

Inspection of Frederick Holmes School

Inglemire Lane, Hull HU6 8JJ

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 February 2023

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Good

Early years provision

Good

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Frederick Holmes School is a special school catering for pupils with severe physical and learning difficulties, and those with profound and multiple needs. There is a strong sense of family across the school. Most pupils join the school in the early years and stay until the end of the sixth form. Adults know the pupils extremely well. They care deeply about pupils' emotional, physical and educational welfare. Pupils are happy and feel safe.

Leaders have high expectations for all pupils. They ensure that all pupils have the support they need to engage in learning. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties follow a sensory curriculum which develops pupils' interaction through learning activities which engage all the senses. Adults provide highly tailored provision to meet pupils' individual physical, emotional and medical needs. Adults have an expert understanding of how to develop and support the earliest stages of pupils' communication and interaction with others. Leaders ensure that pupils who can access subject-specific learning receive a broad and relevant curriculum based on the national curriculum expectations.

Procedures for managing pupils' behaviour are exceptional. Adults understand that pupils' behaviour is often a form of communication. Relationships between adults and pupils are incredibly strong. Adults quickly spot changes in pupils' behaviour and provide the necessary support. The support provided for pupils who struggle to manage their emotions is outlined in their personal learning plans. There is a calm and purposeful learning atmosphere across all classes.

Most parents and carers speak highly of the school. They say that their children are happy and thriving. Parents appreciate the support that staff provide, both in and out of school. A parent commented positively on their child's enjoyment of learning at the school when saying, 'for a non-verbal child who can't tell me about school, his smile speaks a thousand words'.

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

Leaders have introduced a new curriculum for mathematics designed to meet the complex learning needs of all pupils. The curriculum begins in the early years and develops through to the post-16 curriculum. Adults expertly adapt teaching to meet the targets in pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans. For example, older pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties have access to technology, including hand-held electronic devices and touch-activated games, to develop their understanding of number. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to revisit previous learning to deepen their understanding. In subjects such as science and history, leaders have identified the most important knowledge and vocabulary that pupils will learn. However, these subjects are in the early stages of implementation. Subject leaders have not had the opportunity to check the delivery and impact of their subjects.

The teaching of reading is prioritised in all classes. For pupils following the sensory curriculum, this begins with the initial stages of communication and interaction. In the early years, teachers share stories with children to model and promote a love of reading. In the sensory classes, adults use props such as sounds and scents to engage pupils in reading. Leaders have introduced a systematic approach to the teaching of phonics. They have provided staff with training and support to enable them to deliver the programme with consistency. Pupils use their phonic knowledge well to read and spell unfamiliar words. Teachers skilfully support non-verbal pupils to use their communication aides to engage in phonics lessons. Teachers use assessment well to measure pupils' small steps of progress. Leaders use this information effectively to plan additional interventions. In other subject areas, where there is no consistent approach, assessment is less effective.

The programme for pupils' personal development is exceptional. Carefully designed learning opportunities help pupils to develop an awareness of themselves and others. Starting in the early years, teachers help pupils to understand how to stay physically and mentally healthy. In the sensory classes, adults use massage and music extremely well to help pupils identify their emotions. The curriculum provides all pupils with the opportunity to explore meditation, healthy eating and personal hygiene. Teachers deliver relationships and sex education in an age and cognitively appropriate way. Students in the sixth form understand the need for personal privacy and know what makes a healthy relationship. They demonstrate an excellent understanding of how to use their voice and body to positively communicate with others. Leaders use regular assemblies to increase pupils' understanding of national and global events. A wide range of educational visits and lunchtime activities further enhance the curriculum.

Leaders have developed an exemplary curriculum for the sixth form which helps to prepare students for adulthood. Teachers expertly design learning activities that incorporate students' individual EHC plan targets. Students understand that their learning helps them to develop the skills they will need when they leave school. They talk positively about regular visits to local shops and cafes. These help them to learn how to manage money and communicate with different people in the community. High-quality relationships are a key feature of the sixth form. All students, including those with complex medical and communication needs, feel included in the group.

There is a sensitively designed careers programme in place for all students in the sixth form. Adults support students on visits to a range of local businesses, and education and training providers. Leaders invite these providers into school to enable parents to experience the range of options on offer. Leaders have incorporated a range of formal accreditations, such as horticulture, performing arts, and independent living skills, into the curriculum. These are available to all students, including those on a sensory pathway. In addition, students can participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, with several working towards the silver award.

The headteacher provides highly effective leadership for the staff team. Staff know that leaders value their well-being and understand the pressures of their workload.

Staff are proud to work in the school. Members of the trust and local governing board share the headteacher's high ambition for all pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong culture of safeguarding that considers the heightened vulnerabilities of pupils in the school. Leaders ensure that all staff have the training they need to keep pupils safe. Staff know how to identify slight changes in behaviour or appearance that are indicators of concern. Leaders work closely with a range of medical and social care professionals to ensure there is a holistic support network for each pupil and family. The family support worker provides effective support to families at a preventative level. This includes support such as healthy sleep patterns and personal care.

The curriculum helps pupils to stay safe. Pupils understand the dangers of sharing personal information online. With the support of the police community support officer, teachers help pupils to recognise 'safe strangers' such as those in uniform, who can help them outside of school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some subjects, such as science and history, are in the early stages of implementation. Subject leaders have not checked the delivery and impact of the revised curriculum outcomes. Leaders should ensure that subject leaders have planned opportunities to evaluate learning across all classes and provide subject support to staff where required.
- Leaders have not developed a consistent approach to assessment. This means that most subject leaders do not have a clear understanding of the gaps in pupils' knowledge in their subject. Leaders should ensure that assessment provides teachers and subject leaders with the information they need to support future learning in each subject.

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	146220
Local authority	Kingston Upon Hull City Council
Inspection number	10255768
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	108
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	12
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Graeme Brook
Headteacher	Helen Maddison
Website	www.frederickholmesschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Frederick Holmes School converted to become an academy in September 2018. When its predecessor school, Frederick Holmes School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school caters for pupils with severe physical and learning difficulties and those with profound and multiple needs. All pupils have an EHC plan.
- Pupils' medical needs can lead to extended hospital stays and recovery times. Leaders provide learning support to any pupils unable to attend school for medical reasons.
- The headteacher was appointed in January 2022. Prior to that she was head of school under the executive headship of the trust's strategic special school lead.
- Most teachers are new to the school since the last inspection.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded 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 the headteacher and senior leaders, the chief executive officer and deputy chief executive officer of the trust, the trust's strategic special school improvement lead, and members of the board of trustees and local governing body.
- Inspectors conducted deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science and personal development. 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 the subject leader for history and geography and reviewed curriculum plans and samples of pupils' work.
- To judge the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors scrutinised the single central record of recruitment checks and the procedures for the safer recruitment of staff. The lead inspector met with the designated leader for safeguarding, the headteacher and the family support worker to discuss actions taken following reported concerns. Inspectors met with staff to check their understanding of safeguarding and the impact of the training received.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders to review behaviour records and discuss the management of attendance.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses. In addition, inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Alex Thorp, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Stephanie Innes-Taylor

His Majesty's Inspector

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