

Inspection of a good school: Holmgate Primary School and Nursery

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

Inspection dates:

5–6 February 2020

Outcome

Holmgate Primary School and Nursery continues to be a good school.

However, inspectors have some concerns that standards may be declining, as set out below.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils say that Holmgate is a welcoming and friendly place to be. They feel safe in school. Pupils get on well together and incidents of bullying are rare and quickly sorted. The care that staff have for their pupils is evident. Pupils are confident that if they need help, an adult will be there for them.

Pupils behave well. In lessons they listen carefully to staff and try hard. I saw them being sensible when they moved around the school, ate their lunches and played outside. The school's motto is 'Let your light shine'. Leaders want pupils to make the most of their talents. Pupils told me how the staff and the curriculum encourage them to be confident and resilient.

Pupils value the wide range of visits and activities that the curriculum provides. They enjoy the midday and after-school clubs such as the film club and the fencing club. Older pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities, such as 'rights respecting ambassadors', and helping younger pupils.

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

Leaders are ambitious for their pupils. They are redesigning the curriculum in many subject areas. They want the curriculum to reflect the local community and prepare pupils well for their futures. In mathematics, the curricular plan sets out the key knowledge and skills that pupils will learn. This is not the case in all subjects. For example, in history and geography, leaders have not set out clearly what they want pupils to learn and remember. Pupils find it difficult to recall what they have already learned in these subjects.

Leaders have strengthened the phonics curriculum. They check that it is being taught well in the early years and in key stage 1. If pupils are at risk of falling behind, they get extra support. Leaders have improved the stock of early reading books. They have done this

with the aim of giving pupils books with the sounds that they know. However, sometimes there is still a mismatch. When this happens, pupils struggle to read their books.

Leaders want pupils to be keen readers. Pupils have positive attitudes to reading and enjoy books. They told me how much they enjoyed the daily story sessions in their classes. They love taking home, and reading, their teachers' favourite books.

There is some variation in how well teachers use what they know of pupils' learning to plan lessons. In mathematics, teachers check on how well pupils understand their work. They adapt their lesson plans to address weaker areas of understanding. This does not happen as well in English. For example, many pupils do not have the spelling skills expected for their age. The curriculum does not ensure that pupils improve their spelling skills sufficiently. Often, pupils make the same spelling errors time after time.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Curriculum plans take into account the needs of pupils whose reading skills or disabilities can be barriers to learning. In mathematics lessons, pupils with SEND work on the same, or similar, tasks as others. They get any extra help they need.

Children get off to a good start in the early years. Staff in the Nursery and Reception Years work well together. Children listen carefully to adults. They enjoy learning and playing together indoors and in the well-equipped outside area. Parents and carers value the care that adults show to their children. They appreciate the guidance they receive on how to support their children's learning.

Teachers set clear routines and high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils concentrate in lessons. They work well in groups. Teachers plan adventurous lessons. In a history topic on the Stone Age, pupils made flints. They then gutted fish and cooked them in the wooded area of the school grounds.

The curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils to reflect and share their views. They learn why it is important to respect people who have different beliefs or family backgrounds from their own. Staff help pupils to broaden their horizons and to have high aspirations.

Leaders and governors put the interests of the pupils and staff at the heart of their decisions. Staff appreciate the consideration leaders give to their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know what to do if they have a concern about a pupil. They report concerns to the safeguarding leaders. Leaders act promptly and follow up any concerns carefully. When needed, staff provide support and guidance for families. Leaders manage the school's records about safeguarding well.

Pupils told me that they have training to keep safe on the internet, including the risks of cyber bullying. They receive advice that is appropriate for their age. Pupils are given accurate information on how to stay safe, and they know what to do if they are worried.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum is not sufficiently well planned in all subjects. It does not always make clear to teachers the key knowledge pupils should learn and remember. Teaching does not always revise and build upon earlier learning. As a result, pupils' recall of what they have covered in some subjects is limited. Leaders are now redesigning the curriculum. The revised curricular plans should identify, in all subjects, the most important content that they want pupils to learn and remember. Leaders should check that the curriculum builds pupils' knowledge effectively over time.
- Leaders acted promptly when pupils' achievement in phonics fell last year. Their actions, including the appointment of a phonics leader, have strengthened the implementation of the phonics curriculum. However, weaker readers are still sometimes given reading books that do not match their phonic skills. This hampers the development of their reading skills. Leaders should make sure that these pupils are given books that contain the sounds they know, so they can read with increasing confidence.
- Leaders have not ensured that the English curriculum equips pupils with the spelling skills pupils need for their ages. Pupils' written work often includes too many errors in spelling. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum is planned in a way that builds up pupils' spelling skills systematically, so that these skills match the expectations of the national curriculum.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged Holmgate Primary School and Nursery to be good on 17–18 May 2016.

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 are the school and you are 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	112530
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10121277
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	239
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christine Moorcroft
Headteacher	Ian Robson
Website	www.holmgate.derbyshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	17–18 May 2016

Information about this school

- A new deputy headteacher took up her post in September 2019.

Information about this inspection

- I focused the inspection on specific subjects of the curriculum. I did deep dives in reading, mathematics, and history. I visited lessons with senior leaders. I met with teachers, curriculum leaders and pupils, listened to pupils read and looked at samples of pupils' work. I held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, subject leaders and other staff. I had telephone conversations with the chair of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- I spoke with parents. I took account of the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and the responses to the Ofsted staff survey and the Ofsted pupil survey. I considered a range of documents. These included those relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- In order to judge the effectiveness of safeguarding, I read the school's relevant policies, scrutinised the single central record, checked the school's procedures for the safe recruitment of staff, and samples of safeguarding records.

Inspection team

Anthony O'Malley, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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