

Inspection of a good school: The Holme Church of England Primary School

Openfields, Headley, Hampshire GU35 8PQ

Inspection dates:

8 and 9 February 2023

Outcome

The Holme Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a happy school where pupils 'grow together in love, courage and wisdom'. Leaders teach pupils to love themselves and others, even when it is difficult. The headteacher has high expectations of the school and the pupils in it. Most pupils respond well to these expectations. They follow the school rules, 'ready, respectful and safe'. For example, children in Reception are secure in their routines and follow instructions well.

Pupils have many opportunities to talk about their feelings. They can identify emotions in themselves and their friends. Leaders help pupils with coping and calming strategies. When bullying does happen, leaders take it seriously and resolve it well. As one pupil said, 'My teacher hates bullying'.

Pupils enjoy many aspects of school life. For example, they love their regular 'forest lessons', where they grow to become resilient and independent. Pupils enjoy learning how to strip bark with a knife safely and cook over an open fire.

Leaders prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain. Pupils learn about different cultures, religions and traditions. Regular 'pause days' help pupils learn more about the Christian faith. Pupils are respectful of each other and value difference.

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

Leaders have put in place an engaging curriculum. They have ensured that pupils build the knowledge and skills they need to be successful as they move on to secondary school. In most subjects, leaders have broken down knowledge into small steps. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and present lessons with clarity. For example, in Year 1 science pupils learn how to collect data, record it in a table and interpret their results well. However, in a few foundation subjects key knowledge is not identified precisely enough. In these subjects, teachers do not always know exactly what pupils must learn and when they must learn it. This can lead to gaps in pupils' knowledge.

Leaders prioritise teaching pupils to read, from the first few weeks of Reception. On the whole, staff teach phonics well. They check pupils' learning regularly. Pupils are learning and reviewing the right sounds. This includes pupils in key stage 2 who are still learning to read fluently. Teachers make sure pupils' reading books match the sounds they are learning. Pupils enjoy reading and listening to stories, especially with Bertie, the school dog. Most staff are experts in teaching the phonics scheme. All staff know how to pronounce sounds correctly. However, a few staff are not as expert as they could be in understanding all aspects of the scheme. This hinders some pupils' learning and occasionally affects their behaviour.

Leaders have developed a caring and inclusive ethos. The majority of parents are very complimentary of the school. However, a small number of parents worry about behaviour. On the whole, pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Pupils work largely undisturbed by distracting behaviour. For example, children in the early years learn about the effects of their 'red behaviours' on others. Staff model how to be kind and respectful to others. However, in a small pocket of the school, there is some variation in the quality of behaviour. Leaders have recently introduced a new behaviour policy. They are training staff how to use this consistently. Leaders are, quite rightly, seeking advice from experts from the local authority to support pupils with complex social and emotional needs better. Leaders want to do the best for all their pupils. Leaders identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) swiftly. Teachers carefully think about what works best for pupils with SEND. They adapt lessons well, responding to pupils' needs effectively.

Leaders see pupils' personal development as a priority. Leaders enhance the curriculum with many clubs, such as choir and fitness circuits. They provide many opportunities for pupils to take on leadership responsibilities, such as house captains and school council members. For example, playground leaders enjoy helping younger pupils to be physically fit during breaktimes by playing organised games. Prayer is important to school life. Pop-up prayer spaces allow pupils to reflect and pray together about a wide range of current issues, such as the war in Ukraine.

Leaders know the school well. Those responsible for governance support the school's development effectively. Regular support from the trust's directors of education guides leaders well. All leaders keep a close eye on staff workload and well-being. Staff feel well supported. They enjoy working at The Holme.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong culture of care and vigilance. Staff receive regular safeguarding training and reminders. They understand their responsibility well. Staff report any concerns, including those that leaders call 'niggling doubts'. This means that leaders know the full picture about a pupil. Leaders act quickly when responding to concerns by engaging external professionals.

Staff teach pupils how to be safe in a range of situations. Pupils know who to speak to and get help. They appreciate the 'worry monsters' where they can leave a note if they do not want to speak to an adult directly.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Whereas many staff are experts at teaching the school's agreed phonics scheme, a few are not as expert as they could be. This affects how well a few pupils learn. Leaders should continue to review and monitor the implementation of the phonics scheme to ensure that all staff teach all aspects of it well.
- In a small number of foundation subjects, leaders have not identified with enough precision what teachers need to teach. Consequently, pupils do not learn as well as they could. They sometimes have gaps in their knowledge. Leaders should ensure that they identify the important knowledge that they want pupils to learn and remember in these subjects.
- The behaviour policy is new and leaders are working to ensure all staff embed the policy consistently in their practice. Occasionally, a few pupils are not as focused on learning as they could be. Leaders need to continue to ensure that staff understand the agreed approach to managing behaviour and apply the school behaviour policy consistently. This includes building staff knowledge on how best to support pupils with more complex social, emotional and mental health needs.

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 school to be good in September 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

Unique reference number	139920
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10242033
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	183
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Dianna Gwilliams
Headteacher	Sarah Stevenson
Website	www.holme.hants.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	19 and 20 September 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The Holme Primary School is part of The Good Shepherd Trust.
- There has been much change in senior leadership in the school since the last inspection. The headteacher began in September 2020. The assistant headteacher was new to their role in June 2021, and the special educational needs coordinator took up her post in September 2022.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Guildford. As a school with a religious character, the school was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in April 2016.
- 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 their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with senior leaders, staff and pupils. She met with the chief executive officer and the directors of education for The Good Shepherd Trust. In addition, she met with the chair of the local governing committee and a trustee.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. She spoke to subject leaders, staff and pupils, visited lessons and looked at pupils' work. She heard pupils read to an adult from the school. The inspector also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector checked the single central record, reviewed safeguarding records and spoke to leaders, staff and pupils. The inspector also discussed safeguarding with those responsible for governance and with the local authority.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation, including leaders' self-evaluation of the school and school development plan.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and staff to discuss the wider development of pupils, behaviour, well-being and workload.
- The inspector took into account parents' responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and parents' free-text comments. She also considered the responses from staff and from pupils to Ofsted's online surveys.
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Inspection team

Lea Hannam, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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