

Inspection of Holne Chase Primary School

Buckingham Road, Bletchley, Buckinghamshire MK3 5HP

Inspection dates: 5–7 November 2019

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Inadequate

Personal development

Inadequate

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Early years provision

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Staff's expectations of pupils are too low. Pupils say that their learning is often disrupted by poor behaviour. Pupils can be easily distracted and lose their focus. Too often, they do not complete their work to a high enough standard. Pupils told us, 'Our teachers don't help us learn the important things.' Despite this, pupils want to do well.

Not all pupils feel safe in school, because staff do not always deal with bullying incidents effectively or help pupils with their worries. Pupils have a very patchy understanding of how to keep safe, particularly when online. Some parents told us that staff do not always help their children keep safe from bullying.

Pupils are not well prepared for life in modern Britain. Their understanding of different faiths, cultures and communities is muddled. Leaders have only recently introduced more opportunities for pupils to broaden their horizons and experiences, including after-school clubs.

While most pupils attend school regularly, a significant minority do not. Leaders and governors do not address this poor attendance with enough rigour. Due to leaders' lack of timely support and action, over time, a handful of pupils have become school refusers.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Pupils do not get a good deal at this school. Leaders have not ensured that the curriculum is effective. They have not properly organised the order in which pupils are expected to learn things in different subjects. In key stage 2, pupils are not always taught the full range of subjects in the curriculum. They do not learn the important knowledge across subjects in order to help them achieve well. Pupils told us, 'Our teachers tell us what we need to do instead of what it is we need to learn.' Too many pupils leave school unprepared for the challenges in the next stage of their education.

Teachers do not help pupils make links in their learning and build on what they know already. Too often, lessons are unconnected and do not help pupils to learn and know more over time. Pupils' levels of concentration dip too frequently. Subject leaders, many new to these posts, have yet to play their part in making sure teaching and the curriculum are of a good enough quality.

Phonics is generally taught well, helping most pupils to learn to read effectively. However, as pupils move into key stage 2, they do not develop their comprehension skills effectively in order to help them deepen their learning across a range of subjects. Pupils' understanding of the meaning of words and phrases is not extended well enough.

Staff do not have high enough expectations of what disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) can achieve. The curriculum is not adapted effectively in order to meet the needs of disadvantaged pupils and those pupils with SEND. Leaders and governors have not made sure that the additional funding for these pupils helps them do as well as they should.

In contrast to the rest of the school, the curriculum in early years is well sequenced, developing children's knowledge in all areas. Teachers routinely check what children know and use this to plan subsequent learning. Early reading and mathematics are taught effectively. Children build a good understanding of the world around them. They are well prepared for Year 1.

Provision for pupils' personal development is weak. Pupils have very limited opportunities to expand their experiences or build their strength of character. They do not discuss and debate their ideas to develop and challenge their viewpoints and opinions. Their understanding of people with different backgrounds and beliefs is too inconsistent. Pupils told us, 'If your choices are different, we are not sure you would always get a warm welcome from everyone.'

Behaviour in lessons and at playtimes is too varied. Leaders have not made sure that policies and arrangements for staff to manage pupils' behaviour are effective. Leaders do not analyse behaviour incidents well enough. They do not make sure all staff deal with incidents of poor behaviour consistently. Pupils told us, 'Some staff tell us to ignore poor behaviour. This is unfair, because it doesn't help our worries go away.' Many pupils told inspectors that, because of this, they feel unsafe in school. Leaders' actions to improve pupils' behaviour lack precision.

Governors do not have an accurate view of the quality of education. They do not challenge leaders effectively. Governors have not played their role well enough to make sure pupils learn well and leave Holne Chase fully prepared for the challenges ahead.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Leaders and governors have not ensured a strong culture of vigilance. Staff's understanding of the signs that pupils may be at risk of harm is too inconsistent. Not all staff know how to make referrals appropriately or step up wider concerns. Risk assessments for off-site trips and visits are not fully compliant with requirements. For example, they do not always include statutory safeguarding checks on external providers. Pupils' understanding of the possible risks when they are out of school or when online is too variable.

Governors do not fulfil their statutory safeguarding duties. They do not check that safeguarding policies and procedures are effective. Safer recruitment procedures are not rigorous enough.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders and governors have not created a vigilant culture or rigorous systems to ensure the welfare and safety of all pupils. The new headteacher has identified some weaknesses and has begun to address them. Nevertheless, this requires further urgent action. Leaders and governors need to make sure that statutory checks are always made for all staff. They must ensure that all risk assessments for school trips are completed fully ahead of the trip. All safeguarding policies and processes must meet statutory requirements. All members of staff must have an up-to-date understanding of the signs that suggest pupils may be at risk. Staff should be enabled to refer pupils who they consider to be at risk appropriately, consistently and in a timely manner. Leaders need to ensure pupils feel safe in school and improve pupils' awareness of how to keep themselves safe.
- Planning in all subjects in key stages 1 and 2 needs to be improved so that the curriculum is sequenced and coherent. Teachers should know the important knowledge pupils are expected to learn at different stages and in all subjects. Appropriate training is required to improve teachers' professional knowledge to teach the range of subjects effectively. Pupils in key stage 2 should be taught the full range of all subjects so that they learn well over time and their achievement improves by the end of key stage 2.
- Phonics teaching means most, but not all, pupils get off to a good start as readers. However, as they get older, pupils must further develop their reading comprehension and vocabulary to help them learn with deeper understanding across the curriculum, particularly in key stage 2.
- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND do not receive appropriate support to help them learn and achieve well in all subjects. Leaders need to evaluate carefully the impact of additional funding for these pupils and take necessary actions to help these pupils make the best possible progress in their learning. This includes raising levels of ambition for these pupils.
- Subject leaders do not have enough impact on the quality of education. Senior leaders need to make sure subject leaders have the skills, knowledge and opportunities to lead their subjects well.
- Pupils' behaviour is too variable. Leaders need to review and improve the arrangements for the management of pupils' behaviour, ensuring all staff implement them consistently. Leaders' monitoring of behaviour incidents is not precise enough to enable them to take the right action in a timely way. Staff should deal with incidents of poor behaviour and bullying more effectively.
- Leaders do not analyse pupils' attendance well enough. They do not check attendance with enough rigour or make sure that any particular group is at risk due to poor attendance. Leaders need to reduce the number of pupils who are persistently absent.
- Pupils do not have a deep enough understanding of life in modern Britain.

Leaders need to develop provision that enables pupils to increase their understanding of fundamental British values.

- Governors do not accurately understand how effective the school is. They need to make sure they challenge leaders effectively about the impact of strategic decisions and actions on pupils' achievement and the quality of education the school provides.
- The school should not appoint newly qualified teachers.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	110290
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	10111352
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	270
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Graham Sherman
Headteacher	Madeline Dunckley
Website	www.holnechase.com
Date of previous inspection	22–23 March 2016

Information about this school

- The current headteacher took up her post from 1 September 2019.
- The chair of governors was appointed two weeks prior to the inspection.

Information about this inspection

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

- We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders and members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors met a range of staff individually and in groups. They also met with groups of pupils. Inspectors met with a representative from the local authority that has been supporting the school.

- Inspectors did deep dives in these subjects: reading, writing, mathematics and science. This meant that, in each subject, they met with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, talked to pupils, spoke to teachers and looked at pupils' work.
- As part of the inspection of safeguarding, inspectors met with the designated lead, the school administrator, governors and teachers, and made telephone calls to the local authority's designated officer. An inspector met with the director of children's services for Milton Keynes.
- Inspectors spoke with parents at the start of the school day and considered responses to the Parent View survey and the comments made in the free-text boxes on Parent View.
- Inspectors also held meetings with leaders to discuss curriculum plans, met the early years leader and spoke with pupils informally about their day-to-day experiences at the school.
- Inspectors were aware during this inspection that safeguarding concerns were about to be investigated by the appropriate authorities. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate concerns of this kind, actions taken by the school in response to the concerns were considered alongside the other evidence available at the time of the inspection in order to inform inspectors' judgements.

Inspection team

Shazia Akram, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Matthew Haynes

Her Majesty's Inspector

Sarah Hubbard

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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