

Inspection of Holtsmere End Infant and Nursery School

Shenley Road, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire HP2 7JZ

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 April 2022

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 Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at this school. They are very happy and have positive relationships with each other and adults. There is a very evident culture of trust and respect. Leaders have clearly established the school's values and high expectations for all. Pupils are keen to learn and try their best in lessons.

Children in nursery and Reception enjoy learning from the moment they start school each morning. There is much to do and learn. Children quickly learn the routines, take a pride in their learning and make good friendships. They are well looked after.

Pupils behave well in lessons and at breaktimes. The environment is calm and purposeful. Pupils understand about the importance of getting along together. They share their playtime activities willingly. Pupils know what bullying means. Pupils are confident that if it did occur, adults will deal with it effectively.

Pupils learn about keeping themselves safe both in and out of school. They know about online safety and how to share any concerns with adults.

Most parents are happy with the welcome and care their children receive. A typical view stated on Ofsted Parent View was, 'I cannot speak highly enough of my child's journey in Holtsmere End.'

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

Leaders have thought carefully about what they want pupils to learn, know and remember. Across subjects, they have planned how new learning builds on previous learning, so pupils deepen their knowledge and understanding. This is helping pupils be well prepared for starting their next school.

Leaders have identified the key vocabulary they want pupils to learn from early years to Year 2 in most subjects, such as science, for example. However, leaders are still refining their curriculum design. The essential subject-specific information that children need by the end of early years is not as well established across all subjects. This means all children are not as secure as they could be for the subject curriculum they will experience in key stage 1.

Staff are knowledgeable about the subjects they lead. All adults are involved and have the information to teach the curriculum well. Staff frequently check what pupils have learned. They use their information effectively. This helps pupils to deepen their knowledge and understanding and to adapt the activities so that pupils, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), learn well.

The teaching of early reading is very effective. Teachers confidently teach phonics. There is a strong and consistent approach to teaching reading that starts in the

early years. Pupils read from books that are well matched to pupils' phonics knowledge. Adults quickly spot if a pupil is finding learning to read difficult. Staff provide extra help so that pupils are able to keep up. Teachers provide pupils with a range of high-quality books. Pupils learn about the importance of reading. Stories are widely shared across the school, promoting pupils' enjoyment of reading.

Leaders ensure that the needs of pupils with SEND are met well. They provide effective support for teachers so that pupils individual targets are well planned for, delivered and carefully monitored. In most cases, pupils with SEND access the same learning as their peers. Some pupils have significant complex needs which are individually catered for. Leaders have developed good relationships with parents. Leaders work closely with parents and external agencies to tailor learning programmes to address pupils' needs well. This is especially the case for pupils who may have social, emotional or mental health needs. Many pupils successfully move from requiring bespoke support for learning to moving into the classroom with their peers.

Children make a strong start to their education in the early years. Children work and play happily. They are safe and well cared for in this warm and purposeful environment. Children have highly positive relationships with adults. Adults are well trained and ensure that activities are interesting and well resourced. Adults encourage children to develop strong communication and language skills. Children know the routines well and develop their independence effectively.

Pupils are enthusiastic about the extra roles and responsibilities they have. There is a clear sense of everyone being part of the school community whether serving on the eco council or as class monitors. Leaders develop pupils' interests through providing a varied programme of clubs and activities, which are increasing after the restrictions of COVID-19. Pupils in Year 2 are particularly looking forward to their trip to the seaside. Pupils personal development is well promoted. They learn important values, such as respecting difference in others and being kind. They practise fairness through voting for favourite books or naming the African snails, for example.

Leaders have established a highly collaborative team. Staff are proud to work at the school. They appreciate the successful ways that leaders and governors manage their well-being and workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Staff are well trained and understand their responsibilities to keep children safe. Staff know how to spot and record any concerns they may have. Leaders identify quickly vulnerable pupils, providing timely and effective support that families may need. Effective support is in place.

The school's chosen recording system is not used as rigorously as it could be. Consequently, leaders and governors are not able to evaluate all the impact of the help they provide to pupils.

Leaders' checks about adults' suitability to work with children are well organised and maintained.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders, including governors, do not have a quick and secure oversight of all the effective information and actions taken to support vulnerable pupils and their families. Information is not readily available to help leaders check the impact of the support that they are providing to pupils. Leaders should ensure that effective use is made of their chosen approach to record safeguarding information to help evaluate their actions.
- The essential subject-specific information that children need by the end of early years is not as well established across all subjects. This means all children are not as secure as they could be for the subject curriculum they will experience in key stage 1. Leaders should ensure that the end points of learning for early years are clearly defined for all subjects so children can make a smoother transition into the learning expectations of the national curriculum for all subjects in key stage 1.

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	117377
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10211296
Type of school	Infant and Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	219
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jane Bisseker
Headteacher	Nicola O’Connell
Website	www.holtsmereinfects.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	31 January 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school has a nursery provision for children from the age of three.

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 had 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 carried out deep dives into early reading, mathematics, history, geography and science. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons where they were being taught, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils’ work.
- Inspectors spoke to the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, who is also the leader of the early years, and other members of staff. The lead inspector spoke to

two members of the governing body, including the chair, and had a phone conversation with the school's chosen school improvement partner.

- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents about safeguarding, including the employment checks undertaken when staff are appointed, the school development plan and self-evaluation document and minutes of governors' meetings.
- Inspectors considered 44 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, as well as 25 free texts. Inspectors also met parents informally as they arrived to bring their child to school. Inspectors also reviewed 45 responses to the questionnaire for staff. Inspectors spoke to pupils during both class and breaktimes.

Inspection team

Steve Mellors, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Julie Harrison	Ofsted Inspector
Kim Hall	Her Majesty's Inspector

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