

West Hill Primary School

Address: Beech Park, West Hill, Ottery St Mary, Devon, EX11 1UQ

Unique reference number (URN): 113106

Inspection report: 21 April 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

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.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

On the whole, pupils achieve well at West Hill Primary School. Published outcomes at the end of Year 6 exceed national averages for all groups of pupils. This means pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. However, published outcomes for the Year 4 multiplication test and Year 1 phonics check do not reflect the same high standards and are closer to national averages. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities progress well from their starting points.

Many pupils develop appropriate handwriting skills; however, the quality of writing varies too much. Teachers do not always identify misspellings of age-appropriate and important words. This means some pupils continue in their learning with gaps in their writing knowledge.

Pupils enjoy learning. They recall and link learning across different subjects. For example, in history, pupils combine their knowledge of Shackleton with an understanding of how to use a semi-colon when completing historical writing.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

School leaders have a well-informed understanding of attendance and the behaviour and attitudes of pupils at West Hill. Most pupils attend well. School leaders have correctly identified those pupils who need extra support to attend school regularly. However, these pupils are in the minority. The systems that leaders use to assess attendance are rigorous and promote regular attendance. The school works with external agencies and parents and carers to create personalised support packages for those pupils who need it.

Pupils behave well. They are polite and kind to one another. School staff are role models for pupils and promote positive behaviour across the school. Low-level disruption is rare. Pupils do not experience bullying. When incidents of behaviour occur, they are dealt with swiftly and sensitively. School leaders have collaborated with the pupils' school council to review, refresh and simplify the school rules. As a result, pupils know the school rules and do their best to follow them. Generally, pupils respond quickly to instructions from staff. This ensures that classrooms have atmospheres that are conducive to learning.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

School leaders have an accurate view of the quality of teaching and the curriculum. Leaders identified that pupils could achieve more in phonics and mathematics. They introduced a new phonics curriculum as well as a whole-school focus on mathematics. As a result, the teaching of phonics is generally effective. This means pupils are increasingly skilled at being able to read unfamiliar words using their phonics knowledge to decode words. The teaching of mathematics is a strength of the school. The work pupils complete is appropriately demanding. Furthermore, teachers' checks on what pupils know in mathematics regularly support pupils to identify when they have made mistakes and have misconceptions.

The wider curriculum is well planned for pupils to build their knowledge and skills progressively. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities learn alongside their peers with learning adapted as appropriate. However, assessment in these subjects is not always effective. This means that feedback to pupils does not always support pupils to address misconceptions swiftly. At times, teachers do not use assessment information to adapt learning effectively. This means that some pupils complete work that is not ambitious enough.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

School leaders have reasserted their commitment to supporting disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Systems to identify pupils' needs have been refined to ensure that pupils who need support are quickly identified. Staff provide support that is increasingly well targeted to pupils' needs. Support is structured so that targets are manageable and appropriate for pupils. Leaders review targets and monitor support regularly to check its impact on pupils' development. This ensures the support pupils receive is adjusted to meet their needs.

Leaders work with external specialist agencies to make sure the provision for pupils with SEND is appropriate. Staff have professional development opportunities that reflect the needs of the pupils they support. As a result, support for pupils with SEND is increasingly well targeted and effective.

Pupils eligible for the pupil premium remain a priority for school leaders and staff. The school prioritises reading support for these pupils and provides additional pastoral support. As a result, these pupils achieve well by the time they leave West Hill Primary School.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

The school has recently experienced turbulence in leadership and governance. There has been a change in headteacher, and the local authority has implemented an interim executive board (IEB) to temporarily replace the local governing board. The new school leadership, along with the IEB, has quickly and effectively stabilised the school, ensured that policies and processes are in place to reflect statutory requirements and to ensure all pupils are safe. Communication with the local community has improved, and as a result, parents and carers are highly supportive of leaders' recent actions. Staff feel well supported and appreciate how recent changes have reduced workload and increased the opportunity for professional development.

School leaders and the IEB are committed to the school and are highly aspirational for what pupils can achieve. They have correctly identified the areas that need further improvement. While some improvement work is more recent than other developments, leaders' actions are having a positive impact on pupils' experiences across the school.

The IEB provides the school with expertise and experience in governance. It provides a balance of support, challenge and guidance for leaders. Leaders' work with other schools is also supporting the school and the staff to develop an open and reflective culture where

decisions are made in the best interest of the pupils and the community. This includes enhancing the school's support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Recently, leaders have reviewed the provision for personal development and wellbeing. The school meets its statutory requirements for relationships, sex and health education. This means the provision for personal development and wellbeing is appropriate and extends across the taught curriculum.

Pupils learn fundamental British values. Pupils' participation in the school council also helps them to develop an understanding of democracy and fairness. Pupils learn about different religions and cultures, although their recall of some of the important information linked to these areas is limited at times. However, pupils consistently show a deep level of respect for those who lead different lives than their own.

Pupils learn how to stay safe online and in the local community. For example, ahead of the traditional village bonfire night when flaming barrels of tar are rolled through the streets, pupils learn how to keep safe so that they can enjoy the occasion. In addition, pupils learn beach safety from lifeguard visitors to the school. In preparation for life beyond school, pupils learn the importance of financial budgeting, as well as understanding what healthy and unhealthy relationships look like.

Pupils appreciate the wide range of trips and experiences they have. For example, during mental health awareness week, pupils enjoy learning new skills in a circus skills workshop. Extra-curricular activities, including model building, choir, crochet and bead-making club, help pupils to learn and develop new skills and talents. Residential trips to outdoor education centres, where pupils experience rock climbing and learn to abseil, help pupils to develop independence and confidence. Pupils deepen their understanding of topics such as Egypt and Tutankhamun through trips to museums, linked to their learning in history.

Needs attention

Early years

Needs attention 

While children achieve well by the time they leave Reception Year, school leaders have taken strategic steps to improve the quality of the provision in the early years. This includes the appointment of new staff. However, it is very early days and the quality of education in the early years needs further development.

Learning in the early years does not always take into account children's starting points or gaps they have in their knowledge. For example, when writing, children continue in their learning by reversing numbers and letters without this being swiftly addressed. Furthermore, activities in the continuous provision sometimes lack ambition and do not reflect what children are able to do.

Children in the early years are happy and play well together. There is a well-developed culture of children developing a love of reading from an early age. Staff skilfully read a wide range of books, which are known to children, in a way that captures their imagination. This is reflected in how well children listen to books that are read to them. Children excitedly and enthusiastically repeat phrases and words from the story, which helps children to develop their vocabulary. Staff also support children to use whole sentences when responding to questions.

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

Pupils, staff, parents and carers are proud of their school, which sits at the heart of the village. The school is calm, and pupils are warmly welcomed by staff each morning. Pupils are consistently polite and behave well. They enjoy coming to school, which is reflected in high rates of attendance. Pupils show care and warmth towards their friends. They are also respectful towards staff. Pupils are safe and say they feel safe. They do not experience bullying but know that staff will support them if they have any concerns.

By the time pupils leave West Hill Primary School, most are ready for the next stage of their education. This includes those who are disadvantaged or those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, there is variability in the quality of education in the early years. This means that some children continue with gaps in important knowledge, while other children are not appropriately challenged. New school leaders have already implemented a series of changes to improve the provision for pupils. However, in the early years, these changes are still in their infancy.

Older pupils feel a deep sense of responsibility and see themselves as role models for younger children. They also appreciate their roles of responsibility as librarians, house captains and sports leaders. Pupils enjoy the range of trips available to them. Visits to the zoo and wildlife sanctuaries help pupils to develop an appreciation of the natural world. Pupils also value the opportunity to learn a wide range of musical instruments.

Visitors to the school, who include the navy, authors and lifeguards, help pupils to develop an understanding of different careers available to them.

Next steps

- Leaders should develop the quality of education and provision in the early years, including making sure that staff design activities that build on what pupils already know.
- Leaders should ensure that teachers use assessment accurately to identify misconceptions and adapt learning so that all pupils develop deep knowledge across the curriculum and achieve more highly across all subjects.
- Leaders should strengthen writing across the curriculum by ensuring consistent expectations for the accuracy of spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Leaders should strengthen pupils' understanding of fundamental British values, the protected characteristics and different faiths to ensure that pupils are very well prepared

for life beyond school.

About this inspection

Since September 2025, the school has had an acting headteacher.

The chair of the interim executive board is Iain Grafton.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the acting headteacher, subject leaders, the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator team and the chair of the interim executive board.

The inspectors gathered parents' views by considering the responses to Ofsted Parent View and by talking with parents and carers. The inspectors also reviewed responses to Ofsted's online staff and pupil surveys.

The school currently does not make use of alternative provision.

Acting headteacher: Rob Pantling

Lead inspector:

James Gentile, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Matthew Shirley, Ofsted Inspector

Anna Mills, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 21 April 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

203

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 272

School capacity

218

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

2.46%

Well below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 26.3%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

1.97%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

6.40%

Well below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Well below average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	85%	61%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	91%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	90%	61%	Above

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2022/23 (final)	73%	60%	Above

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	95%	74%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	100%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	97%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	87%	73%	Above

Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	90%	72%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	91%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	97%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	83%	71%	Above

Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	90%	73%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	97%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	90%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	83%	73%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average		46%	
2024/25		47%	
2023/24 (final)	S	46%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	44%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average		62%	
2024/25		63%	

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	S	62%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	60%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average		59%	
2024/25		59%	
2023/24 (final)	S	58%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	58%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average		60%	
2024/25		61%	
2023/24 (final)	S	59%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	59%	S

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average		68%	
2024/25		69%	
2023/24 (final)	S	67%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	66%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average		80%	
2024/25		81%	
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	78%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average		78%	
2024/25		78%	
2023/24 (final)	S	78%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	77%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average		80%	
2024/25		81%	
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	79%	S

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	3.4%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	3.9%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	3.9%	5.9%	Below

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	5.6%	13.3%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	6.1%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	4.9%	16.2%	Below

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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