

Holmgate Primary School and Nursery

Holmgate Road, Clay Cross, Chesterfield, Derbyshire S45 9QD

Inspection dates	17–18 May 2016
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 senior leaders and the governing board work effectively together to make the school an inclusive environment for the pupils and to bring about demonstrable improvements in the school's work.
- The early years provision is vibrant and stimulating. The achievement of the children is now above average, as a result of some rapidly implemented changes.
- More often than not, the teaching involves well-chosen topics and activities that manifestly generate enthusiasm and even fire excitement in the pupils, including in the early years.
- As a result, and when combined with the school's commitment to the care and welfare of the pupils, the pupils develop positive attitudes to school and to life in general.
- Overall, the pupils make steady and progressive gains in their learning. Their attainment by the end of key stage 1 has improved markedly since the last inspection and is now broadly average, as it is by the end of key stage 2.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The teaching does not enable the pupils consistently to make fully the progress of which they are capable, including in the early years and for the most-able pupils.
- Disadvantaged pupils still do less well than others.
- Senior leaders' and the governing board's evaluations of the school's work are not searching and exacting enough.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils, though broadly effective, is not planned coherently.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it has a consistently good impact on the progress of the pupils, including in the early years, by:
 - making sure that teachers and teaching assistants identify quickly times when the pupils have stopped concentrating or their progress has declined, and then prompt and question the pupils effectively in order to extend their learning
 - making sure that the most-able pupils get work that is sufficiently, but not too, challenging
 - enabling subject leaders to spread the most effective practice evident at the school, so that the practice is used more consistently.
- Remove the remaining differences between the achievement of different groups of pupils at the school, particularly those eligible for the pupil premium and the most able, by evaluating the impact of all aspects of the schools work incisively, including:
 - the decisions made about using additional funding
 - the methods used to provide extra support to pupils who may need it
 - the work to encourage good attendance and behaviour of the pupils.
- Develop a fully coherent and strategic approach to the spiritual, social, moral and cultural development of the pupils and for the promotion of fundamental British values.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher and senior leaders have a steady, carefully considered and sure-footed approach to improving the school.
- Along with the governing board, they have set a sensible number of appropriate priorities for improving the school and worked on them methodically, to good effect. Quite simply, they just get on with the job.
- They have not resolved every aspect of the school that needs improving, but are well informed about what has improved and are clear-sighted in their plans for dealing with what still needs to be improved. They listen to and act upon advice, both from the local authority and in response to inspection findings, and then set about making the required improvements. The remaining issues for the school are matters of honing and refining practice, rather than needing to put in place fundamentals.
- The senior leaders have put in place a systematic approach to managing the performance of the staff. It draws upon a calendar of activities that provide senior leaders with information about centrally important aspects of the staff's work. It leads to opportunities for staff training and development that have supported the improvements made at the school, for example in the teaching of mathematics.
- The provision for pupils who have special educational needs or disability is led well. The leader takes a strategic and coherent approach to tracking the pupils' progress and, as a result, has been able to communicate high expectations for the pupils and to organise training for the staff, so that they are able to meet those expectations. The leader makes good connections between the pupils' special educational needs and the needs that may result from them being disadvantaged, so that funding from the pupil premium can be put to better effect than might be the case otherwise.
- The impact of different leaders and managers varies. Currently, subject leaders have not been enabled to have enough impact on improving the quality of teaching and assessment. They do not, for example, spread systematically among the staff the good practice that is evident at the school.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and augmented by several clubs and after-school activities. Senior leaders monitor the teachers' planning and ensure appropriate coverage of a good range of subjects, including, for example, music, physical education (PE) and religious education.
- The senior leaders have paid careful attention to providing disadvantaged pupils with additional opportunities, with the result that these pupils feel included fully at the school. The pupils are able to take on significant roles, such as being house captains, which they see as making an important contribution to the good behaviour at the school. They pick out the homework club as being helpful and can talk about occasions when they have been pushed by their teachers to do more difficult work, particularly in literacy and science.
- The school provides numerous experiences that have a positive impact on the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, but senior leaders have not ensured that there is a carefully planned, strategic approach, based on clear evaluation of the impact of the work.
- Similarly, the school's approach to promoting fundamental British values is at a very early stage of development. That means, for example, that it does not yet understand the sorts of approaches and activities that are likely to be most relevant to children in the early years.
- As a result, senior leaders are unable to determine with clarity the impact of this aspect of the curriculum on the pupils, or to establish whether there are learning needs for particular individuals, or groups of pupils, and to respond accordingly.
- The senior leaders work well with the local authority. The local authority has, appropriately, ensured a level of support for the school beyond the basic. That has contributed to improvements in the work of senior leaders to monitor what is happening and to the significant improvements in the early years provision.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The governing board understands its role well. It provides a suitable level of challenge and support to the senior leaders, asking pertinent questions that help to keep the school on track and improving.
 - The governing board ensures that the school spends external funding, such as the pupil premium and the primary PE and sports premium, on appropriate things.
 - The senior leaders and the governing board's evaluations of the impact of how it has used external funding are not incisive enough. They are not sufficiently clear about which actions have had the most impact for the pupils and which may need to be abandoned.

- Also, the school’s comparisons of how well different groups of pupils are doing leave out some groups, such as the most-able pupils, and do not routinely use the most exacting benchmarks to test out how well the school is doing. For example, senior leaders are fully alert to and report openly to the governing board about how the progress of disadvantaged pupils compares with the averages for the pupils’ classes and the school as a whole, but the comments in the school’s published report on its use of the pupil premium do not show how those pupils’ progress compares with the progress of pupils who are not disadvantaged.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The senior leaders have made it a cornerstone of the school’s ethos to nurture the pupils, which has been an important factor in the pupils feeling safe and happy at the school and in developing the confidence that the pupils have that the staff are there to help them. The staff are trained regularly and, as a result, are aware of the broad range of potential concerns and signs to look out for, including matters such as the possible radicalisation of pupils. They understand and operate the school’s policies for recording and reporting concerns. Records are kept up to date and the school works well with a broad range of external agencies, augmented by the central role of the school’s pastoral manager, for the benefit of the pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- The teachers have good subject knowledge and use it often to devise lessons and tasks designed to provide a ‘wow’ factor for the pupils. This results in positive attitudes to learning being demonstrated by the pupils. For example, the pupils revelled in working outdoors to investigate the properties of vortices, linked to a topic about climate change. They did not find it easy to use the equipment provided for them to generate the vortices, which led to some animated discussions about the problems.
- Regular and frequent sessions are devoted to reading. The pupils who have special educational needs or disability and disadvantaged pupils are given effective additional support, which also increases their enjoyment of reading.
- The pupils acquire effective strategies to help them to read, though sometimes they rush and do not quite get a word right. In key stage 1, the teachers use well-worked-out and effective approaches to teaching phonics, based upon careful, close and accurate assessments of the pupils’ skills, and the pupils become fluent in using the appropriate terms.
- The pupils are taught effective strategies for carrying out mathematical calculations also. The work that they are given provides good opportunities to develop problem-solving and reasoning skills, and the teachers make good use of suitable apparatus to help the pupils to understand things like place value and to use mathematical skills and knowledge in different contexts.
- In the most effective examples of teaching found by the inspectors:
 - the teachers and teaching assistants questioned the pupils skilfully, prompting the pupils to reflect, listening astutely to their responses and identifying where the pupils had misunderstood, so that the pupils’ learning was solidified
 - well-timed interventions by the staff led to revisions in the tasks set for the pupils, which prevented the pupils’ learning from stalling
 - pupils who have special educational needs or disability were included well in lessons and received effective additional support, including from teaching assistants
 - carefully thought-out verbal and written feedback to the pupils resulted in clear improvements in the pupils’ knowledge, skills and understanding; the pupils understand well how the ‘block tasks’ help them to correct, or to improve, a piece of work, while the ‘bubbles’ help them to be clear about what in particular they have done well.
- The inspectors’ scrutiny of the pupils’ work, their observations in lessons and the evidence from the pupils revealed that this best practice has not been spread evenly across different subjects and all lessons.
- The teachers and teaching assistants do not always identify quickly enough times when the pupils have stopped working or when the pupils’ progress has slowed. On those occasions, they do not recognise the reasons why the pupils are not concentrating on the tasks, or use suitable questions or other prompts to push the pupils to learn more, including in the early years.
- Too often, the most-able pupils are given work that is set at a level similar to that for other pupils and which does not, therefore, give them enough of a challenge. Even when they are given extra tasks, as they are routinely once they have completed their other work, the tasks are sometimes still too easy for them and occasionally too difficult.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. As a result, the pupils feel safe and happy at the school. 'Bubble time' is important to them and a notable example of how individual pupils are able to get personal support if they have worries or are upset.
- The school's commitment to inclusion is evident in the daily life of the school. The pupils nurture each other. They are tolerant and accepting of the differences between people.
- The school provides a good range of opportunities for the pupils to fulfil particular roles, such as acting as friendship buddies, and the pupils develop a good sense of responsibility towards the school community as a result. For example, they gain a good understanding of what is and what is not appropriate behaviour and will often correct themselves, or others, when they begin to stray from what is acceptable, such as when rushing down stairwells or along corridors in their eagerness to get to and from lessons.
- Healthy eating is promoted well. Special events, such as 'Change for Life', have had a positive effect on the pupils, including pupils who have special educational needs or disability, who remembered and were able to tell the inspectors about what they had learned.
- The pupils gain a good understanding about staying safe online and when using social media. The school's e-Safety Day contributes significantly to their awareness and was recently particularly helpful to them in knowing how to deal with 'nasty messages'. The learning is reinforced well in lessons, as, for example, when Year 6 pupils were observed being very reflective, mature and responsive in a lesson about the dangers of 'sexting'.
- The pupils' attendance is broadly average. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils, however, remains below that of others.
- The staff follow the school's procedures for safeguarding the pupils.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They respond well to instructions from the staff and good manners are encouraged successfully.
- Instances of serious misbehaviour and of bullying are rare. Exclusions are low and, in the few instances of bullying that have occurred, the school has gone to considerable lengths to resolve issues, such that the pupils state quite emphatically that bullying does not reoccur.
- Much of the misbehaviour that does occur concerns squabbles between some pupils, which sometimes escalate when individuals lose their temper. Usually, matters are resolved successfully, sometimes, with pupils who experience more difficulty than others in dealing with their emotions, through the good offices of the school's pastoral manager.
- The inspectors found little evidence of disruptions to lessons, however, even on occasions when the pupils were kicking their heels because the work had not grabbed their attention or the staff had not spotted that the pace of learning had slowed. The pupils were particularly good at rejoining lessons after having been out of the classroom – at the Forest School, for example – or after having been given some additional support, doing so quietly and getting on with the next task quickly.
- Sometimes, the teachers' biggest problem is controlling the pupils' enthusiasm for a topic or task so that it does not get in the way of the progress of a lesson.
- The pupils report that they rarely hear racist language being used but, occasionally, homophobic terms are used. The pupils know well that this is wrong. The senior leaders are aware of it and have taken direct action, working with the Stonewall charity, to devise better ways to deal with the matter.
- The senior leaders do not analyse the detailed information that they have about the pupils' behaviour carefully enough. As a result, they are unable to show that the school's work to improve behaviour is reducing, for example, the number of instances when squabbles between pupils escalate into more bad-tempered incidents.

Outcomes for pupils are good

- Typically, the pupils make reasonable, though not exceptional, progress. They reach broadly average standards by the time that they leave the school.
- They make better progress in mathematics than in other subjects, but the differences are not marked.

- Overall, the pupils are set relevant and reasonably challenging targets. The pupils at the school currently are making better progress than expected in all year groups. The work in the pupils' books shows that those improved rates of progress are being maintained.
- Currently, the progress of disadvantaged pupils is closer to that of others than it has been in the past; they still lag a little behind, though not uniformly in all subjects or year groups. The difference between those groups is reducing steadily.
- Historically, pupils who have special educational needs or disability have made less progress than their peers. The school has made significant improvements to its provision for these pupils. As a result, currently they are making similar progress to other pupils at the school.
- The school has not ignored the needs of the most-able pupils. For example, it has worked successfully and increased significantly the proportion of pupils reaching high levels by the end of key stage 1, so that there is now a more secure basis from which to work in key stage 2. Nevertheless, the most-able pupils do not make as much progress through the school as they could, because they are still not given work that provides them with a consistent level of challenge.

Early years provision

is good

- The leaders have made significant changes and improvements to the provision rapidly. The early years setting is now a busy and vibrant place for learning, particularly the outdoor facilities.
- The children make solid gains in their learning, due to the stimulating tasks that they are given and to the fact that they stick at what they are doing. From being a little below average on entry to the early years, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development is now above average.
- The children's learning and progress are monitored closely. As a result, the staff are well aware of the needs of the children, particularly those who have special educational needs or disability and disadvantaged children. The proportion of disadvantaged children reaching a good level of development by the end of the early years remains, nevertheless, noticeably lower than for other children.
- The early years leader has put in place simple, but effective ways to enable parents to contribute to the assessment of the children's learning. For example, parents are encouraged to – and many do – record 'wow moments' on paper 'leaves' and to add the 'leaves' to a display in the classroom. The staff are able then to collect and take into account the parents' comments very easily, helping them to devise learning opportunities suited more closely to the children's needs than would be the case otherwise.
- The children develop positive attitudes to learning and immerse themselves in the tasks that they are given. They behave well and form good relationships with each other and with the staff. Along with the increasing proportion reaching a good level of development, that means that they are well prepared to enter key stage 1.
- The children are encouraged to explore their environment, helped to assess risks and so to keep themselves safe. As a result, they feel safe and behave sensibly.
- The curriculum is well constructed so that the children get good opportunities covering all aspects of learning.
- The teachers and other adults do not always question the children enough when the children are involved in activities, or think of suitable prompts and ways to extend the children's learning. This means that the children do not make as much progress in some lessons as they could.

School details

Unique reference number	112530
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10009121

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	217
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Kinsell
Headteacher	Ian Robson
Telephone number	01246 862270
Website	www.holmgateprimaryandnurseryschool.createprimary.co.uk
Email address	enquiries@holmgate.derbyshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	4–5 March 2014

Information about this school

- The school is a little smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is average.
- There have been major changes in senior leadership since the previous inspection.
- The school meets the current government floor standards.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed lessons in all phases of the school and in all classes, accompanied sometimes by senior leaders. They also scrutinised examples of the pupils' work.
- The inspectors held meetings with leaders and managers, governors and with other members of staff.
- They spoke with pupils in groups, in lessons and around the school.
- They looked at the results of questionnaires completed by the staff.
- The inspectors checked the 25 responses on Parent View and spoke with parents. They looked also at 60 questionnaires completed recently by parents for the school.
- The inspection team looked at a range of documentation, including the school's development plan and self-evaluation, policies and records relating to safeguarding, records relating to the pupils' behaviour, the school's information about the pupils' achievement and attendance, and records of the activities of the governing board.

Inspection team

Clive Moss, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Emma Nuttall

Her Majesty's Inspector

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