

Inspection of Holmgate Primary School and Nursery

Holmgate Road, Clay Cross, Chesterfield, Derbyshire S45 9QD

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 June 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are well cared for at Holmgate Primary School and Nursery. They know that their teachers are there to help them. Pupils 'check in' every morning so that they can let staff know how they are feeling. Pupils who say that they are 'not feeling great' have the opportunity to speak to a member of staff. This helps pupils to manage their feelings so that they are ready to learn.

Leaders are ambitious that all pupils will succeed both personally and academically. Pupils are encouraged to 'let your light shine'. Pupils know that teachers expect them to work hard and behave well. In lessons, they pay close attention and participate fully in their learning. They show respect towards adults and one another. Their positive attitudes continue at social times. They play well together and stick to the zones for different activities. They know that this is to keep them safe.

Children in the early years get off to an exceptional start. Every learning activity is purposeful. Pupils show high levels of concentration and enjoyment as they work and play. Staff take every opportunity to extend children's learning. They say that 'every day counts, there is not a minute to lose'.

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

Leaders have worked strategically to improve the ambition of the curriculum. They know that in the past not enough pupils were well prepared for the next stage in their education. Leaders are addressing this rapidly. Discussions with pupils, and work in their books, confirm that they now know, and remember, more of the intended curriculum.

Curriculums set out what pupils are expected to learn. The small steps of learning that pupils need to make towards these end goals are broken down. Careful thought is given as to how learning builds up step by step in a logical way. This is particularly well thought out in early years. In a very small number of subjects, these small steps of learning are not identified as clearly as they are in the vast majority of other subjects.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They explain new learning clearly. They provide pupils with interesting activities that engage them in their learning and help them to learn effectively. As a result, pupils remember the important knowledge they have been taught. For example, they recall key dates in history and make links between historical facts and modern-day life. They explain that democracy originated in Ancient Greece. In physical education, pupils use the skills they have been taught in one sport and apply and adjust these skills as they learn to play new games.

Teachers routinely check that pupils do not forget important knowledge in reading and mathematics. When pupils have not grasped a new concept, teachers make sure this is addressed. This practice is not as well developed in other subjects.

Leaders have prioritised the teaching of early reading. Staff receive the training they need to be early reading experts. Phonics is taught well. Pupils are experiencing greater success as they learn the sounds they need to know to read successfully. Pupils who find reading more difficult receive extra support. Leaders have also ensured that when pupils acquire a secure knowledge of phonics, they continue to develop the comprehension skills they need to read and understand a wide range of texts. Pupils are positive about reading. Librarians champion a love of reading across the school.

From the early years, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are promptly identified. Teachers adapt lessons so that these pupils can learn alongside their peers. Pastoral support is provided for pupils who have social and emotional difficulties. A small number of pupils sometimes miss important learning in foundation subjects when they are taken out of class to receive this support. Some pupils with SEND also miss learning because they do not attend school often enough.

Leaders have carefully planned opportunities to enhance pupils' personal development. Right from the start of school, pupils begin to be prepared well for life in modern Britain. They learn how to take care of themselves and each other. They understand the value of making positive contributions to the life of the school, their local communities and the world beyond. They learn about the faiths and beliefs of others. They accept and respect difference.

Governors are dedicated to improving the school. Pupils' best interests are at the heart of every decision. Staff are proud to work at the school. They appreciate the positive working environment leaders have established. They say that their workload and well-being are considered.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong safeguarding culture. They understand their responsibilities. They ensure that all staff receive the training they need to recognise the signs that pupils may be at risk of harm. Staff know pupils and their families well. They pass their concerns on without delay. Leaders take the right action. They offer in-house support. They involve external agencies when needed to make sure that vulnerable pupils and their families receive the help they need.

Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe. They know who to talk to if they are worried or feel unsafe in any situation.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a very small number of subjects, curriculum plans do not identify the small steps of learning that pupils need to make as they work towards the overall learning intention. It is not always clear how new learning builds on prior learning and pupils struggle to remember what they have learned beyond the most recent lessons. Leaders should ensure that all curriculum plans precisely identify the key knowledge that pupils are expected to learn.
- Assessment in subjects other than English and mathematics is not fully developed. Gaps in pupils' learning are not consistently identified or addressed. Leaders should ensure that an effective approach to checking what pupils know and can do in these subjects is developed so that teachers can accurately identify what pupils have learned and can remember.
- Not enough pupils with SEND attend school well. In addition, a very small number of pupils with SEND miss key learning in foundation subjects when they access nurture activities. This means that pupils with SEND have gaps in their learning. Leaders must take action to ensure that pupils with SEND attend well and that every pupil with SEND has access to all of the curriculum alongside providing vital support to meet pupils' social and emotional needs.

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	112530
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10254776
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	244
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Phil Waters
Headteacher	Ffion Thornton (acting headteacher)
Website	www.holmgate.derbyshire.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	5 and 6 February 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- An acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher were in post at the time of the inspection.
- A new chair of governors has been appointed since the previous inspection.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club that is managed by the governing body.
- The school does not make use of 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 held meetings with the acting headteacher, acting deputy headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team. The lead inspector met with

seven members of the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair of the governors. She also spoke with a representative of the local authority.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics, science, physical education and history. Inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, reviewed pupils' work and spoke with teachers and pupils. The lead inspector observed pupils reading to a member of staff.
- Inspectors reviewed further curriculum plans for geography and religious education.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils to collect their views of the school, including how pupils behave. Inspectors observed behaviour in lessons, at social times and around the school.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors met with safeguarding leaders, staff and pupils. They checked a sample of safeguarding records and reviewed the recruitment checks made on staff.
- Inspectors met with parents at the start of the school day. They considered responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also reviewed responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Caroline Poole, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Rob della-Spina	Ofsted Inspector
Kelly Royle	Ofsted Inspector

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