

Inspection of Holywell Primary and Nursery School

School Road, Rubery, Rednal, Birmingham, West Midlands B45 9EY

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 October 2021

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
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The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils have positive attitudes to their work, but their learning is better in some subjects than in others. Aspects of early reading and curriculum planning in some subjects need to improve.

Pupils are happy in school. Their attendance is good and they enjoy lessons. Relationships are positive among pupils and with adults.

Pupils show care, consideration, and respect for one another. Leaders and teachers promote the school's golden rules of 'be ready, be respectful, be safe'. Pupils are proud of these rules, which they say help everyone in school. For example, pupils move around school very sensibly.

Staff manage any incidents of bullying well. Pupils who need extra help to manage their behaviour are well supported.

The school sets out to nurture the whole child. This is shown in pupils' confidence and eloquence. Pupils feel safe in school. Pupils appreciate visits from the local police, who help them learn how to keep themselves safe.

The majority of parents are pleased with the school and would recommend it to other parents.

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

Leaders have improved the mathematics curriculum. It is planned and sequenced so that new learning builds on what has been taught before. Pupils say tutorial time, at the start of the day, is helping them to get extra practice in mathematics. Staff are trained to challenge and support all groups of learners in mathematics. In early years, children get off to a rapid start and adults model correct mathematical language well. As a result, children are confident to use mathematical words in their work and play.

The history curriculum is well organised, engaging, meaningful and delivered effectively. Leaders plan lessons carefully and provide opportunities for pupils to revisit learning. This helps pupils to remember what they have learned. For example, a study of Longbridge develops pupils' knowledge of local history. Pupils in Year 5, for example, have a good knowledge of how and why things have changed over time. Pupils say that regular quizzes help them to remember more in history.

Leaders' plans to develop learning in other subjects are at different stages. In part, this is because of the disruption caused by COVID-19. For example, in personal, social and health education a new programme is in place but has not yet been fully implemented.

Assessment of learning in some subjects is also at an early stage. Currently, staff are not always clear about what is going well and what needs to be improved. Leaders are not sure about how well some subjects are being taught.

Improving reading and phonics are key priorities for the school. The school has adapted a phonics programme from a range of published materials. Leaders have recently reorganised reading books to match them to the sounds pupils know. However, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to practise the sounds they know. This hinders the development of their reading skills. The school does, however, promote a love of reading from Nursery and throughout the school. Adults read a range of books to pupils. Children are encouraged to become familiar with books and share stories they enjoy with their friends.

Leaders make sure pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) take part in all aspects of school life. Leaders and staff adapt provision to meet the needs of pupils who need extra help.

From the outset, pupils are well cared for and learn to play cooperatively together. Pupils learn the school's 'golden rules' through assemblies and lessons. Leaders make sure that pupils are taught about fairness and respect for others. Pupils are considerate, well-mannered and polite. They say that they enjoy the rewards in school, which include raffle tickets and days when they can choose where to sit in class.

Pupils have a strong sense of fairness and learn to listen to other viewpoints. Pupils respect that everyone is different; they are taught to value the skills and talents of others. Pupils and parents comment positively about the after-school opportunities, including choir and sporting clubs.

Leaders are mindful of staff welfare and workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Senior leaders work closely with the thrive team in school to support pupils and their families. Pupils say they feel safe in school. Leaders place a strong emphasis on pupils learning how to keep themselves safe, for example when online.

All staff receive regular updates from the headteacher about safeguarding. They know what to do if they have a concern about a child. They can spot signs that a pupil may be at risk, and make referrals to other agencies when they need to.

The required checks on staff working at the school are completed.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Not all subject leaders have a clear view of how effectively pupils are learning in their subjects. Leaders need to check whether the intended curriculum is being well delivered and identify where staff need more support and training.
- Leaders have not ensured that a systematic synthetic phonics programme is delivered consistently. Some books are not well matched to the sounds pupils are learning. This means that some pupils cannot practice and apply their phonics skills confidently and fluently. Leaders should ensure that all pupils become fluent early readers, by ensuring that all pupils read regularly to an adult with books which have words that match the sounds they are learning.

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	132060
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10201038
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	449
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Katya Chaplin
Headteacher	Christian Hamilton
Website	www.holywellschool.org
Date of previous inspection	23 – 24 January 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, a new assistant headteacher has joined the senior leadership team.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school, and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- At the time of this inspection, there was a high level of staff absence. The school was operating 'bubbles' and staggered breaktimes and movement around school due to a recent outbreak of COVID-19.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders and subject leaders.

- The lead inspector met with five governors, including the chair of the governing body via an online meeting. She also had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science, music and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors looked at other subjects in less detail.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of safeguarding documents and spoke with pupils, staff and leaders about the arrangements for safeguarding.
- Inspectors observed pupils around school and in lessons. Inspectors spoke to pupils about behaviour and life in school.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, including free-text comments. Inspectors spoke with parents at the school gate.
- Inspectors considered pupil and staff survey responses.

Inspection team

Pamela Matty, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Rachel Davis	Ofsted Inspector
Devinder Riat	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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