

Holywell Primary and Nursery School

School Road, Rubery, Rednal, Birmingham, West Midlands B45 9EY

Inspection dates

23–24 January 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- In 2016 and early 2017, the school was without a permanent headteacher. Staff training lapsed and teachers did not keep up to date with changes to the school curriculum and assessment.
- Pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics slowed and standards at the end of key stage 2 are not as high as they should be given pupils' starting points.
- Progress for current pupils is improving but many still have some catching up to do, particularly in mathematics.
- Across the school, the quality of teaching varies. In some classes, work is not pitched at the right level for pupils' different abilities. This hinders learning.
- The most able pupils are held back by some teaching and tasks.
- Middle leadership is not strong. The school would benefit from a review of middle leaders' roles and responsibilities.
- The leadership of teaching and learning in mathematics has had a limited impact on raising standards.
- Routines for checking on the impact of support for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities could be improved.
- Some governors do not fulfil the obligations of their role.
- There are limited opportunities for pupils to be taught music.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and governing body have a well-informed understanding of the school's current performance and realistic plans for improvement.
- Pupils are polite, inquisitive and behave well. They look smart and follow the school's rules.
- Provision in the early years is good.
- Procedures for attending to pupils' welfare and safety are effective.
- The primary school sport premium is put to good use. Pupils enjoy many different sports.
- There is some strong teaching in upper key stage 2 and the early years.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen leadership and management by making sure:
 - middle leaders' roles and responsibilities are reviewed and the leadership of mathematics is strengthened
 - leaders at all levels receive guidance and support in order to be fully effective in their roles
 - teaching staff get regular training and feedback about their work
 - the governing body maintains an informed oversight of the school's performance and all governors play their part
 - procedures for checking on the impact of additional support for disadvantaged pupils or those who have SEN and/or disabilities are sharpened up
 - opportunities for pupils to be taught music are increased.
- Improve the quality of teaching in order to boost pupils' progress and raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics, by making sure:
 - teachers make effective use of assessment information in order to plan lessons that meet pupils' learning needs
 - the most able pupils are not held back by unnecessary tasks or work that is too easy
 - the less able pupils are given work that builds securely on their current levels of understanding
 - staff receive regular training to keep them up to date with the demands of the current school curriculum
 - staff share and learn from effective practice in this school and elsewhere.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The current headteacher took up his post in the summer term 2017. Prior to this, there had been a period of unsettled leadership and the school did not keep up with changes to the national curriculum and assessment. Consequently, school improvement planning stalled, the quality of teaching declined and pupils' progress slowed. In the absence of strong leadership at the top, other leaders within the school did not grow or develop in their roles.
- Since taking up his post, the headteacher has identified the problems to be overcome and has put measures in place to improve teaching and learning. He has sought advice and assistance through the local authority, brought teaching staff up to date and set out his expectations in a calm and constructive way. He shows good judgement and has ambitious and realistic plans for the school. Already, the school has recognised the need to strengthen the senior leadership team further and governors have appointed an assistant headteacher to start in the summer term 2018.
- The quality of middle leadership in the school, however, remains underdeveloped. The leadership of mathematics and oversight of the pupil premium, for example, require swift improvement. Currently, leaders do not have an informed understanding of the school's performance in these areas. An urgent review of staff roles and responsibilities across the whole tier of middle leadership would be beneficial.
- Pupil premium funds are spent in line with the recommendations of a recent pupil premium review. It is clear that all staff now have a greater understanding of the need to improve progress for all groups of pupils. In addition, some imaginative projects, such as the after-school 'glitter gang', motivate groups of pupils to do extra work and practise key skills. Leaders' analysis of progress information for different groups of pupils, however, is too vague, so it is hard to know how well the school's actions are working.
- Leaders' use of the primary school sport premium is effective and the quality of physical education (PE) and sport in the school has improved. In the last year, over 80% of pupils took part in at least one voluntary sports activity at school and PE lessons are led regularly by visiting experts.
- While the school did not keep up with curriculum changes and standards in core subjects have slipped, pupils continue to be motivated by school and want to succeed. They learn the value of effort and participation and enjoy a suitably broad range of subjects, although there are limited opportunities for pupils to be taught music. School trips, forest school activities, and well-resourced learning spaces like the school's 'Phiz lab' for science, inject interest and excitement into learning. Before- and after-school clubs operate on most days, with varied sports and other activities on offer.
- Through their lessons and assemblies, pupils are taught to respect others and to understand the difference between right and wrong. The school is an inclusive environment where pupils feel valued and are helped to become considerate members of British society.

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective. The governors who met with inspectors presented an informed understanding of the school's current position. They understood their statutory duties and the nature of their role and could call upon many good examples of how they ensure effective governance. It is clear that some governors are very active and are doing their best to steer and support the school. Inspectors' scrutiny of governors' records, however, found that attendance at governors' meetings by some governors is erratic. In one recent instance, a full governors' meeting could not take place because too few governors turned up. Governance is competent but the bulk of the work is being done by a small number of governors.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- This aspect of the school's work has been maintained well over time. On his appointment, the headteacher carried out a full safeguarding audit and found only minor points for improvement. Checks on school staff and visitors are all in order and records are well organised and up to date. Staff are kept fully informed about their duty of care through regular bulletins and training and there is a detailed safeguarding file in every classroom. During this inspection, staff gave consistent and accurate accounts of what they would do, or had done, in the event of a concern about a child.
- The school's policies and practice demonstrate an informed awareness of the risks pupils may face, including the dangers of extreme views and prejudice.
- Pupils who require medicine in school have access to it when needed and it is stored correctly. First-aid arrangements are fit for purpose, the school site is well maintained and pupils know that an adult will help them if they have a worry or problem.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- In 2014, the national curriculum and assessment arrangements changed but the school did not keep up. Consequently, pupils were not being taught what they needed to know and began to fall behind.
- Recent training for teachers has brought everyone up to date but teachers' use of assessment is still not good enough. In some classes, the most able pupils have to work their way through unnecessary or easy tasks or the less able pupils do not understand their work. In key stage 1 mathematics, for example, several pupils were confused by their work on measuring weight because the explanations and resources they were given were not pitched at their current level of understanding. On the other hand, some pupils were already well ahead and could have pressed on further. Other similar instances were observed in some of the lower key stage 2 classes and are evident in work in pupils' books.
- The school's leadership recognises that teachers' everyday use of assessment needs to improve. To this end, a tutorial time has been introduced for the first 30 minutes of each day. During these sessions, teachers follow up any mistakes or misconceptions from earlier work, remind pupils about recent learning and check what they have

retained and understood. In the main, these are brisk, purposeful and effective sessions. Nevertheless, pupils who already understand are sometimes occupied with tasks that do not add much to their learning. They complete such tasks with conscientious efficiency but it is not the best use of their time and attention.

- The school leadership has brought in several whole-school approaches in order to ensure consistent practice, progression of skills and coverage of national curriculum content. For example, many writing activities are heavily supported by templates or structures produced by teachers. In many instances, this is appropriate and helps pupils to move on in their learning. For the most able pupils, however, it sometimes limits the quantity and/or quality of their work because they manage to do what is required quite quickly.
- There is some strong teaching in the school. In Years 5 and 6 and the early years, teaching is tuned in to what pupils need to learn next. When prompting Year 6 pupils to refine and improve their story-writing skills, for instance, teachers asked some thought-provoking questions that probed pupils' understanding and generated some highly eloquent responses. Pupils were attentive, keen to learn and turned out some good-quality writing. Indeed, across the school, pupils show positive attitudes to learning and their teachers. Relationships between staff and pupils are usually calm and courteous and pupils get on with their work without fuss.
- In order for teaching to continue to improve, leaders intend to make sure staff share and learn from effective practice in this school and elsewhere.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. In fact, this aspect of the school's work has been a consistent strength over time.
- A notable feature of the school is the attention given to pupils' well-being and mental health. The school has taken some expert advice about this and provides well-thought-out nurture provision that offers tailored support to pupils who need it. Staff help pupils to manage their feelings and behaviours in constructive ways so that they feel good about themselves, life and learning.
- Staff teach pupils about different forms of bullying and its harmful effects. Pupils report that it is rarely a problem at Holywell Primary and are confident that it would not be tolerated if it happened. Pupils also learn how to stay safe in different situations and older pupils take on responsibilities around the school. Prefects oversee morning routines as pupils come into school, play leaders help younger pupils at lunchtimes and elected pupil-led councils give pupils a say in decision-making at school. Pupils are currently concerned about litter on the school playground which, they say, blows across from the direction of the nearby secondary school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Most pupils come to school regularly and on time. They look smart, act politely and are interested in learning. Their conduct in class is usually excellent and they move around the school building in an orderly manner, showing regard for their own safety and that of others. Exclusions are uncommon, but have happened when necessary.
- It is very rare for lessons to be disturbed by poor behaviour and most staff treat pupils in a calm and kindly manner. Pupils understand and follow the school's rules. They say that the school's values of respect, courage, friendship, responsibility, honesty and consideration for others are actively promoted by staff and help to maintain a positive and caring school community.
- Lunchtime in the dining hall is a pleasant social occasion with well-organised routines and attention to table manners and healthy choices. Outside on the playground, there is some boisterous play at times. It is rare for any harm to be done and supervision arrangements are fine. Even so, staff are not always quick to respond when play gets a bit too rough. As soon as the end of playtime bell rings, pupils immediately calm down and no time is lost when returning to lessons.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, pupils' progress in English and mathematics has slowed because the school did not keep up to date with changes to the national curriculum. Over time, pupils' progress in mathematics has tended to be weaker than their progress in reading and writing.
- Academic standards reached at the end of key stages 1 and 2 are more or less in line with age-related expectations, so most pupils are able to cope with the secondary school curriculum when they move up. However, many pupils at Holywell Primary School are capable of achieving so much more in their reading, writing and mathematics. The most able pupils should be reaching higher standards but have been held back by shortcomings in teaching. Similarly, some of the less able pupils have fallen further behind their peers because they have not understood their work.
- Recent improvements to teaching and assessment are driving faster progress for current pupils. Many of the current Year 6, for example, are on track to cope well with the end-of-key-stage assessments. For pupils in Years 4 and 5, however, there is still a lot of ground to make up if they are to achieve in line with their capabilities. Furthermore, in both key stages, the most able pupils could be doing better.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils is not significantly different from the progress made by other pupils. Both groups are not doing as well as they should, and this is most marked in mathematics.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities receive some effective additional support. The benefits of this are clear to see and inspectors had no concerns about these pupils' progress. Nevertheless, procedures for checking on the impact of different types of support could be sharpened up so that leaders are more informed about what it working well and what could be improved.

Early years provision

Good

- Effective leadership in the early years has ensured that the children receive good-quality teaching and behave well. Most children make good progress.
- In both the Nursery and Reception classes, children are kept productively occupied with activities that exercise their minds and bodies. Teaching pays careful attention to developing children's early literacy and numeracy skills. Classrooms provide plenty of opportunities for them to play, explore, cooperate, discuss, make decisions, discover and imagine.
- In the Nursery, there is some very strong practice. In a story time session seen during this inspection, for example, the teacher used the tale of Goldilocks and the three bears to check on and develop children's counting and language skills. At the same time, the teacher managed to fully involve all the children in the telling of the story, making them feel excited and encouraged. Teaching brought out the best in everyone and the children were captivated.
- Teaching in the Reception classes builds further on this great start. Adults are attentive to children's different learning needs and, in turn, the children learn to do things for themselves and develop good learning habits.
- Effective safety and supervision arrangements are in place, both indoors and outside, so that adults know where children are and if anyone needs help. Children get on well with one another and there is plenty of lively, good-natured and productive chatter in all classrooms.
- Parents and carers receive regular information about their children's life at school and also provide staff with information from home. A large wall display records parents' hopes and aspirations for their children while another display nearby captures children's own hopes for the future. This early attention to pupils' and parents' views and aspirations helps set the tone for a productive journey through the early years. It is no surprise that, by the end of the Reception Year, the proportion of children who reach a good level of development is above the national figure. Having said this, given children's typical starting points when they first come to school, there is scope for some of them to do even better.

School details

Unique reference number	132060
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10045521

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	461
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Katya Chaplin
Headteacher	Christian Hamilton
Telephone number	0121 453 7829
Website	www.holywellschool.org
Email address	office@hollywell.worcs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	20–21 March 2014

Information about this school

- Holywell Primary and Nursery School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The current headteacher took up his post at the start of the summer term 2017.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils at the school is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is just below the national average.
- In 2017, the school met the government's floor standard, which sets out the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all year groups. The inspectors also examined pupils' work in books and considered school test and assessment information.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour and the school's procedures at the beginning and end of the school day, at lunch and breaktimes and when pupils were moving about the school site. Inspectors also saw pupils taking part in school clubs and sports and watched an assembly.
- Meetings were held with pupils, staff, school leaders and governors. The lead inspector had a phone conversation with an educational consultant who is working with the school.
- By the end of the inspection, there were 50 recent responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View) and 25 free-text responses. Inspectors took account of these responses. In addition, inspectors spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day.
- A number of school documents were examined. These included: information about pupils' achievement, evaluations of the school's performance and several policy statements. Records relating to governance, staff training, the quality of teaching, SEN, early years, external support, behaviour, admissions, attendance, safety and safeguarding were also scrutinised. The school's website was checked.

Inspection team

Martin Pye, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Ellen Taylor	Ofsted Inspector
Helen Quinn	Ofsted Inspector

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