

Inspection of Witham St Hughs Academy

Muntjac Way, Witham St Hughs, Lincoln, Lincolnshire LN6 9WF

Inspection dates: 26 and 27 March 2024

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

The headteacher of this school is Richard Stock. This school is part of L.E.A.D. Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Diana Owen, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Andy Buck.

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since December 2012.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thoroughly enjoy attending Witham St Hughs Academy, where they are inspired to learn and achieve. Pupils said that the school was 'life changing' and that they feel very lucky to attend.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They live and breathe the school's values of resilience, respect, unity, enjoyment and ambition. Pupils strive to be positive members of their school community. They wear the school's stickers and badges with pride.

The school has the highest expectations for all. It provides numerous opportunities for pupils to develop their interests and talents. They love the broad range of clubs on offer, such as sign language, drumming, coding, choir, cookery, cricket and many more.

Pupils proudly take on roles of responsibility, such as being members of the community council, eco-warriors, curriculum champions or well-being champions, or by being part of the 'ministry of food'. Pupils spoke about how these roles 'help others and make a difference'. The school guides pupils to be responsible, caring individuals.

One parent, typical of many, spoke about how their children 'have flourished academically, socially and emotionally.' Another parent said: 'This school goes above and beyond each and every day. They celebrate each child as an individual and develop their talents and interests.'

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

Pupils learn exceptionally well here. The curriculum is highly ambitious for all. The school has ensured that the precise knowledge, skills and vocabulary that pupils need to learn are carefully mapped out.

The curriculum is delivered by skilled, passionate staff. In all lessons, pupils work hard and enjoy learning. No time is wasted. Teachers present key concepts very effectively. They systematically revisit content taught previously. This ensures that pupils can confidently remember what they have learned. In mathematics, for example, pupils in Year 5 were learning about co-ordinates and could discuss how their learning built on the work done in Year 4. The school has introduced 'maths stations' in lessons, which support pupils and enables them to progress. 'Working walls' are also used to showcase prior learning and support pupils in lessons.

Teachers expertly question pupils to check their understanding. They use a variety of flashback activities and strategies to aid pupils' memory. In geography in Year 2, teachers use songs to recap on the world's oceans, and in mathematics they use

'fraction Fridays' to revisit and ensure that learning is secure in key areas of the curriculum.

Pupils love books at this school. Reading is encouraged and nurtured. Pupils' interests are taken into consideration, and pupils regularly recommend books for each other to read and for the school to add to their extremely impressive library. Teachers ensure that pupils read and share texts that explore diversity and different groups in society through the school's 'reading spine'. This helps pupils to broaden their understanding of the wider world. Pupils spoke about how teachers, 'inspire you to step out of your reading comfort zone and to try new books and genres.' Teachers and other adults have received expert training to ensure that they deliver the phonics programme exceptionally well. Pupils who struggle to learn to read get extra support and practice.

The school supports pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) exceptionally well. Staff quickly identify the needs of pupils with SEND. They ensure that any adaptations for these pupils are thoroughly considered and work well. Teachers adapt lessons skilfully to meet the needs of all pupils. Pupils with SEND flourish and experience success.

Children in the early years are full of smiles and eagerness to learn. Children settle well and develop their understanding of routines and expectations. There are stimulating, precisely-planned activities that enable children to acquire and practise new skills and vocabulary. Children could remember new words such as 'gasped', 'shimmer' and 'magnificent' and are encouraged to enjoy learning and using new words.

Pupils benefit from a carefully constructed, bespoke personal development curriculum. Character education is at the core of the school's curriculum. It enables pupils to learn to be tolerant and respectful. Pupils have a clear understanding of British values and the protected characteristics. This provision goes beyond the expected. For example, pupils' talents and interests are nurtured through the 'enhanced enrichment' offer and cultural capital experiences such as STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) clubs and workshops, and virtual assemblies with engineers and scientists.

The school provides pupils with an exceptional education. It is very well led. Leaders listen to staff and work with them to ensure that workload is manageable. High-quality professional development plays a key role in the school's success. All staff are dedicated to supporting the development of every pupil.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	137978
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10324142
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	400
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Andy Buck
CEO of the trust	Diana Owen
Headteacher	Richard Stock
Website	www.withamsthughssacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 December 2012, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the L.E.A.D Academy Trust.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded 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.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, other school leaders and members of the governing body and trust.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, geography, art, religious education and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to

teachers, spoke to groups of pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector listened to pupils in Years 1 and 2 read to a member of staff. The inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and samples of pupils' work for science and computing and also a range of character education books.

- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site during playtime.
- The inspectors spoke with groups of pupils and staff. An inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents, as well as the staff survey.
- 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' interest first.

Inspection team

Dawn Ashbolt, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Heather Hawkes	Ofsted Inspector
Jamie Nairn	Ofsted Inspector
Helen Atkins	Ofsted Inspector

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