

# Inspection of Holywell Primary School

Tolpits Lane, Watford, Hertfordshire WD18 6LL

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Inspection dates: 19 and 20 April 2023

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Early years provision

**Requires improvement**

Previous inspection grade

**Good**

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

Holywell is a friendly school. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They feel safe, and they enjoy playing with their friends. Pupils know what bullying is. They trust staff to deal with issues if they occur.

Pupils have a strong understanding that everyone is equal. They play their full part in making Holywell a welcoming school. They are kind and supportive in helping new pupils to settle in. Pupils learn about rights and responsibilities. They put what they know into practice to make a positive difference to their community. Pupils take on responsibilities such as becoming school councillors or house captains, as well as carrying out activities like litter picking.

Leaders have high ambitions for pupils. They learn from a curriculum that interests them. However, the quality of education they receive is not consistently good. Pupils do not always get enough opportunities to practise what they study. This means that some do not make the progress they should.

Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They listen carefully and follow instructions. Most pupils behave with respect and tolerance. However, some pupils are not supported to make the most appropriate behaviour choices, so poor behaviour reoccurs.

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

Leaders have carefully managed the school through a transitional period. They have adjusted the curriculum so that it is broad, ambitious and meets pupils' interests and needs. Leaders' curriculum plans in some subjects are not fully in place. They have not checked how well the curriculum is taught. In several subjects, and in the early years, delivery of the curriculum does not match leaders' high ambitions. Governors were not as informed about the quality of education as they should have been. This is no longer the case.

Leaders have not given teachers the curriculum information they need to be able to teach some subjects effectively. Some teachers do not have sufficient subject knowledge, and so they do not break learning down clearly for pupils. In the early years, the activities that teachers provide for children do not always match what leaders intend children to learn. These weaknesses mean that some pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), struggle to develop a secure understanding of some curriculum content.

In some subjects, teachers have the subject knowledge they need and teach the curriculum well. Where this is the case, pupils have a stronger understanding of curriculum content. In science, for example, pupils recall what they have learned with enthusiasm.

Leaders identify the needs of pupils with SEND well. Staff forge positive relationships with these pupils. This helps pupils to develop the confidence to try learning tasks independently. In some cases, the quality of support is not consistent. Pupils with SEND experience the same variable quality of education as other pupils.

The new phonics curriculum is in the early stages of development. The teaching of phonics varies in its effectiveness. In the early years, children are learning to match letters to the sounds they make. They enjoy sharing books with their classmates and adults. They are gaining the knowledge to help them with reading in Year 1. However, teachers do not consistently provide some pupils at the early stages of reading with enough practise to become confident and fluent readers. Teachers do not always ensure that pupils who are more secure in reading have books that are closely matched to their reading stage. Leaders are developing opportunities for pupils to develop a love of reading.

Most pupils want to do well. They listen and follow instructions, and this begins in the early years. However, staff do not consistently have high expectations for all pupils' behaviour. On some occasions, teachers do not act to prevent the behaviour of a few pupils' from impacting on the learning of others. Some pupils find it hard to concentrate in some lessons. In some cases, pupils are not taught how to correct their behaviour, and therefore they repeat it. Leaders do not look closely at patterns and trends in pupils' behaviour. This means they do not have a clear view of where behaviour needs to improve.

Pupils learn about the world around them and what makes them individual. They develop a mature understanding of different faiths and lifestyles.

Governors now hold leaders to account to ensure that the quality of education is a priority. Leaders and governors are developing a strategic approach to school improvements.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff have up-to-date safeguarding training. Staff know how to spot and report concerns. They do this with urgency. Leaders act upon concerns promptly. They seek support appropriately from external agencies to keep pupils safe. Leaders complete the necessary checks on staff working at the school.

Pupils learn how to stay safe in the real world, such as when crossing the road or when riding a bike, and how to stay safe online. Pupils know how to recognise risks online and how to use apps safely. Pupils know who to talk to if they have worries or concerns. They trust staff to help them.

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

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

- Teachers do not provide some pupils with sufficient opportunities to develop their phonics knowledge or practise their reading. This means that, in some cases, some pupils do not make rapid, secure progress to become fluent readers. Leaders must ensure that all staff support pupils to develop fluency with reading effectively.
- Teachers' knowledge of some subjects and how to teach them is not consistently secure. Teachers do not consistently adapt the curriculum well enough to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with SEND. This prevents pupils from learning and remembering some important subject knowledge. Leaders should ensure that all staff have the subject knowledge and expertise to teach all subjects well and adapt the curriculum to meet pupils' needs.
- Leaders have not ensured that all teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Occasionally, teachers allow behaviour that disturbs pupils' learning to go unchallenged. A small number of pupils are not supported effectively to improve their behaviour. Leaders should ensure that staff know, understand and consistently apply leaders' high expectations for pupils' behaviour.
- Leaders' monitoring of pupils' behaviour and how well the curriculum is delivered is underdeveloped. As a result, they do not have an accurate understanding of the quality of education or pupils' behaviour. Leaders should ensure that they monitor and evaluate all aspects of the school's provision effectively.

## **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>	117290
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10255091
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	237
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Stephen Moran
<b>Headteacher</b>	Coert Van Straaten
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.holywell.herts.sch.uk">www.holywell.herts.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	29 November 2017

## Information about this school

- The number of pupils on roll has decreased significantly since the previous inspection.
- The school does not use 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, deputy headteacher, subject leaders, the special educational needs coordinator and other staff. The lead inspector met with five governors, including the chair of the governing body. The lead inspector also had a meeting with a representative from the local authority.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science, history and art. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with the subject leader, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning, listened to pupils read and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at other curriculum plans, including those for religious education, relationships and sex education, and personal, social and health education.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation relating to behaviour and attendance. They also spoke to pupils about their learning, safety and behaviour.
- To inspect safeguarding, meetings were held with the designated safeguarding lead, teachers and pupils. The lead inspector also reviewed records, policies and documents relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of the eight responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, and the eight free-text comments that were received. Inspectors also took account of the seven responses to Ofsted's staff survey and the 37 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

### **Inspection team**

Nerrissa Bear, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Stuart Pope	Ofsted Inspector
Michael Williams	His Majesty's Inspector

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