

Inspection of a good school: Holtspur School & Pre-School

Cherry Tree Road, Holtspur, Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire HP9 1BH

Inspection dates:

28 and 29 September 2021

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending this small school. They say how much it has improved in recent months. They told me that the best things about this school are their friends and kind teachers.

Pupils feel safe and well cared for. They appreciate the pastoral care that they receive. Any pupil who feels anxious or worried can visit the school's 'Flourish' department. They say how well staff listen to and act on their concerns.

Most pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to their learning. But, in some key stage 2 classes, low-level disruption can affect pupils' learning. Pupils play happily together. They say that bullying rarely happens at this school.

Parents speak highly of the school and would recommend it to others. Parents whose children attend the specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are pleased with the care their child receives. Pupils make gains in their speech and language skills due to staff expertise.

There are growing expectations for every child. Reading is strong throughout the school. In some subjects, pupils do not learn as well as they should.

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

Parents say that the school has come on in 'leaps and bounds' since the new headteacher arrived a few months ago. Throughout the school significant improvements have been made in a short time. Leaders have a clear vision about how to make the necessary changes. Staff morale is high, and they are ready for the next step in the school's journey. Many staff have recently become subject leaders. They say that their workload and well-being are always carefully considered when any changes are made.

Leaders acknowledge that the school is not providing a consistently high-quality of education in all subjects of the curriculum. Sometimes, gaps in pupils' knowledge are not identified and addressed. In some subjects, curriculum plans are still being developed and implemented. Staff, including those leading a subject, sometimes haven't had subject-specific training. Teachers often have high aspirations for pupils when teaching a specific topic. Nevertheless, they recognise that sometimes pupils are not building on their existing knowledge of a subject. Instead, they are learning information in a disconnected way.

Reading has a very high profile at the school. Staff are rightly proud that pupils make strong gains in their phonics skills. Staff are well trained and teach phonics successfully. They are diligent in checking that new sounds have been carefully learned. The content of books always matches the sounds that pupils know. Extra support is given to any pupil who is falling behind. Pupils enjoy reading a range of books for pleasure and make good use of the school library. Most pupils quickly become confident readers.

New routines have had a significant impact on improving behaviour throughout the school. In most classes, pupils enjoy their learning and don't call out. However, in some key stage 2 classes, there is some low-level disruption in lessons.

Throughout the early years children are well cared for by attentive staff. This enables children to settle quickly into routines. In Reception, children make strong gains in their phonics and number skills. But, in the pre-school, curriculum plans, where they exist, are not closely linked to learning in the rest of the early years. This is because school leaders have not effectively overseen the pre-school since the last inspection.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are well supported so that they learn well. Those pupils who attend the specially resourced provision make significant steps in developing their speech and language skills. Staff, including the on-site speech therapist, are experts in giving pupils the time and encouragement to express themselves.

The school's values were changed with the arrival of the new headteacher. Staff and pupils thought carefully about what they wanted. They agreed that the values were to be 'ready, safe, respectful, kind and unique'. Pupils say that they insisted that unique was included. As one pupil said, 'We are all unique individuals with different needs.' Since September, pupils have enjoyed taking part in a wide range of clubs and educational trips that complement the curriculum.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspector agreed that the planning and sequencing of the curriculum, pupil behaviour and school leadership oversight of the pre-school may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know pupils well. Regular training and updates are provided to ensure that staff identify those pupils who need additional help to flourish. Leaders make sure that staff are alert to local issues. They work well with external agencies to make sure that pupils and their families get the right support as quickly as possible.

There are careful checks when staff join the school. Pupils have regular lessons on how to stay safe when out and about. Pupils show a good understanding of potential dangers when using the internet.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Subject leaders are often new to their roles. They do not always have subject-specific training to help them develop and implement curriculum plans. Gaps in pupils' knowledge are not always identified. As a result, pupils do not always build their understanding of a subject in a systematic way. Leaders need to ensure that staff are well trained. Curriculum plans need to show how learning is to be progressively built on and how gaps in knowledge are to be identified.
- Leadership oversight of the pre-school has been minimal and school leaders need to supervise this part of the school more closely. Curriculum planning in pre-school, where it exists, is at an early stage. School leaders need to ensure that children make consistent gains in the seven areas of learning throughout the early years. To do this, pre-school curriculum plans need to be developed to link in to planned learning in Reception.
- The behaviour of some pupils is not consistently good. Low-level disruption can sometimes affect the learning of others. Leaders need to ensure that all pupils have positive attitudes to their learning.

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 outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2012.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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	110398
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10200180
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	285
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Kirsten Farquhar
Headteacher	Andrew Tagg
Website	www.holtspursch.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 October 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the last Section 8 inspection, there have been a significant number of staffing changes.
- There is provision for two-year-olds in the pre-school.
- The school has specially resourced provision for 10 pupils with speech and language needs. All these pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school uses one alternative provider called The Oaks, which is a primary pupil referral unit based in Buckinghamshire.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation.
- A range of documentation was considered. The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, assistant headteachers, subject leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, the lead teacher for the specially resourced provision and the manager of

the pre-school. There was a telephone call with a representative from the local authority. There was also a meeting with members of the governing body.

- The inspector conducted deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics and history. Lessons were visited, including in the specially resourced provision and pre-school. There were discussions with subject leaders and teachers. Pupils from different year groups read to the inspector.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, around school and during lunchtime.
- Safeguarding records were examined, including the single central register of recruitment checks on staff. The inspector spoke to leaders, teachers, governors and pupils about safeguarding.
- The views of parents were considered, including 109 responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View and 110 responses to free text. The inspector also spoke with parents, including those whose children attend the specially resourced provision. There were 17 responses to the online survey for staff.

Inspection team

Liz Bowes, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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