

Inspection of a good school: Holywell Village First School

Holywell, Holywell Village, Whitley Bay, Northumberland NE25 0LN

Inspection dates:

28–29 January 2020

Outcome

Holywell Village First School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

The headteacher and staff treat everyone with kindness and consideration. Adults and pupils feel valued. They are rightly proud of their cheerful and family-oriented school.

Pupils are happy and friendly. They are welcoming and go out of their way to look after each other. Behaviour is extremely good. Pupils' emotional health and well-being are important to staff. Any rare occurrence of bullying is taken very seriously. Pupils attend regularly and on time. Parents are confident that their child is safe and well looked after. As one parent stated, 'An amazing school with fantastic staff, where every child is genuinely loved.'

Leaders are ambitious for pupils. Pupils have exciting, memorable learning experiences in most subjects. Pupils show appreciation, and a sense of curiosity and wonder about the world around them. The school's motto of 'Making learning an adventure' is experienced across lessons.

Reading is rightly a high priority in school. By the end of Year 2 most pupils are confident readers.

Children do well in early years. Parents believe that their children get off to a flying start from Nursery onwards. Children learn about reading, numbers and writing straight away. Early years staff are very caring. Children are treated with dignity.

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

The headteacher makes sure that pupils come first. Her expectations are high. She treats staff, parents and pupils with respect, ensuring that everyone is made to feel welcome.

Pupils behave extremely well in and around school. They listen politely to adults and each other. They are quick to hold doors open, help friends and offer encouragement to each

other. Adults are kind, patient and understanding. They treat pupils fairly and firmly. Pupils come to school every day and on time.

Personal development is a strength of the school and helps pupils to have a respect and tolerance for each other. Through a wide range of visits and visitors pupils experience many different cultures. This helps them to understand difference and see it as something to be celebrated and shared.

Leaders know the importance of reading for pupils' success across the curriculum. They want every child to be a reader. Teachers work hard to inspire a love of reading among pupils. High-quality phonic teaching begins as soon as children enter school.

Staff quickly identify those pupils who need extra help and support is immediately put in place. Those who enter school with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are provided with a wide range of additional help and, as a result, are able to access every part of the curriculum. Pupils, including those with SEND, make good and sometimes better than good progress in phonics, reading, writing and mathematics.

Leaders are determined to make sure every bit of their pupils' curriculum is always of the highest standard and helps pupils learn. They now need to make sure that the very best of staff's work around the curriculum is shared so that every subject is consistently of a high standard.

Pupils' knowledge and skills in subjects increases every year. For example, in history Nursery and Reception children enjoy exploring and talking about special events in their lives. Year 1 pupils confidently discussed how Christopher Columbus could not travel by air as he lived much earlier than the Wright Brothers, who invented the plane! In a Year 4 history lesson pupils were able to see how settlements changed over time because people developed different building skills.

Teachers' subject knowledge is good across all subjects, particularly in mathematics, and is used well to support pupils' learning. Staff use appropriate technical mathematical vocabulary and expect pupils to do the same. In Reception, children write number sentences confidently and neatly. Year 3 pupils are able to identify key vocabulary in written problems and use the most effective approach to solve them. Pupils' mathematics books clearly show how pupils are making progress across the year.

Across subjects pupils are given lots of additional experiences to support their learning outside of the classroom. For example, pupils work on a dragon's den theme linked to the annual school fair. Also, family expertise is brought into school, for example work with grandparents around local Northumbrian folk songs.

Children in early years are well looked after by caring and committed staff. They listen to stories and work with numbers every day. There are lots of opportunities for children to count, write and read books. The curriculum is carefully planned to make sure that

children experience lots of different things that develop their curiosity and excitement about learning.

Teachers know leaders value their hard work and commitment. Leaders are considerate of their well-being. Where possible, issues of workload are reduced and made manageable.

The work of leaders is very well supported by the governing body. Governors bring much expertise to the school. They recognise its strengths and know what could be even better.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an extremely strong culture of safeguarding within school. Pupils' welfare and safety are of the utmost importance to all staff in the school.

Staff have ensured that pupils have a very strong awareness of how to keep safe. Pupils were able to tell me about staying safe while using the internet and the danger of talking to strangers.

Staff are very well trained and understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Staff know their pupils and their families very well and take prompt action when they have concerns. This makes sure that families get the help they need.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school provides an exciting, full curriculum. It is coherently planned, sequenced and implemented ensuring that pupils are building their knowledge and skills cumulatively across most subject areas.
- The headteacher and senior leader now need to further use the expertise within school amongst subject leaders to ensure that all curriculum areas are securely and consistently embedded and implemented across the school.

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 second section 8 inspection since we judged Holywell Village First School to be good on 28–29 June 2010.

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	122195
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	10121857
Type of school	First
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	170
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	David Harrison
Headteacher	Sarah Brett
Website	www.holywell.northumberland.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	29 June 2016

Information about this school

- Holywell Village First School is a smaller than the average-sized first school.
- It serves the families of a local village and an increasing number of pupils who live out of the catchment area.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average. However, this is not representative of the school as a large proportion of families who may be eligible do not claim free school meals.
- The greater proportion of pupils are of white British heritage.
- There is before- and after-school provision that is run by an outside company.

Information about this inspection

- I met with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, staff and pupils. I also met with a local authority representative, the chair of the governing body and three governors.

- I met with the member of staff responsible for maintaining records of recruitment checks and personnel records. I also met the safeguarding lead. I looked at attendance information, behaviour logs and safeguarding records.
- I selected four subjects for closer scrutiny. These subject were reading, history, mathematics and design and technology. This involved visiting lessons with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and subject lead for reading, listening to pupils reading, meeting with senior and subject leaders, looking at pupils' work and talking to teachers and pupils about their work and learning.
- I spoke formally and informally with pupils about behaviour and how they keep themselves safe in school. In addition, I observed pupils' behaviour at various times across the day, including at breaktimes and in the dining hall. There were no responses to the pupil survey.
- I considered the views of staff through Ofsted's survey and in face-to-face discussions.
- I spoke to several parents and grandparents before the school day and reviewed 69 responses left by parents through Ofsted's Parent View survey. In addition, I reviewed 36 additional free-text comments.

Inspection team

Anne Vernon, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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