

# Inspection of a good school: Holmer Green First School and Pre-School

Watchet Lane, Holmer Green, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire HP15 6UG

---

Inspection dates:

29 and 30 November 2022

## Outcome

Holmer Green First School and Pre-School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils learn in a creative and stimulating environment. They are encouraged to experiment and take risks. Pupils do this by living out the school mantra, known as 'NED'. They never give up, they encourage others and always do their best. Even when, as one child put it, 'it's really hard but you just keep going'.

Early years provides children with strong foundations, where high expectations of behaviour and learning are established. Pupils enjoy the practical tasks and activities that help them know and remember more. They show high levels of engagement and motivation to learn. Pupils have a real love for learning. Opportunities to discuss their work with their friends are plentiful. This is a key feature in most lessons.

Pupils are proud of their school, always feeling safe because they trust the adults who care for them, implicitly. Parents agree. 'Very caring and inclusive' sums up parents' views. Pupils show high levels of care for one another: older pupils are excellent role models for the youngest children. Bullying is extremely rare because leaders constantly focus on building trust and strong relationships. Behaviour is almost always impeccable.

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

Leaders have developed an ambitious curriculum that they improve and refine regularly. Broad topics stimulate learning across different subject areas. For example, in the current topic, Mary Anning, pupils write about her life in English. They learn about the fossils she discovered in science. They explore dinosaur movements in dance lessons. In most subjects, the key concepts that pupils need to know have been clearly identified. Leaders acknowledged that in some subjects this is not yet as precise as it should be. They are addressing this so that all pupils can build on learned knowledge, to help pupils commit their learning to memory.

Leaders make reading a priority. Children in early years learn the initial sounds of letters quickly. A consistent, structured approach to the teaching of phonics builds on this strong

foundation. Swift action is taken if pupils fall behind, to make sure they catch up quickly. Pupils develop a love of reading by listening to their teachers read. Reading with their teachers, at the bedtime stories evening, reinforces this further.

Mathematics is taught well. Children in Reception have a good understanding of the numbers zero to 10 that is built upon in Year 1. Pupils' knowledge of place value is well developed. They can add, subtract, multiply and divide with increasing confidence, using the correct mathematical language. Pupils use this knowledge when undertaking complex tasks like problem-solving. As a result, they deepen their understanding and knowledge. This results in pupils knowing and remembering more of their learning.

The early years curriculum is vibrant and stimulating for young learners. Teachers' high expectations and structured routines enable children to settle quickly and make friends. Exciting learning opportunities help children to develop positive attitudes. This helps build their knowledge. There are writing opportunities available in all areas of learning. Children develop stamina as they move from simple mark making to forming letters. Equally, older pupils work hard to meet their teachers' high expectations. Teachers give pupils lots of practical experiences to capture their imagination and make learning purposeful.

Pupils' knowledge and understanding are checked regularly. Teachers make sure pupils understand key learning before moving on. They ensure that those pupils who find learning more difficult get the help they need. Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are quickly identified and helped. There are appropriate plans in place to make sure they access the same learning as their peers. This often involves more practice, to deepen knowledge, before moving on. On-going emotional support is available for all pupils. This builds confidence, to catch up quickly.

Pupils' personal development drives leaders' ambition for pupils. It is central to the school's vision. Pupils are curious learners, they enjoy learning about their locality in history and geography. Pupils love learning in the forest school and said, 'You can get muddy.' They are accepting of people's differences, tolerant and caring. Roles of responsibility such as being members of the eco-committee develop confidence. Being a member of the 'H team', where you take care of others, develops empathy, tolerance and resilience. These are the school's values demonstrated every day at Holmer Green.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, including governors, have developed a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility. All staff are trained in all aspects of child protection. They are confident to take action if they have a concern regarding a child's safety. Detailed records enable leaders to take swift actions if required. Leaders work effectively with partner agencies to get pupils and families the help that they need.

Pupils have regular appropriate internet safety lessons. They are confident in how to safely cross a road. They know they must stay with their parents when shopping and never talk to strangers.

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

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

- In some foundation subjects, leaders have not identified precisely the key knowledge they want pupils to know and remember. As a result, some pupils cannot build upon their knowledge over time. Leaders need to continue to develop the curriculum so that it clearly sets out the order in which pupils should learn the essential knowledge across all subjects.

## 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in April 2013.

## 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>	110268
<b>Local authority</b>	Buckinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10227212
<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	175
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	David Eteen
<b>Headteacher</b>	Gillian Jones
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.holmergreenfirst.co.uk">www.holmergreenfirst.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	14 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school runs the attached separate pre-school.
- The school manages before- and after-school childcare provision.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

## 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 leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other school staff.
- The inspector also met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, the inspector 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.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector spoke with staff, pupils and governors. They met with the safeguarding lead to discuss safeguarding and review records and documents. The inspector also looked at safeguarding records and actions and reviewed information about the safer recruitment of staff.
- The inspector spoke to staff and groups of pupils from different year groups. He observed behaviour in classrooms and at breaktimes.
- The views of staff and pupils, including responses to Ofsted's online staff and pupil surveys, were considered.

### **Inspection team**

Bill James, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2022