

# Holme Slack Community Primary School

Manor House Lane, Preston, Lancashire PR1 6HP

**Inspection dates** 24–25 November 2015

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The headteacher, governors and staff have significantly improved the school since the last inspection. They have driven forward improvements in teaching and outcomes for all pupils.
- Governors are knowledgeable about the school, hold senior leaders to account and are proactively involved in checking improvements.
- The strong teaching team and middle leaders know the school well and have established a firm basis from which to build further improvements.
- Pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs thrive as a result of the effective teaching and support they receive.
- All pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs, make at least good progress from starting points which are typically below those found for their age.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare are strengths of the school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is central to all that the school does.
- The quality of the learning environment, activities provided and teaching in early years is good. Strong relationships between staff, children and parents enable children to settle quickly. Children have a good attitude to learning and, as a result, they achieve well.
- The quality of teaching and learning has improved and is now consistently good or better. Pupils work hard in lessons because learning is engaging and interesting.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Despite good progress, some pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils, continue to have gaps in attainment in reading, writing and mathematics, by the end of Key Stage 1.
- Some potentially high-attaining pupils are not identified soon enough to ensure their needs are always fully met.
- Pupils' handwriting is not well developed.
- A few pupils arrive late to school because leaders do not insist enough on punctuality.
- The school does not successfully engage all parents of pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 in their children's learning.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in Key Stage 1, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.
- Identify those pupils who have the potential to be higher achievers at an early stage and ensure that they are always challenged and extended well.
- Improve the handwriting of pupils across the school by having clear expectations that are rigorously adhered to.
- Improve punctuality to school by registering pupils promptly after school has started so that no learning time is lost.
- Build on the school's successful practice for working with parents of children in Reception and those pupils with special educational needs to develop a greater range of ways to involve parents of older pupils in their learning.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The school has improved significantly since the last inspection. The headteacher has played an instrumental part in turning the school around through her hard work and persistence. Together with the governing body and staff of the school, weaknesses have been addressed and pupils are thriving.
- There is a clear sense of direction from the senior leadership team and an ambition to continually improve so that every pupil can achieve their best.
- The school is a welcoming, affirming place because of the positive relationships that run through the whole school between adults and pupils and pupils with each other.
- The leadership team's judgements on the quality of teaching, planning and the learning environment are accurate and leaders offer a good level of feedback to staff to ensure further improvement. Leaders regularly check lessons and review pupils' progress in their books.
- School improvement planning has improved and senior and curriculum leaders' action plans are detailed. However, the school has recognised that some plans cover too many areas for improvement and need to be further refined so that the main areas for focused improvement are more precise.
- The new curriculum leaders are enthusiastic and knowledgeable and are already making an important contribution towards improving in the school.
- The headteacher and governing body have addressed weak and inconsistent teaching robustly and have made good teaching appointments to school. Teachers are highly reflective about their practice and consistently deliver a good or better quality of teaching and learning across the school.
- The school includes specialist provision for pupils who have a hearing impairment. This area is well managed and is a strength, as is the support for pupils who have special educational needs and emotional or social needs. As a result of the good leadership in this area, pupils thrive.
- The school has a rich curriculum that engages pupils and contributes to their enjoyment of learning. Pupils are taught about being good citizens directly and through many other opportunities in the curriculum, and this prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. British values of tolerance, respect and democracy are demonstrated in lessons and in the way pupils and adults behave with each other. The diverse abilities and skills of pupils are celebrated, promoting equality as a central value in school: for example, a 'signing' assembly encourages all pupils to sign and sing. As a result, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is central to all that the school does, whether this be in class or around school, and is promoted and modelled by both staff and pupils equally.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively. Disadvantaged pupils are supported well, both personally and academically, enabling them to be successful and take part in everything the school offers.
- The physical education (PE) and sport premium is used well. Pupils take part in a wide range of sporting activities both after school and at lunchtimes. There are also opportunities for pupils to be involved in sports competition with other local schools. Sports coaches visit school regularly to offer activities, and staff training in PE has supported their continuing development.
- The local authority has provided support for the headteacher and teaching staff and has contributed to increasing the effectiveness of the governing body. Recently their involvement has reduced to reflect the school's improvements and increased confidence among leaders to tackle any remaining weaknesses.
- **The governance of the school**
  - Since the last inspection the governing body has transformed itself. Governors have completed and acted on an audit of their work, which has resulted in their rethinking their committees and structures so that they now focus on the close monitoring of school improvement.
  - Governors have a good level of understanding about the progress pupils are making and need to make. This enables them to challenge senior leaders well to drive forward further improvements.
  - Governors are hungry to continue to improve the school. They recognise the need to engage more parents in Key Stages 1 and 2 in their children's learning.
  - Governors have a good understanding of performance management procedures and together with the headteacher have appointed a strong staff team. As well as holding teachers and leaders to account, they ensure that the management of teachers' pay is effective and, if appropriate, they are suitably rewarded. They check to ensure that the pupil premium and the PE and sports grants are spent effectively and have impact.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- The quality of teaching and learning has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now consistently good or better. Teachers and teaching assistants are positive, upbeat and friendly in lessons: this creates a good environment for learning. Positive relationships, coupled with good resources, capture pupils' interest.
- Teachers use their good knowledge of pupils to plan lessons very effectively. They generally match activities well to the different abilities and needs of the pupils that there are in the class, and often plan specifically for individual pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language.
- Teachers give every opportunity for pupils to learn new skills, practise ones they are still learning, and challenge and deepen the understanding of those who are most able.
- Where pupils are struggling with their learning, teachers and school leaders have a highly effective range of learning activities to help them catch up. As a result, pupils at all levels of ability make progress. However, a small number of pupils are not consistently being identified as having the potential to be most able and, for these pupils, more could be done to accelerate their progress.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and make regular reference to past learning both within lessons and over time. There is an insistence by all staff that pupils use the correct vocabulary in lessons and in most lessons teachers use questioning well to challenge pupils' learning.
- For those pupils who are disabled, including those who are hearing impaired and those with other special educational needs, the support they are offered is thorough, of a high quality and a strength of the school. Pupils are identified quickly and their needs planned for robustly resulting in their making good progress in lessons and in their personal and social development.
- Teaching assistants across the school are deployed effectively and make a significant contribution to the progress of the pupils with whom they work.
- The school's policy for marking is consistent across the school. Pupils have the opportunity to find out what they have done well and what they could do to improve further. Marking also offers pupils opportunities to learn from their mistakes by giving extra challenges.
- Reading and phonics (letters and the sounds they make) are taught well in school. However, handwriting is not developed as well because it is inconsistently taught through school. Many pupils are not learning to join up their writing until they are in Year 5, resulting in weaknesses in their written presentation and quantity of writing.
- The curriculum is well planned. Teachers plan good opportunities for pupils to develop reading, including phonics, writing and mathematics, as well as to master concepts in different subjects.
- Parents say they value the information given to them about how their children are improving and their next steps in learning. There is a strong relationship between school and parents who have children with special educational needs but through Key Stages 1 and 2 parents of other children are sometimes less involved with their learning.
- Teachers and teaching assistants promote and model high standards in spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Opportunities for developing awareness and skill in pupils is woven into lessons across the curriculum.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good and is a strength.
- Pupils develop good personal and social skills because all staff consistently show them how to develop positive, respectful relationships.
- All staff treat pupils equally and ensure that the school makes them feel welcomed and valued.
- Those pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs benefit from teaching which is carefully planned to support their progress.
- Pupils who have a hearing impairment are extremely well cared for, participate fully in all that school has to offer and as a result flourish.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and know how to stay safe, including when they are online. They are proud of their school and take pride in their work.

- Pupils enjoy school and show respect for each other and their differences. They form strong relationships with each other that are caring and compassionate. The older pupils enjoy reading with younger pupils. This works particularly well for boys who are seen as role models by the younger pupils. Lunchtime buddies thoughtfully assist younger pupils to eat their lunch.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. There have been significant improvements in pupils' behaviour since the last inspection and as a result school is a different place: it is a calm and purposeful environment for pupils to learn.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning in class are very positive. Pupils listen carefully to instructions and respond quickly.
- Pupils who have behavioural needs are well supported to ensure that their behaviour does not get in the way of their learning and does not disrupt others' learning. Pupils say there are a few incidents of inappropriate behaviour in school occasionally but these are now rare and dealt with quickly by teachers.
- Pupils' attendance has improved and is close to the national average. The number of pupils who are persistently absent is reducing.
- Systems for tackling poor attendance are strong and effective. A number of pupils who previously had low attendance and high persistent absence now have attendance of over 90%.
- The amount of time that pupils are allowed before they are marked as late in the register is too long, resulting in a lax attitude to coming to school on time for some pupils.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

### **are good**

- The strong improvements in progress at the end of Key Stage 2 have resulted in most pupils making expected progress and many making more progress than pupils of a similar age in reading, writing and mathematics. This is often from starting points that are below and, in some cases, significantly below other pupils of a similar age.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to support disadvantaged pupils. As a result they make good or better progress through school. In most year groups in reading, writing and mathematics, the progress pupils make is typically in line with or above other pupils in school and nationally. This is because the school very effectively monitors the progress of this group of pupils and ensures that they are supported well in class to improve.
- Disabled pupils, particularly pupils who are hearing impaired and those with special educational needs, make good progress from their starting points. Teachers and teaching assistants provide very effective support to ensure that pupils have the appropriate resources to help their learning. Work in pupils' books shows good progress over time.
- By the end of Year 6, the proportion of pupils attaining Level 4 and Level 5 is in line with that expected of pupils of a similar age. However, this is not the case at the end of Year 2. Although there have been improvements in attainment, not enough pupils are reaching the levels expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils do not attain as well as their peers. As a result, some pupils move into Year 3 needing to catch up quickly. This is because they are new to school in Year 1 or Year 2 and many have very low starting points.
- The proportion of most-able pupils making expected or above expected progress is increasing but there are some pupils who have the potential to be higher achievers who do not always accelerate their progress. This is because monitoring systems in the school are not yet precise enough to identify these pupils and plan for their learning effectively.
- The proportion of pupils passing the national phonics check fell significantly in 2015; however, pupils in this cohort joined the school with particularly weak skills in literacy. Phonics is generally well taught in school and, if needed, pupils have opportunities to catch up or practise further their phonics skills in Key Stage 2.
- Pupils enjoy reading and have lots of opportunities to read in school. In all year groups, time is dedicated to allow pupils to read. Reading is seen as very important in school; pupils read with adults regularly and have reading areas and reading booths in each classroom.
- Pupils enjoy school and feel very positive about their teachers and their learning. They say they work hard and know how to make progress in their learning.

## Early years provision

is good

- Many children start Reception with skills and knowledge typically below what would be expected for their age, and often significantly below. Children in the current Reception class have particularly weak mathematical skills. Many children have limited communication skills and some speak English as an additional language. A significant proportion of children in Reception are disadvantaged or have identified special educational needs.
- The proportion of children who reached a good level of development at the end of Reception in 2015 was low. However, from their starting points, children made at least good progress and this picture continues. Teachers' assessments and tracking of children's learning is of a high quality and activities are closely matched to their needs. This allows them to catch up as quickly as they can. Children are presently on track to meet challenging targets that have been set for the end of Reception this year and, if met, will again represent good or better progress.
- Safeguarding is effective and the classroom is a safe environment for children.
- The new leadership of early years provision is clear about the strengths and weaknesses of provision and, along with the senior leadership team and her staff team, has plans to enhance early years provision further to maximise the tight space they presently have.
- The quality of teaching is good, there are high expectations and sessions are well prepared with stimulating activities tightly matched to the wide range of abilities in class.
- All curriculum areas are planned for in detail and provision is well resourced and stimulating. Children are motivated and talked knowledgably to inspectors about their topic on penguins. Topics are woven in to phonics work and developing communication skills so that these can be constantly referred to.
- There is a clear emphasis on creating a caring and nurturing environment, which is evident from the very positive relationships adults have with children and children have with each other. For example, when coming in to school and seeing each other for the first time in the morning, many of the children give each other a spontaneous hug.
- Children's behaviour is good and they have a keen attitude to learning. There are well-established routines that help children settle quickly. Sometimes children struggle to stay on task when they are working on activities by themselves and, therefore, can distract others. However, the staff are well aware of this and are working hard to build up children's skills in this area.
- There are very positive relationships between all parents and Reception staff. Parents feel well supported by staff who will, if asked, give advice and guidance on home issues as well as learning. In turn, staff have a greater understanding of children's interests and achievements at home.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	119234
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10002250

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	182
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Keith Manogue
<b>Headteacher/Principal/Teacher in charge</b>	Michelle Peck
<b>Telephone number</b>	01772 795257
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.holmeslackprimary.co.uk">www.holmeslackprimary.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:head@holmeslack.lancs.sch.uk">head@holmeslack.lancs.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	8–9 October 2013

## Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is just below the national average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs is twice the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and supported by the pupil premium is twice the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school has a specialist resource base for children with hearing impairments.
- Since the last inspection the school has restructured staffing, recruited a number of staff, including teachers, a learning mentor and teaching assistants, and set up an inclusion team.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons in all classes and in a range of subjects. Inspectors also visited an assembly and listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms and assessed the school's promotion of social moral, spiritual and cultural development. Inspectors observed pupils in the playground and during lunchtimes.
- Inspectors looked at work in pupils' books and in the learning journals of pupils in the early years.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and special educational needs coordinator, curriculum leaders and teachers.
- An inspector met with four members of the governing body, including the Chair of the Governing Body. A meeting was also held with two school advisers representing the local authority.
- A group of pupils discussed their opinions about the school and their learning with inspectors. Inspectors also spoke informally with pupils in the playground.
- The inspectors took account of 13 staff questionnaires. There were three responses to Ofsted's online parent survey (Parent View) and these were considered. Inspectors also took account of a recent parent survey completed by the school.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including minutes from meetings of the governing body, information on pupils' outcomes, the school's evaluation of its own performance and its development plan. Behaviour and attendance records and information relating to safeguarding were also scrutinised.

## Inspection team

Sue Eastwood, lead inspector

Adrian Francis

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector



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