

Inspection of a good school: Hilbre High School

Frankby Road, West Kirby, Wirral, Merseyside CH48 6EQ

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 October 2021

Outcome

Hilbre High School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and students at Hilbre High School look out for and support each other. They have positive and mature relationships with each other and with staff.

Pupils feel safe at the school. They said that they are well educated about staying safe. Pupils trust staff. They are confident to turn to staff if they need extra help or support.

Staff have consistently high expectations of pupils. Most pupils learn well in their lessons. They gain a good understanding of a range of subjects and the wider world.

Pupils mainly behave well in their lessons and around school. They have good attitudes to their learning. They consistently respect the rules and routines that staff set.

Pupils typically respect and value each other. They told inspectors that this is why bullying and other poor behaviours are not common. Pupils said that staff are good at resolving problems such as these when they occasionally happen.

Pupils benefit from a broad range of opportunities that support their wider development. They learn how to give back to their communities through activities such as The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, peer mentoring and charity fundraising.

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

Trustees, leaders and staff have successfully sustained a good quality of education for pupils and students in the sixth form at Hilbre High School. They ensure that plans for improvement are ambitious and focused on the needs of pupils. Leaders and staff use external expertise well to further develop their knowledge and skills.

Leaders ensure that the curriculum offer for pupils and students is suitably ambitious. Most pupils study an increasingly broad curriculum. Leaders have strengthened the guidance that pupils receive when deciding which subjects to study. More students in the

sixth form are now completing their programmes of study than was the case previously. Nearly all pupils and students take positive next steps in their education, employment or training.

Teachers are ambitious about the subject content that pupils and students will learn. Most pupils have good attitudes to their learning and behave well in lessons. Teachers carefully plan how pupils will acquire knowledge in the subjects that they are studying. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They use it well to present subject matter clearly. They provide pupils with suitably demanding activities. This helps most pupils to know and remember more. Most pupils achieve well.

Teachers' use of assessment strategies is developing at different rates. Increasingly, they ensure that assessment strategies provide useful information about what pupils can and cannot do. In some subjects, assessment provides teachers and pupils with a more refined picture of what pupils know and remember. As a result, pupils are better informed in some subjects about the next steps that they should take in their learning.

Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are achieving better than they did in the past. The support that these pupils receive in subjects is developing, but at different rates. Teachers usually ensure that these pupils are well guided as they work. In some subjects, teachers also consider further adaptations to the work that these pupils do. Consequently, some of these pupils gain and remember more knowledge than others.

Staff carefully identify the particular needs of pupils and students with SEND. They provide well-designed additional support for these pupils. This includes the pupils who attend the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND (specially resourced provision). These pupils follow carefully designed curriculums that help them achieve appropriately ambitious goals in their education, employment and training.

Leaders are taking positive action to strengthen the support for pupils who are at the earliest stages of learning to read. They ensure that staff have the right expertise to lead this work effectively. Leaders have a suitably clear picture of the reading abilities of these pupils. Staff provide an increasingly wide range of effective additional support for pupils who find reading difficult. They make good use of daily form time to help all pupils widen their reading experiences.

Staff provide carefully planned opportunities for pupils and students to promote pupils' personal development. Pupils have a good understanding of how to thrive, be healthy and have positive relationships with others. Leaders are successfully restoring the careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) programme now that the COVID-19 restrictions have eased. Staff deliver an increasingly rigorous programme of CEIAG opportunities. They provide pupils with the full range of information they need to make confident decisions about their future.

Leaders and trustees have established a supportive ethos in which the needs and interests of staff are suitably considered. Staff are positive about what leaders do to look after them. Leaders and staff work in harmony to ensure that systems support staff

workload, well-being and welfare. Staff told inspectors that they are a content, happy and well-looked-after team.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have a good understanding of the risks that pupils and students at the school most commonly face. They provide pupils with a rich range of opportunities to explore what they can do to stay safe. Pupils feel confident to make safe decisions.

Staff are appropriately alert to potential safeguarding concerns. They do what they can to ensure that any concerns are reported and acted upon as early as possible.

Staff confidently use their own expertise to support pupils who need extra help or who have worries or problems. Staff also make considered use of external expertise to provide good-quality, specific support for the pupils who most need it.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Assessment strategies are not equally well developed in all subjects. Pupils do not get consistently detailed information about the knowledge that they have learned across subjects. This means that they are not equally equipped to make further gains in their learning. Leaders should ensure that the strongest assessment practice is shared across all subjects. They should provide subject staff with the support they need so that assessment consistently provides pupils with helpful detail about what they know and remember.
- The support for some pupils in lessons is not equally refined across subjects. This includes some pupils who are disadvantaged and some pupils with SEND. This means that the progress that these pupils make is still uneven across subjects. Leaders should ensure that staff get the help they need to further enhance the additional support that pupils receive in lessons.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in June 2016.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	138355
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	10199870
Type of school	Secondary modern (non-selective)
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of students in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,159
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	168
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trustees	Michael Cockburn
Headteacher	Mark Bellamy
Website	www.hilbre.wirral.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 and 22 June 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Hilbre High School is a single academy trust.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for 30 pupils with SEND. This supports pupils with moderate learning difficulties and pupils with autism spectrum disorder.
- Leaders uses three alternative providers to support the learning of a small group of pupils.

Information about this inspection

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher and senior leaders. They spoke with representatives of the board of trustees and Wirral local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning, and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's records of safeguarding checks and referrals. They met with leaders who have overall responsibility for safeguarding. Inspectors spoke with staff and pupils about the school's work to keep pupils safe.
- Inspectors spoke with leaders responsible for SEND and reading. They visited the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND. They also looked at information about the support for pupils with additional needs.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in class and around the school site. They also scrutinised behaviour and attendance records.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils from all year groups and considered the responses of Ofsted's online questionnaire for pupils.
- Inspectors held discussions with staff and took account of the responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff.
- Inspectors also took account of the responses on Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

Mark Quinn

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