

Holmeswood Methodist School

Chapel Lane, Holmeswood, Nr Rufford, Ormskirk, Lancashire L40 1UD

Inspection dates

10–11 January 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- This very small school is well led and managed. The headteacher has high expectations for pupils and staff. Everyone is encouraged to do his or her very best.
- Pupils benefit from an engaging and stimulating curriculum. This helps to ensure that pupils from all groups, including those who are disadvantaged and those who have special educational need and/or disabilities, make good progress in a wide range of subjects across the curriculum.
- At present, outcomes are stronger in reading and mathematics than in writing. On occasions, pupils are not challenged to reach the higher levels in writing, notably the most able pupils.
- Learning at Holmeswood Methodist School is fun. Teachers' good subject knowledge and effective questioning help to drive forward pupils' learning.
- Pupils come into school each morning with a smile on their face and a spring in their step. They feel very safe and thoroughly enjoy their learning.
- Behaviour around the school is impeccable. Pupils are very proud of their school and typically commented that 'this school could not be any better'.
- Most parents are overwhelmingly supportive of all aspects of the school's work. Typical comments include: 'we are so grateful for having such a fabulous small school' where pupils 'grow up to be respectful young people, full of confidence and care for each other'. However, there are a few parents who do not engage with the school.
- Pupils are treated as unique individuals. Due to the small numbers in each year group, staff know each individual child, their likes and capabilities well.
- Teaching assistants are highly skilled and a valuable asset to the school. However, at times, in the infant class they are not deployed effectively.
- Children in the early years settle quickly at school and make good progress from their different starting points.
- Governors are supportive of the school and know it well. However, the school website does not contain all the information that it should.
- Although the headteacher keeps a close eye on the quality of teaching, the feedback to help teachers improve their practice further is not as detailed as it could be.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that pupils who learn more quickly are consistently challenged to reach the higher standards in writing.
- Review the deployment of teaching assistants in the infant class to ensure that they take a more active part in pupils' learning at the beginning of the session.
- Ensure that written feedback to teachers after formal lesson observations is more sharply focused on the progress that different groups of pupils are making.
- Explore ways of ensuring that a greater number of parents take a more active part in their children's learning.
- Ensure that the website is compliant and is checked regularly by governors to ensure that it remains so.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher shows a sheer determination to provide the best possible education for pupils at Holmeswood Methodist Primary School. The school motto of 'Growing Together, Aim High, Believe, Achieve' underpins the school's work.
- The headteacher is ably supported by a talented team of teachers and teaching assistants. Staff are proud to work at the school and hold the headteacher in high regard. They work well as a team and feel well supported and valued by the headteacher.
- The headteacher is clear-sighted about the school's performance and what areas can be further improved. Based on accurate self-analysis, their plans for future improvements are robust and accurate.
- Regular checks are made on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. This is done through formal observations, learning walks, planning reviews and scrutiny of pupils' work. Teachers find written feedback from formal observation helpful and constructive. However, feedback given is not sharply focused on the progress that different groups of pupils are making.
- There is a strong commitment to on-going professional development which is open to all staff in the school. Teachers also have opportunities to observe best practice within the school and at other schools within the locality.
- Careful consideration is given as to how the sport premium funding is spent. Specialist sports coaches enhance the teaching of physical education, thereby supporting teachers in developing their skills. Resources have also been purchased to further enhance the provision available. Pupils now take part in more inter-school competitive sports, such as cross country running, bench ball and athletics which helps them to develop a healthier lifestyle.
- Senior leaders are acutely aware of the importance of spending the pupil premium money wisely to support the small number of disadvantaged pupils in the school. The money has been used to provide pupils with targeted support to overcome barriers to learning and to ensure that they have the same chances as everyone else. Such good practice demonstrates the school's commitment to equality of opportunity.
- The headteacher and middle leaders have created a broad and balanced curriculum which appeals to pupils' interests. Pupils' progress is closely monitored in all subjects as they move through the school. Subjects are either taught discretely or through a topic-based approach. British values are strongly embedded throughout the curriculum. Strong emphasis is also on pupils' developing an awareness of other faiths and cultures. This helps pupils understand the diversity of the world in which they live and the importance of mutual respect and tolerance.
- Pupils' learning is further enriched by an extensive range of visitors, trips and out of school clubs. Recent trips have included visits to Jodrell Bank, Liverpool Museum and Helmshore Textile Mill. Pupils also attend clog dancing workshops, which end with them performing at Tarleton Academy to show off their talents. Out of school clubs are particularly popular with all pupils, especially the gardening club, which has had its

achievements recognised by a children's television programme.

- Overall, the school has developed good relationships with parents. Many travel from far afield to bring their children to this school. Most parents who have pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities appreciate the 'excellent' care afforded to their children to enable them to make good progress in their learning. They find staff approachable and enjoy attending weekly assemblies. However, there are some parents that the school find harder to reach. This prevents some parents from taking a more active part in their children's learning.
- The website is bright, colourful and easy to navigate. However, it is not up to date with all the information required. There is no information on the early years curriculum and the special educational needs report (SEN) is missing. Furthermore, the impact of the spending of the pupil premium funding and sport premium does not contain all the required detail.
- The local authority provides 'light touch' support to this good school. They fully endorse the school's self-evaluation of its own performance. They have recently supported the school with lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work.

Governance of the school

- Governors are resounding in their praise of the headteacher and are regular visitors to the school. They have a clear understanding of what the school does well and what further improvements are needed.
- They are kept well informed about the progress that different groups of pupils are making as they move through school.
- They are fully aware of how the pupil premium money is being spent and its impact on pupils' progress and attainment.
- Governors hold the school to account, offering it support and challenge in equal measure.
- The budget is managed carefully to ensure that school priorities are met.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff have a good awareness of the indicators of abuse or neglect and procedures to follow should adults be concerned about a child's welfare. All staff are trained in the 'Prevent' duty and are aware of the potential indicators of child sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation, and extremism.
- Those with responsibility for safeguarding are trained at the appropriate level. The headteacher fully understands his responsibility to ensure that there is always someone with responsibility for safeguarding on the school site to deal with any concerns.
- The premises are secure. Closed circuit television is in the place outside the school and in the corridors within the school building. The identity of any visitors to the school is closely checked.
- Appropriate checks are carried out on all staff prior to them starting work at the school.

The single central record is compliant.

- Pupils, parents and staff all agree that pupils are safe in school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The strength of the respectful relationships between adults and pupils is clear and this contributes to the good learning that takes place within the school. Staff know each pupil very well and respect their individuality.
- All pupils have an excellent start to the school day. Just after registration, all staff and pupils come together to take part in a 'wake and shake' session. Pupils relish this time. They laugh with delight as they bend their knees, swing their arms and move from side to side energetically in time to the music. Pupils typically commented, 'It wakes me up ready to learn.'
- Teachers want pupils to learn and have high expectations. Progress is regularly monitored during lessons and any misconceptions are dealt with on the spot. Pupils are encouraged to share their ideas with each other and check their work for accuracy.
- Questioning is effective and is used well to assess pupils' understanding and extend their learning. This good practice was evident during a mathematics lesson where skilled questioning ensured that pupils made good progress in their understanding of fractions.
- Learning at this school is active and fun. This was exemplified during a science lesson where pupils took part in a practical experiment. They were given a wide range of materials such as foil, cotton wool, kitchen roll, net and felt. They were then asked to share their ideas and test out which material would be the best insulator to make a lunch box to keep food warm. To bring the concept of being a scientist to life, pupils put on white coats, which certainly added to their enjoyment.
- Pupils show a real love of reading. The most able pupils in the school read with fluency and expression. Younger pupils make good use of their phonic knowledge to sound out unfamiliar words. Pupils talk avidly about their favourite authors and the type of books that they like. Some pupils realise the importance of being able to read and told the inspector, 'If you can read you get a lot more out of life and learn about what is happening in the world.' Accessing books to read for pleasure from the well-stocked school library is popular with pupils.
- Pupils are becoming keen writers. Some write at length about historical facts relating to the Roman invasion of Britain. Through writing, others share their thoughts about anti-social behaviour and of the rights of children to be happy, protected and not stereotyped by race, gender or culture. However, on occasions pupils, particularly the most able in the school, are constrained by using worksheets to write at length and in greater depth.
- There is a close partnership working between the teachers and teaching assistants to ensure that the needs of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are met. Teaching assistants are knowledgeable and are well deployed to support pupils with their learning, particularly in the junior class. However, at times, in the infant class, teaching assistants do not take an active part in pupils' learning at the

beginning of the lesson when the whole class is being taught together.

- Homework is appropriate to the age and development of each child. Marking is regular and in line with the school's policy.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The school places very strong emphasis on encouraging pupils to aim high in life and achieve well. Through the curriculum and assemblies, they are taught to have a great sense of responsibility, perseverance and resilience. Pupils are very keen to learn and clearly value the importance of education. This impacts very positively on the good progress pupils make. Many pupils told the inspector that they wanted to go on to university and develop their careers as vets or astronomers.
- Pupils were unanimous in the view that they felt very safe in school. They understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle and the dangers of alcohol and drug misuse. No stone is left unturned to ensure that pupils know how to keep themselves safe online and of the potential dangers of social media. An effective filtering system is in place to make sure that pupils are safe when online.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy being elected members of the school councils and the responsibility that it brings. Through visits to a magistrate court, and by taking part in a mock trial, pupils learn about the rule of law.
- Pupils regularly raise money for a wide variety of charitable causes to support others who are facing difficult situations.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- During the inspection, behaviour around the school both indoors and outside was impeccable. Any visitor cannot fail to be impressed by the responsible and caring attitudes of both adults and pupils alike. The school has a very warm and friendly atmosphere.
- Similarly, high standards of behaviour were observed during lessons. All lessons started promptly and no learning time was wasted.
- Pupils who talked to the inspector have a very secure understanding of the different forms of bullying. Logs show that bullying at the school is rare and pupils were keen to confirm that this is the case.
- Pupils are enthusiastic and very keen to learn. This is reflected in their high rates of attendance and in their punctuality at the start of the school day. There are clear and structured procedures in place to follow up any unexplained absences.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Extreme caution needs to be taken when interpreting published data due to the very small numbers in Year 2 and Year 6. For example, in both Year 2 and Year 6 in 2016 one pupil represented a third of the group. This makes any overall judgement on progress and achievement difficult. Consequently, the inspector took a greater account of the school's own information on pupils' outcomes.
- The number of children entering early year varies year-on-year, as do their knowledge and skills. The school monitors children's progress closely and from their different starting points all make good progress and most are ready to access a Year 1 curriculum.
- School records and work in pupils' books show that good progress continues as children move through key stage 1 and key stage 2, most notably in reading and mathematics. Outcomes in writing are improving but still lag behind those of reading and mathematics.
- Good progress is also evident across all year groups in subjects such as science, history and geography.
- With only three pupils in Year 1 in 2015 and two in 2016 the published results for the phonic screening check are too small to compare with national averages. The school's own detailed tracking system shows that most of these pupils were successful in reaching the required standard. In addition, a high proportion of the seven children currently in Year 1 are on track to reach the required standard this academic year. Observations of phonics teaching made during the inspection confirm that this is the case for this group of pupils.
- Overall, the most able pupils in the school are challenged in many aspects of their learning. For example, the most able pupils in Years 5 and 6 go to a local high school for literacy and numeracy lessons. Furthermore, pupils in the junior class are taught in ability groups for literacy and numeracy and pupils are streamed for the teaching of phonics in the infant class. However, on occasions, pupils who learn more quickly are not challenged to reach the higher standards in writing. As a result, the progress made by this group of pupils is sometimes not as rapid as it could be.
- The number of disadvantaged pupils in the school is very low. Case studies show that as a result of the effective spending of the pupil premium funding and close monitoring, pupils make good progress and achieve well in relation to their starting points.
- There are a significant number of pupils with diverse and complex needs. Taking this into consideration, individual case studies show that these pupils make strong progress. This is due, in no small part, to the high-quality support they receive from teaching assistants, swift interventions and good partnership working that the school has with outside agencies.

Early years provision

Good

- The leadership and management of early years is good. The early years leader has an accurate overview of the strengths and priorities for development.
- Children feel safe, are confident and secure with the routines that are followed in the classroom.
- Staff are kind and caring and attentive to the individual needs of this group of young children. Independence skills are well promoted from the start as children are encouraged to put on their own coats and shoes. Standards of behaviour are high.
- Children show good level of collaboration as they play together making models from small world toys. Staff engage well with the children, talking to them and questioning them effectively as they play. Such good practice helps to develop and extend children's language skills.
- Arrangements to settle children into early years are personalised to suit individual needs. Parents greatly appreciate this.
- Children's progress is very well monitored and their achievements are regularly shared with parents both verbally, through written communications and online.
- There are no breaches to the statutory welfare requirements.

School details

Unique reference number	119403
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10024174

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	41
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Michael Tindsley
Headteacher	Relph Higson
Telephone number	01704 821 360
Website	www.holmeswood.lancs.sch.uk
Email address	head@holmeswood.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	19 April 2013

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the early years curriculum, the pupil and sport premium funding and special education needs report on its website.
- The school is a much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- There are two classes. The infant class comprises of children in the early years and pupils from Years 1 and 2. The junior class contains pupils for the four years which make up key stage 2.
- Children attend the Nursery class on a part-time basis and full time in Reception.
- All pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils in the school is much lower than the national average.

- The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs is significantly higher than the national average. The proportion of pupils receiving special educational needs support is higher than the national average.
- Due to the small number of pupils in each class, the school is exempt from having to meet the government's floor standards.
- There is a breakfast club and after-school club on site which is run by the governing body.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning across both classes within the school.
- Meetings and discussion were held with the headteacher, members of staff, a representative from the local authority, parents and pupils. The inspector also met with some members of the governing body.
- Observations were made of pupils' behaviour at the beginning of the day, at lunchtime, breaktime and in the classroom.
- The inspector examined a wide range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance, the school's information on pupils' outcomes and reports on the quality of teaching.
- The inspector listened to pupils read and looked at examples of their work in books and on display.
- Account was taken of the 12 responses to the Ofsted's online questionnaire completed by parents. Responses to the most recent questionnaire to pupils and parents were also considered.

Inspection team

Sheila Iwaskow, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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