

# Inspection of a good school: Holly Trees Primary School

Vaughan Williams Way, Warley, Brentwood, Essex CM14 5RY

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Inspection dates: 23 and 24 May 2023

## **Outcome**

Holly Trees Primary School continues to be a good school.

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

Pupils enjoy being part of this happy, caring school community. Pupils know staff expect them to work hard and behave well. Pupils are motivated to meet these expectations. They take pride in their work. Pupils value being part of a school that looks after everyone. They appreciate that staff know them well. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are ably supported academically and personally by staff.

Pupils understand the school rules and how these help them to stay safe. Pupils co-operate well. They respect each other's ideas. They concentrate fully on their learning in lessons. Pupils have positive working relationships with staff. Pupils know who to speak to if they have any worries. They are confident that adults will always listen and respond to their concerns. Bullying is rare and quickly dealt with.

Pupils appreciate the wide range of learning experiences on offer. They value the opportunities to develop their talents and interests. Many pupils attend school clubs. Pupils look forward to going on trips, residential visits and attending sporting competitions. Members of the large school choir sing annually at London's O2 arena. Pupils are encouraged to look after the school environment. For example, older pupils enjoy looking after the beehives and harvesting the honey.

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

Leaders have designed a curriculum that is ambitious for all pupils. From early years upwards, leaders have ensured that pupils' knowledge builds step by step over time. This means that pupils, including children in Reception, are ready and well prepared for what they will learn next. Teachers deliver the curriculum confidently. However, in a small number of subjects, curriculum content has very recently been updated. Teachers are still getting to grips with these changes. Leaders' work to check that these curriculum updates are working as intended is also at a very early stage.

Leaders provide teachers with effective support and training. As a result, teachers in all year groups have strong subject knowledge. Teachers provide pupils with plenty of opportunities to use the important words and phrases, which deepen pupils' understanding in different subjects. Pupils achieve well because teachers explain things clearly. This includes children in the early years. Pupils show they understand important knowledge. Teachers encourage pupils to discuss their learning. This helps pupils retain new knowledge.

Teachers regularly check what pupils know and remember. Teachers adjust their teaching to close any gaps in pupils' understanding. Teachers regularly ask questions to identify pupils who need extra help. Pupils can recall what they have been taught in previous lessons. However, in subjects other than English and mathematics, leaders do not make enough use of these checks to ensure that pupils are learning the knowledge they intend.

The reading curriculum is well thought out. Leaders have introduced a new phonics scheme to ensure that all pupils learn the sounds and skills they need to become fluent readers. Staff have been well trained to teach reading confidently. Children learn to read as soon as they join Reception. Older pupils develop fluency and understanding of what they have read because teachers think carefully about the books pupils study. Teachers regularly check that pupils are achieving well in their reading. They quickly identify anyone falling behind. These pupils get the extra support that they need. These pupils catch up quickly, as the books they read precisely match the sounds they need to practise.

Pupils with SEND have their needs identified quickly and accurately. They are well supported to access the full curriculum. Leaders make good use of advice from external specialists, so that pupils with SEND get the extra help they need. Teachers skilfully adapt lessons to cater for the range of pupils' needs. As a result, pupils with SEND achieve well.

Pupils listen and respond well to adults' advice. Learning is very rarely disrupted by poor behaviour.

Leaders have ensured that there are opportunities to support pupils' personal development. This includes pupils being able to serve as house captains, sports captains or apply to be head boy or head girl. There is a range of extra-curricular activities, including choir, French and basketball. Pupils learn about important values such as democracy and tolerance. They celebrate difference with events such as 'Love is Love' week. Pupils have a mature understanding of equality and diversity.

Governors are supportive of leaders' and staff's well-being and workload. They carry out their responsibilities diligently. Staff feel valued and are proud to work at the school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. They are taught about online safety and managing risks. Staff receive regular safeguarding training. Staff are vigilant and know

how to identify and report concerns. Leaders have in place a rigorous reporting system to ensure that all concerns are dealt with appropriately. Leaders work well with a range of agencies to get pupils and families the assistance they need.

Governors and leaders have a clear oversight of safeguarding procedures in the school.

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

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

- A few foundation subjects have recently had curriculum content updated. This means that teachers are still becoming familiar with the new knowledge they need to teach. As a result, pupils do not yet have the detailed knowledge leaders want them to have in these few subjects. Leaders need to support teachers to deliver these updated subjects as intended. Leaders then need to check that pupils are acquiring and securing this new knowledge well.
- In the foundation subjects, leaders do not check regularly enough what pupils have remembered. This means that leaders are not clear how successfully pupils are meeting the aims of their ambitious curriculum. Leaders should ensure that their checks demonstrate fully how well pupils are recalling and retaining the depth of knowledge intended.

## **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 October 2012

## **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>	132142
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10255058
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	407
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Kathryn Waters
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sarah Meacher
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.hollytreesprimaryschool.co.uk">www.hollytreesprimaryschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	14 September 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- There is an early morning childcare club and an after-school childcare club, run by school staff.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

## Information about this inspection

The inspector carried out this graded inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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 have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and members of the school's leadership team.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and music. For each deep dive, the inspector met with the subject

leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at pupils' work.

- The inspector looked at a range of documentation including development plans, governor visit reports and minutes of governor meetings.
- The inspector met with the special educational needs coordinator and with the pastoral leader.
- The inspector met with three members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The inspector spoke on the telephone to the local authority's school effectiveness partner.
- The inspector looked at the single central record of pre-employment checks. The inspector spoke to leaders, school staff, governors and pupils to review the school's records and arrangements for safeguarding.
- The inspector spoke to parents at the beginning and end of the school day. The inspector considered the 103 responses made by parents to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, including 68 free-text responses. The inspector also considered the 40 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff and the 84 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for pupils.

### **Inspection team**

Nick Rudman, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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