

The Honeywood Community Science School

Westfield Drive, Coggeshall, Colchester, Essex CO6 1PZ

Inspection dates

28–29 March 2017

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	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher's ambitious vision is widely shared across the school community. This vision is grounded in the well-founded expectation that Honeywood pupils will become resilient, independent learners.
- The leadership of teaching, learning and assessment has been strengthened. As a result, the quality of teaching continues to improve.
- Effective monitoring and review processes are well supported by regular professional development opportunities for staff to share good practice.
- Not all teachers use assessment information effectively to help pupils to achieve as well as they should.
- Despite a three-year trend of improving standards, outcomes for pupils require improvement. This is the unintended legacy of previous early entry for GCSE examinations.
- In 2016, pupils, especially the most able, did not make the progress they should have made by the end of Year 11.
- Differences between the progress of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally remain too wide.
- The broad curriculum is establishing stronger learning foundations. As a result, pupils are on track, from their different starting points, to make better progress in the current year.
- Effective links with primary schools ensure that pupils make a smooth transition from Year 6 and settle in quickly when they join the school in Year 7.
- Alongside academic skills, pupils develop good personal and social skills which enhance their progression and wider learning opportunities beyond school.
- Almost all pupils are successful in gaining places in further education, employment and/or training when they leave at the end of key stage 4.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They behave well and have good attitudes to learning. They are typically respectful to each other and to school staff.
- Safeguarding is effective. Staff know and care for their pupils very well. Good provision is in place to support the most vulnerable pupils and to equip pupils with the skills they need to keep safe.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the rates of pupils' progress so that:
 - the most able pupils are challenged to reach their potential, especially in English, mathematics, science and modern foreign languages
 - the differences continue to diminish between the progress of disadvantaged pupils and other, non-disadvantaged, pupils nationally.
- Continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning so that all teachers use assessment information effectively to help pupils to achieve as well as they should.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher has a clear and ambitious vision that is widely shared across the school community. This vision is grounded in the expectation that pupils will be empowered to become resilient, independent learners, developing the skills, knowledge and understanding needed to make good progress as they move on through each stage of their education.
- Leaders have transformed the culture of the school. Pupils and staff are proud to be part of it. This comment of one parent reflected the views of many in saying, 'The school has a positive, encouraging ethos. My child is engaged with learning and fiercely proud of his school. He is allowed to flourish and is learning valuable skills.' Another parent said, 'My child has come such a long way. The school has transformed him into a responsible and well-motivated learner.'
- However, not all parents agreed with this view. In their free-text responses to inspectors during the inspection, some parents said that they would prefer a more traditional approach to teaching and learning. This was because a few of them felt that some of the most able pupils were not challenged enough to achieve as well as they should. A few others were concerned that less-confident pupils may fall behind.
- Although standards have improved, year on year, over the last three years, in 2016, published outcomes reflect the results achieved by the high proportion of pupils who were entered for GCSE examinations early. Current in-year assessment information suggests that pupils are making better progress this year.
- The broad curriculum establishes strong learning foundations. Alongside academic skills, it helps pupils to develop good personal and social skills which enhance their opportunities to progress and learn in different settings when they leave school. For example, post-16 education providers, who work closely with the school, say that they value these skills because they help ex-Honywood pupils get off to a good start when they join their courses at the end of key stage 4.
- In Years 7 and 8, through themed topics, pupils build their subject knowledge in taught sessions, one-to-one and small group subject tutorials. These take place alongside planned periods of supported independent learning and regular assessments of the progress pupils are making. These foundations ensure that pupils are well prepared to begin their GCSE courses in Year 9.
- Work experience, aimed to extend pupils' understanding of the skills the school knows are valued by employers, is an integral part of learning in Year 10. The range of extra-curricular activities, including sport, music, drama, and further opportunities for subject-specific study, are enjoyed and well attended. The promotion of British values and pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural skills development are firmly rooted across the curriculum and the day-to-day life in school.
- The leadership of teaching, learning and assessment has been strengthened further since the previous inspection. Monitoring and review processes are supported by regular professional development opportunities where staff share good practice.
- A recently introduced coaching model is offering a more intensive programme for staff

who need to improve aspects of their teaching quickly. This model is also supporting middle leaders to continue to develop their skills so that they are confident in holding their teams to account for pupils' performance.

- Newly qualified teachers are well supported through their first year in teaching by more experienced members of the school team.
- As part of the ongoing commitment to further improvement, pupils' attendance is monitored systematically and routinely, including for the few pupils who attend work-related and alternative courses away from the school site. Any absence is followed up quickly. Where necessary, interventions are linked to support for pupils and families to ensure that improvement is rapid and sustained.
- Effective links with primary schools ensure that pupils make a smooth transition from Year 6 and settle in quickly when they join the school in Year 7, as illustrated when one parent commented, 'The transition from primary to secondary school was seamless. We are very pleased with the way our child has risen to the challenge.'

Governance of the school

- The wide range of experience governors bring to their role ensures that they are effective in holding senior leaders to account for pupils' progress.
- Governors are fully engaged in the life of the school, for example in completing routine monitoring visits to observe teaching and learning and in meeting with staff to discuss their work.
- Governors ensure that additional funding, including the pupil premium, Year 7 catch-up funding, and funding to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, is spent wisely. Spending is sharply focused on securing improving outcomes for all these groups.
- Safeguarding is a high priority on the governors' agenda. They are fully aware of their responsibilities in this aspect of the school's work. Because they understand what is expected, they are rigorous in ensuring that pupils are safe and that safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school is a caring and inclusive community. Safeguarding is a high-priority aspect of its work.
- Regular training and updates ensure that all staff are very clear about their safeguarding roles and responsibilities. As a result, they know how to spot the warning signs of possible neglect or abuse and how to protect pupils from the dangers of extreme views and radicalisation.
- Where necessary, appropriate and prompt referrals are made to external agencies. Referrals are recorded and carefully monitored to ensure that follow-up actions are swift and effective.
- The single central record meets statutory requirements for ensuring that staff are

suitable to work in schools. Its content is regularly checked to ensure that it is compliant.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- In most lessons, teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Working together with their pupils, they plan learning targets at appropriate levels of challenge. As a result, pupils typically make the progress they should from their different starting points.
- Teachers use their good subject knowledge well to plan interesting learning activities for pupils. The very effective working relationships between teachers and pupils are a key strength that underpins the positive learning culture inspectors observed during the inspection.
- This positive approach to learning is embedded effectively in teaching across most subjects. This was mirrored in the comments of one parent when they told inspectors, 'My child moved to Honeywood in Year 8. Within just a couple of weeks she was truly thriving in the school.'
- The quality of teaching and learning has improved because of senior leaders' strong focus on continuous improvement. This is complemented by better use of the increasingly more accurate assessment information available to teachers across subjects. Regular assessments help teachers to understand how well their pupils are doing and to put extra support in place quickly when needed.
- Learning is at its best where teachers challenge pupils to think more deeply and explain their answers, through skilful questioning, to extend responses to higher levels. In these lessons, teachers pick up on any misconceptions quickly and adapt learning activities so that pupils from different starting points can achieve their potential. In doing so, they ensure that no pupils fall behind.
- Occasionally, inspectors saw lessons where teaching was less effective. For example, pupils were not focused well enough on their learning. This was because assessment information was not used effectively to set work at the right level. In these cases, the most able pupils were not stretched by the activity to do as well as they could and, sometimes, lower-ability pupils fell behind as they waited for help from their teacher to catch up.
- In their free-text comments to inspectors during the inspection, a few parents said they felt that the school could provide information for them about their child's progress more regularly. A few other parents told inspectors that the homework guidance from teachers was too imprecise. In these cases, they felt that too much was left to the discretion of the pupils in terms of how much work they completed.
- Pupils generally make the most of the extra learning opportunities available to them through 'my learning choices', one-to-one tutorials and in after-school clubs. Most of them enjoy reading and read frequently.
- Year 7 pupils, of different abilities, read fluently to inspectors during the inspection. In doing so, the most able readers demonstrated that they understood texts through their explanations of the different meanings and inferences of the words they read out loud. They also used intonation and punctuation appropriately to bring their reading to life

for their audience.

- The less-confident readers used strategies effectively, to sound letters and blend sounds, to work out how to pronounce unfamiliar words. They told inspectors how much they value the extra support they receive from teachers and how it helps them to catch up with important literacy and numeracy skills.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school is a welcoming and inclusive community. Pupils are typically tolerant and respectful to each other and to school staff. They are proud of their school and speak articulately about the learning culture that is well embedded.
- They know that their school expects them to become independent, mature and empowered learners. Mostly, they rise to the challenge of this expectation, making good decisions about their education as they move forward to new learning environments at the end of key stage 4.
- However, occasionally some pupils make the wrong choices. For example, in 2016, too many Year 11 pupils were satisfied with the GCSE grade C outcomes they achieved from early examination entries, in English, mathematics and science, in Year 10. Because they chose not to resit the qualifications to gain higher grades, they left school without reaching their full potential in some of these subjects.
- Nevertheless, despite these choices, effective careers information, advice and guidance from teachers, specialist staff and through careers events ensured that almost all pupils progressed to suitable further education and/or training when they moved on at the end of key stage 4.
- Staff know and care for their pupils very well. Good provision is in place to help the most vulnerable pupils. The school-based family learning team offer a wide range of highly valued assistance for pupils and their families. This includes strategies, ranging from extra help to meet identified learning needs through to counselling and multi-agency working, to secure specialist intervention when it is needed.
- Pupils are well informed about the potential risks to their personal safety and well-being, including about safe use of the internet, social media and mobile phones. They are very clear about the consequences and sanctions related to any potential misuse of electronic equipment in school.
- In their meetings with inspectors, pupils told them that they feel safe in school and that they know who to go to if they need help. Although they said that bullying occasionally happens, they are generally very confident that if it does, staff are quick to resolve their concerns.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Teachers' expectations of the standard of pupils' conduct are high in all aspects of their

learning. The same high expectations are in place as pupils move around buildings and outdoor spaces at break and lunchtimes. As a result, there is generally a calm and purposeful atmosphere across the school.

- Typically, pupils enjoy their lessons, arrive on time and mostly develop good attitudes to learning and study.
- Incidences of fixed-term exclusions are reducing and there have been no permanent exclusions for the last six years.
- Most pupils attend regularly because they are eager to learn. The rate of persistent absence overall is reducing but, despite the school's best efforts, it remains too high for a very small group of pupils who are regularly absent.
- Leaders are systematic in ensuring that pupils following courses in alternative provision are safe, attend regularly and that they are making the progress they should.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In the wake of early examination entry in the previous year, in 2016, not enough pupils made the progress they should to reach their full potential by the end of key stage 4, in particular in English, mathematics and science. This was especially so for the most able pupils.
- Because of the legacy of early entry, against the government's new national measure, Progress 8, pupils' progress overall in 2016 fell below the national average. The progress of pupils in English was better than it was in mathematics and science subjects. In modern foreign languages, too few of the large number of pupils entered for GCSE French or German achieved a higher grade.
- Nevertheless, pupils' overall unpublished 2016 'best entry' examination outcomes show stronger progress than the published 'first entry' outcomes suggest. For example, although no longer an official measure, the proportion of pupils achieving 5 A* to C grades, including English and mathematics, was above the national average.
- By the end of Year 11, in 2016, pupils' GCSE outcomes overall, based on the government's new measure, Attainment 8, were similar to the national average.
- The school's current in-year assessment information suggests that more pupils are on track to make better progress by the end of key stage 4.
- More-focused monitoring of pupils' progress and improving teaching and learning are ensuring that the differences between the progress of the small number of disadvantaged pupils in the school and other non-disadvantaged pupils nationally are diminishing. Lower-ability pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those attending the school's special resource base, typically make good progress from their different starting points.

School details

Unique reference number	136729
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10023440

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	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,026
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dawn McIntosh
Headteacher	Simon Mason
Telephone number	01376 561231
Website	www.honywoodschool.com
Email address	admin@honywoodschool.com
Date of previous inspection	6–7 June 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Very few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average.
- The school has recently opened a specialist resource-based unit, for pupils who have special educational needs, funded by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is

similar to the national average.

- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium additional funding is well below average.
- A small number of pupils attend work-related courses at Colchester Institute.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils in English and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 45 lessons, some of which were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- Discussions took place between inspectors, different groups of pupils, the headteacher, senior leaders, middle leaders, teaching and administrative staff.
- The lead inspector met with members of the local governing body, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors observed pupils and spoke with them in lessons, at break and lunchtimes, and as they moved around the school.
- They also considered 64 responses to the Ofsted questionnaire from staff and 324 responses from pupils. In addition, they reviewed 223 responses to the parent questionnaire, Parent View, and 125 free-text responses from parents.
- Inspectors scrutinised documentation, including leaders' evaluations of the school's performance, the school improvement plan, information relating to pupils' progress, policies, procedures and arrangements for safeguarding.

Inspection team

Christine Dick, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jenny Carpenter	Ofsted Inspector
Helen Loughran	Ofsted Inspector
Nicola Hood	Ofsted Inspector
Sue Smith	Ofsted Inspector
Vanessa Love	Ofsted 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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