong. This means that children get off to a great start in their education. They receive skilled support to settle quickly into positive routines. Staff across all the early years classes work effectively as a team. Children develop secure knowledge and skills by means of the interesting activities and high-quality resources. Adults model qualities of kindness and patience. This helps children to develop good social skills.

Leaders promote pupils' broader development well in most respects. Staff plan regular opportunities to enrich the curriculum through educational visits. Pupils can take part in extracurricular clubs and activities. They learn about healthy relationships and how to keep themselves safe when online. Pupils are learning about some of the values that are important in British society, such as democracy. However, pupils have limited understanding of a range of faiths and cultures. Leaders have not ensured that staff regularly teach the religious education curriculum as intended.

Staff speak highly of the support leaders provide for their workload and well-being. Trust leaders ensure that leaders and staff benefit from training and development. There are regular opportunities for staff to share good practice across the group of schools.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff say that safeguarding is 'at the forefront of everything'. Safeguarding themes are prominent in the weekly staff meetings and monthly training programmes. Leaders closely analyse any safeguarding incidents that may occur. They use their findings to highlight training needs or to provide specific support for pupils. Records are detailed and accurate. Leaders act quickly in response to any concerns that are raised.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. They say that they feel safe and well cared for all the time at school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not yet ensured that the curriculum is fully planned and sequenced in all subjects. In some foundation subjects, the curriculum content is uncertain, and the implementation is weak or sporadic. Pupils do not currently know and remember more in those subjects as well as they do where the curriculum is

strongly embedded. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum sets out the key knowledge and skills that pupils should learn and when, and that this is consistently implemented in all subjects.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is not as well supported as it should be in some respects. The religious education curriculum is currently not implemented in full in all year groups. Pupils do not have a secure understanding of a range of faiths and cultures. Leaders should ensure that they prepare pupils for life in modern Britain by encouraging them to develop informed respect for people who hold a range of faiths and beliefs.

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](#)' 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.

School details

Unique reference number	146314
Local authority	Nottinghamshire County Council
Inspection number	10254733
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	320
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sue Trentini
Principal	Andy Stirland
Website	www.pythonhill.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Python Hill Academy converted to become an academy school in September 2018. When its predecessor school, Python Hill Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be inadequate overall.
- The principal took up his post in September 2019.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the principal and other senior and curriculum leaders.
- The lead inspector met with the chair and the chief executive officer of The Forge Trust.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, geography and music. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders to discuss the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector observed some pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum, reviewed curriculum planning and samples of pupils' work, and spoke to pupils in some other subjects.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at other times around the school.
- Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding by reviewing the school's record of pre-employment checks and holding discussions with leaders, staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Christine Watkins, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Steven Barnes

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