

Inspection of a good school: Holmer Lake Primary School

Brookside, Telford, Shropshire TF3 1LD

Inspection dates:

4 and 5 May 2023

Outcome

Holmer Lake Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a very welcoming and caring place in which to work and learn. Leaders and staff have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and learning. They set fair rules and make sure everyone understands them. There are lots of rewards that recognise and encourage positive attitudes. Pupils value these and usually respond well.

If anyone thinks that bullying might be happening, then staff take it seriously. They record all concerns and follow them up swiftly. A pupil safeguarding team and playground 'happy helpers' also play their parts in checking that everyone is safe and happy at school.

Lessons are well organised and cover a lot of ground. Pupils work hard and achieve much. Beyond the classroom, there are plenty of other things to do. Clubs, trips and 'special days' add colour and interest to school life. On top of this, the playground is full of fascinating equipment that helps pupils exercise their bodies and imaginations.

Pupils, parents and staff say many positive words about the school. They particularly like the way leaders look out for everyone's welfare and listen to what they have to say. Communication from school to home is excellent, so parents always know what is going on.

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

Leaders are very clear about the central importance of reading in the curriculum. To this end, they have established a systematic and well-resourced approach to teaching phonics. From the first day in Reception, staff teach about letter sounds. They support children to develop good speaking and listening habits. This serves them well in all areas of learning. By the end of key stage 1, almost all pupils have grasped the phonics code and many are reading fluently. If any pupils need to catch up, then well-trained staff provide them with extra practice.

The focus on supporting pupils to become informed and capable readers continues across key stage 2. Daily classroom reading, story time and a rich range of fiction, non-fiction and poetry provide pupils with plenty of quality literature to enjoy and learn from.

Leaders provide clear guidance in other subject areas too. They have set out what pupils should learn and in what order. The curriculum design is mindful of children's starting points in the early years, but also looks ahead to what comes next. Importantly, the curriculum identifies key aspects of learning that teachers revisit time and time again so that pupils remember them. In doing so, leaders have also thought carefully about how to make this work with mixed-age classes. In the main, they have managed this well. Indeed, teachers' regular checks on what pupils know reveal that pupils remember much of what they have been taught. Furthermore, in both English and mathematics, pupils regularly use and apply what they know in order to learn more. This assists teachers' ongoing assessments of what pupils know and can do.

However, some other subjects do not provide as many opportunities for pupils to use what they have learned. In geography, for example, pupils learn about continents, countries and oceans and can find them on maps. However, because the curriculum does not regularly require them to draw on this knowledge in different contexts, they do not develop more complex ways of using what they know. Leaders are alert to this and plan to make further adjustments.

In addition to classroom learning, pupils learn a lot in other ways. The school's behaviour code is displayed around the school for all to see and follow. This supports a consistent approach to managing behaviour and allows lessons to run smoothly. If any behaviour slips below expectations, staff and leaders deal with it promptly and constructively. For instance, if any pupils miss too much school, arrive late or find it hard to settle in class, the school team works with parents to find ways to improve things. All of this makes for a very inclusive and solution-focused culture.

Leaders identify any special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) accurately and keep a close eye on pupils' progress and well-being. Pupils with SEND are supported to access all areas of the curriculum, and extra-curricular activities. Whether it be a residential trip, a special job in school or an after-school club, all are encouraged to make the most of the opportunities provided.

The headteacher provides calm, reflective and ambitious leadership. Together with other leaders and governors, she has built up an effective staff team and is doing a very good job. Indeed, staff report high levels of satisfaction at work. They say that expectations are high but appreciate leaders' support for their work.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are attentive to pupils' safety and welfare. They have reliable systems for noticing, and responding to, concerns. Around the school and in newsletters to parents, there are many messages about safeguarding. These explain what to look out for and

what to do in different situations. This helps to keep safeguarding at the forefront of everyone's thinking.

Pupils are also involved in promoting safety messages. The pupil safeguarding board finds out what pupils think and makes suggestions about how to keep everyone feeling safe and secure at school.

All the correct checks on adults are carried out and recorded.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In foundation subjects, pupils learn and remember a lot but, in some subjects, the curriculum does not regularly require them to use and apply what they know. This means they do not learn to apply their knowledge in more sophisticated ways. Leaders should continue to refine their curriculum plans so that pupils have more opportunities to use what they know in different contexts.
- Some pupils arrive late or miss school too often. This hinders their learning. Leaders should continue to work closely with families and other services to find constructive solutions to improving attendance and punctuality.

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 November 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	123429
Local authority	Telford & Wrekin
Inspection number	10256985
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	241
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Barbara Williams
Headteacher	Harv Kumar
Website	www.holmerlakeprimary.org
Dates of previous inspection	1 and 2 November 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school provides before- and after-school childcare on the school site.
- Leaders do not use any alternative providers.

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 of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics and history. In these subjects, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at pupils' work. The inspector also looked at the curriculum in other subjects to check how they were organised and taught. He observed some pupils reading to an adult.
- The inspector looked at published performance data about the school and a range of school documents. These included information about pupils' behaviour, attendance, the

curriculum, extra-curricular activities, governance and school improvement planning. He examined documents published on the school's website.

- The inspector asked school leaders, pupils and parents about safeguarding arrangements and safety routines. He examined the record of employment checks on school staff and looked at other records.
- The inspector talked informally with pupils, parents and staff to gather general information about school life. He took account of the responses to Ofsted's surveys of staff and parents' views. He spoke with some parents at the start of the school day and during a 'stay and play' session in the Reception class. He visited the before-school breakfast club, a Coronation celebratory lunch and an assembly.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in class, at lunchtime, on the playground and at other times during the day.
- During the inspection, the inspector had formal meetings with the headteacher, other leaders, school staff, pupils and governors. He met with a local authority officer and the school's education adviser.

Inspection team

Martin Pye, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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