

Inspection of a good school: Holcombe Brook Primary School

Longsight Road, Holcombe Brook, Bury, Lancashire BL0 9TA

Inspection dates: 11–12 March 2020

Outcome

Holcombe Brook Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Holcombe Brook is a happy school where everyone is welcome. As one pupil reported, 'We are an inclusive school.' Pupils enjoy their time at school and rarely miss a day. They say that their learning is fun. They also appreciate the many opportunities they have to take part in after-school clubs. Pupils are taught to stay safe through the school's curriculum. All pupils spoken to said that they felt safe at school and the overwhelming majority of parents and carers agree.

Expectations for all pupils at this school are high. Leaders are keen for all pupils to achieve well and to develop as well-rounded citizens. Pupils have regular opportunities to be involved with the local community or to raise money for charities.

Pupils behave very well. They are polite and well mannered. The pupils spoken to told me that bullying is very rare. On the few occasions it has happened, they said it is resolved very quickly by teachers.

The school is in the heart of its community. The overwhelming majority of parents really value what the school has to offer for their children. Many parents report that staff 'go the extra mile' to support pupils and their families when faced with any problems.

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

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum which enables pupils to achieve well. Teachers make sure that pupils' learning builds on what they already know. Teachers share information with each other to make sure that this happens. They also check what pupils already know before they start to teach a new topic. Pupils enjoy their learning because it excites and motivates them.

The curriculum also provides many opportunities for pupils to develop their character and interests. Trips to museums and local places of interest help to bring pupils' learning to life. Older pupils enjoy many positions of responsibility. These include helping with

recycling, assemblies, the library, being sports leaders or buddies for the youngest children in Reception. Pupils enjoy meeting and listening to the many authors and poets who visit the school to inspire pupils to read and write. There is a good selection of reading books in each class. These include fiction, non-fiction and poetry books. This helps to promote pupils' enjoyment of reading. In 2019, pupils' progress in reading and writing at the end of key stage 2 was well above the national average.

Learning to read has high importance at this school. As soon as children enter the Reception class, they start to learn phonics. Those pupils who struggle with early reading are supported well to catch up. There is a consistent approach to the delivery of the phonics curriculum across the early years and key stage 1. Staff have been well trained. This ensures that pupils enjoy a similar approach when they move into the next class. Pupils' reading books are well matched to the sounds that they are learning. This allows them to practise their reading skills at the correct level. Due to the strength of the phonics curriculum, pupils achieve well. In 2019, the proportion of pupils who met the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check was above the national average.

Pupils are excited by their learning. They are keen to learn and behave well. They share ideas and listen to each other's opinions. Teachers know individual pupils well and cater to their needs. As a result, pupils engage well in lessons. Any disruptions to learning are very rare. Where pupils struggle to remain engaged, staff are skilled in taking time to refocus pupils' attention. This includes for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These pupils receive expert support and achieve well.

Leaders have focused on the development of the science and mathematics curriculum over the past year. In science, the main focus has been for pupils to strengthen their skills in, and understanding of, scientific investigations. Leaders have developed an effective system of assessment in this subject. There are plans to share this approach in other subjects, but these plans are at an early stage. In mathematics in 2019, pupils did not attain as well as they usually do in key stages 1 and 2. Leaders have carefully analysed why this was the case and revised the mathematics curriculum. This means that pupils have more opportunities to strengthen their basic number knowledge and their skills in rapid mental calculation. Work in pupils' books shows that the new strategy is working, but this practice should become firmly embedded.

The early years is a strength of the school. Children quickly learn routines and good learning habits. Staff have an excellent understanding of children's needs. Children are regularly assessed to see what they know and can do. The curriculum is adapted regularly to follow children's interests, which motivates them to learn. They achieve well and are well prepared for Year 1.

Leaders and governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They ensure that no pupils are removed from the school's roll unnecessarily. Leaders are considerate of teachers' workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have a comprehensive package of training in place. This ensures that teachers remain up to date in knowing how to keep pupils safe. Checks on adults who work regularly in the school are comprehensive. Staff are alert to any signs that pupils might be at risk. Leaders ensure that pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including when they use the internet.

When safeguarding matters arise, leaders are quick to react. They engage well with other agencies to make sure that pupils are not at risk. Their approach is rigorous and well recorded. Leaders have recently completed a thorough safeguarding review, which has ensured that all systems and procedures are up to date and robust.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In the recent past, pupils' basic number skills and their mental calculation skills have been underdeveloped. This means that their attainment in mathematics declined in 2019 at the end of key stages 1 and 2. Leaders should ensure that the revised mathematics curriculum becomes firmly embedded. This will help to ensure that pupils develop more fluency in mathematics and are better prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Changes to assessment in some foundation subjects are very recent. This means that teachers do not have a comprehensive understanding of what pupils know and can do in some subjects. Leaders should ensure that the good practice seen in science is developed across all subjects.

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 or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that a 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 the school to be good on 28–29 June 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	105311
Local authority	Bury
Inspection number	10135172
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	278
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mr J Haworth
Headteacher	Ms G Evans
Website	www.holcombebrookprimary.org.uk/
Date of previous inspection	28–29 June 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There have been no significant changes since the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

- I met with two governors, including the chair of the governing body. I also spoke with a representative from the local authority.
- I met with several school leaders, including the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the early years' leader and the leader for SEND.
- I took account of the 30 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- I considered the following subjects in depth as part of the inspection: early reading and phonics, mathematics and science. Inspection activity in these areas included: evaluation of curriculum planning; visits to lessons; scrutiny of pupils' work; listening to pupils read and discussion with subject leaders and teachers. I also had discussions with pupils about their learning in these subjects.
- I looked at safeguarding procedures and scrutinised records for safeguarding and pupils' behaviour. I checked pupils' attendance. I spoke to staff and pupils to evaluate their understanding of safeguarding procedures.

- In addition to the subject-focused activity, I checked the quality of provision in the early years.
- I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school. I also spoke to pupils about school life and their views on personal development and behaviour.
- I analysed the 102 parental responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I also spoke with six parents who were dropping their children off at school.

Inspection team

Ian Hardman, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates:
<http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

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

© Crown copyright 2020