

# Inspection of a good school: Holywell Church of England School

Tawstock, Barnstaple, Devon EX31 3HZ

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Inspection date:

8 November 2022

## **Outcome**

Holywell Church of England School continues to be a good school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are proud to attend Holywell Church of England School. The Christian values permeate all aspects of school life. Pupils arrive each morning eager to learn and do their best. They know what it means to 'let your light shine'. Strong relationships feature in pupils' day-to-day experiences. They share any worries with staff. This helps them to feel safe. Pupils know that they will be listened to, and any concerns will be taken seriously. They do not worry about bullying and say that pupils care for each other.

Leaders expect pupils to achieve well. Pupils live up to leaders' high expectations. They are very clear about what is expected of them. Pupils show positive attitudes and commitment to their learning. They cooperate and collaborate well. This helps them to progress securely through the curriculum.

Pupils enjoy learning about the world. Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to learn about contrasting localities by maintaining links with a school that is abroad. Pupils talk with confidence about respecting differences. They value the opinions of others, even if these are different from their own.

The majority of parents and carers hold positive views of the school. They appreciate the individual care and attention that pupils receive.

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

Leaders have developed a curriculum that identifies clearly the key knowledge that pupils need in order to be successful learners. The design of the curriculum means that most pupils learn in a way that helps them to know more and remember more over time. Teachers check pupils' prior knowledge to understand what they can remember. However, this information is not used consistently well enough to provide sequences of learning that build on what pupils know and can do. This makes it hard for some pupils to remember their learning over time.

Pupils learn to read as soon as they join the school. They enjoy reading. Staff regularly read to pupils. Pupils benefit from carefully chosen books that help to expand their vocabulary and develop their comprehension skills. Teachers ensure that the books pupils take home to read are well matched to the sounds they know. This helps pupils to develop confidence and fluency. Leaders provide helpful information about phonics for parents. This supports them in understanding the school's approach to teaching early reading. Staff receive ongoing phonics training. Consequently, phonics teaching is accurate and effective. Staff quickly identify pupils who struggle. Leaders ensure that pupils who fall behind with their reading receive the help they need to catch up.

Children in early years quickly settle into the school's routines. Staff model language accurately and ask children relevant questions to extend their learning.

Teachers know pupils' individual needs well. They identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) without delay. Leaders ensure that pupils receive the help they need in order to learn well. They evaluate pupils' targets to make sure that these are suitable.

Pupils learn to be active citizens in the local community. They participate in fundraising projects, for example for the local homelessness charity. Pupils say that this work is important as it exemplifies one of the school's values, 'loving all others'. Pupils learn about different types of relationships. Staff ensure that the school environment, starting in early years, is inclusive. For example, pupils can choose from a range of books that challenge stereotypes.

Pupils at Holywell are kind and caring. They have a strong sense of right and wrong. Older pupils help younger pupils to make the right choices about their behaviour. Leaders set clear expectations for how all pupils should conduct themselves. This means that learning is rarely disturbed by poor behaviour. Leaders provide a range of opportunities for pupils to fulfil leadership roles. These include being on the ethos committee and the school council. Pupils take these responsibilities seriously. They leave the school with the knowledge and self-belief they need to face their next steps with confidence.

Staff say that this is a happy place to work. They feel well supported to fulfil their roles effectively. There is a shared aim among all stakeholders of wanting the best for every child. Staff, including those who are new to teaching, appreciate leaders' consideration for their workload. Leaders allocate time to embed new ideas.

Leaders have realistic and sustainable development plans. They have managed a period of leadership transition well. Governors regularly check that leaders' actions have a positive impact on the quality of education that pupils receive.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils learn how to keep safe through the taught curriculum. Leaders are aware of the local safeguarding risks that pupils need to be aware of. They plan and deliver training

that enables staff to identify pupils who may be at risk. All staff know how to report concerns. They know that their concerns will be taken seriously. Leaders take swift action to secure the help that vulnerable families may need.

Pupils learn how to keep safe when online. They know the possible risks to consider when using the internet. Leaders share helpful information about online safety with parents.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Leaders have designed a curriculum that is ambitious for all pupils. However, some sequences of learning do not build on what pupils know and can do. This makes it hard for them to remember their learning over time. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum is implemented effectively so that it supports pupils to know and remember more.

## **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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Holywell Church of England Primary School, to be good in March 2017.

## **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.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	145767
<b>Local authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	10240178
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	96
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Nathalie Ingles
<b>Headteacher</b>	Fiona Pearce
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.holywell.devon.sch.uk">www.holywell.devon.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school consists of four mixed-age classes.
- There is before- and after-school provision on the school site.
- The school's most recent section 48 inspection took place in November 2019.

## Information about this inspection

- 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 in early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors spoke with school leaders, subject leaders, pupils, governors and a representative from the trust.

- An inspector listened to pupils read.
- To evaluate safeguarding, inspectors spoke to the designated safeguarding lead, who is also the acting head of school. Inspectors also spoke with staff, governors and pupils, and evaluated record-keeping and staff training.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted’s online survey for parents, and comments made by parents online during the inspection. There were no responses to the pupil questionnaire.

### **Inspection team**

Jane Dennis, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Craig Hayes

Ofsted Inspector

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