

Inspection of Holmesdale Community Infant School

Alma Road, Reigate, Surrey RH2 0BY

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 February 2022

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| Overall effectiveness | Good |
| The quality of education | Good |
| Behaviour and attitudes | Good |
| Personal development | Good |
| Leadership and management | Good |
| Early years provision | Good |
| Previous inspection grade | Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

Ofsted has not previously inspected Holmesdale Community Infant School as an academy school under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as, until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections.

Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection of the predecessor school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Adults at Holmesdale put children at the heart of all they do. Staff show care for every child. The school is inclusive and leaders strive to get to know each child inside out.

Pupils behave well in lessons and work hard. They speak cheerfully about what they do at school. Lunch and break times are a particular favourite. Staff ensure that there are equipment and activities to keep pupils engrossed outside. Pupils talk fondly of friendships and looking out for each other. They know what bullying is and it rarely occurs. Pupils feel safe and protected.

Leaders' high expectations start with instilling independence right from the start of Nursery. They teach children the social and practical skills they need. For example, the youngest children are taught table manners. They can use a knife and fork correctly when eating.

Enrichment beyond the academic curriculum is important to leaders' vision. Visitors come into school to teach pupils new things. Staff make the most of the local area to give pupils first-hand experiences. Pupils are taught important values that prepare them well when they leave at the end of Year 2.

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

Since the headteacher's arrival, she has set about implementing a well-thought-out curriculum that gives pupils exactly what they need. Across subjects, knowledge and skills are identified and sequenced from Nursery through to Year 2. Leaders have pressed on with their plans despite the COVID-19 pandemic. They are passionate about providing the best for pupils.

Leaders have carefully checked the impact on pupils' learning from the COVID-19 pandemic. They have wisely concentrated on the teaching of core skills. Leaders revised the school timetable to enable pupils to practise further their reading, writing and mathematical skills. In early years, teachers are actively promoting children's communication and language and physical development throughout the day. All of these measures are working effectively.

Having chosen ambitious content for the curriculum, leaders are training staff to deliver it well. Teachers are clear how a unit of work is sequenced so that they build on what pupils already know. However, at times, staff lack expert subject knowledge. When this is the case, they tend to think about the activity first, rather than the knowledge pupils need to learn.

In lessons, teachers check pupils' understanding carefully. They look out for typical misconceptions when pupils learn something new and tackle them quickly. However, other than in English and mathematics, leaders have not broken down assessments

to match the steps of learning in the curriculum. Consequently, staff are not necessarily checking that pupils have remembered key knowledge within a unit of work.

Reading underpins everything in the school's curriculum. Leaders ensure that pupils read a diverse range of books to open their minds and learn about the world. Leaders have recently introduced a new phonics programme to teach pupils how to read, write and spell. The implementation of this is at an early stage, but all the signs are positive so far. Leaders have rightly prioritised staff training. They make it clear to staff that they must follow the programme as laid out. Staff are familiarising themselves with teaching phonics in a consistent and effective way. They are making sure that pupils are reading the right books that come with the phonics programme.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. The SEND coordinator knows what is happening for every child. In lessons, teachers ensure that resources and activities are adapted without compromising on ambition. For pupils who may struggle to manage their emotions, leaders quickly involve other professionals where support is needed.

A wide range of clubs are on offer for pupils. The elected school councillors suggest ideas to bring about positive change. Pupils take part in charity work to develop their understanding of helping others. They are respectful and tolerant to anyone who may look or be different to them. Pupils enjoy nominating a friend to receive a coveted friendship school award.

Governors and trustees are strategic and focused on improving the school. They challenge leaders well and probe in depth the impact of leaders' actions to ensure high outcomes for all pupils.

Staff feel that leaders look out for them. It is a happy team. Teachers who are new to the profession are given the time they need to get to grips with the new curriculum and school systems.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils' safety is paramount at this school. Leaders do their utmost to look out for them. Staff are well trained to raise a concern. They know that leaders take swift action and refer to external agencies if required. Adults are vigilant and clear that 'it could happen here'. The headteacher keeps detailed safeguarding records and discusses cases and actions regularly with her team. If a child does not arrive at school, staff investigate immediately to find out where the child is. Some safer recruitment checks for new governors were not in place, but leaders quickly addressed this during the inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Staff's subject knowledge across the whole curriculum is not consistently as strong as it needs to be. As a result, sometimes, teachers are not clear how to set work that focuses on what pupils need to learn next. Leaders should ensure that ongoing professional development for staff is aligned with the teaching of the new curriculum to help pupils build knowledge sequentially.
- In the foundation subjects, assessment is focused on end points. This summative approach does not tell leaders enough about how well pupils are learning in all subjects. Leaders need to ensure that teachers' use of assessment in subjects other than English and mathematics checks precisely if pupils have retained key learning along the way.

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

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| Unique reference number | 145213 |
| Local authority | Surrey |
| Inspection number | 10211810 |
| Type of school | Infant |
| School category | Academy converter |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 7 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 344 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | Nigel Gout |
| Headteacher | Sharon Mullarkey |
| Website | www.holmesdale.surrey.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Information about this school

- The headteacher joined the school in September 2019. The deputy headteacher is currently on maternity leave. Two phase leaders share the role of acting deputy headteacher.
- The school does not currently 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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector met with the chief executive of Greensand Multi-Academy Trust, two trustees and three governors, including the chair.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives into these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science, computing and physical education. To do this, they met

with subject leaders, had discussions with staff and pupils, visited lessons and looked at pupils' work.

- The lead inspector observed some pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors spoke with staff and pupils. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead to examine records and actions. This included sampling a range of safeguarding documentation. A team inspector reviewed checks on the safer recruitment of adults.
- Some pupils from different year groups were met with to talk about their learning and experiences at school.
- The views of staff and parents were gathered through discussions and Ofsted's online surveys.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation provided by the school. This included the school improvement plan, leaders' self-evaluation, policies, curriculum documents, pupil premium strategy, published information about pupils' performance and minutes of governance.

Inspection team

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|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| James Broadbridge, lead inspector | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Zoe Harris | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Lizzie Jeanes | Ofsted Inspector |

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