

# Inspection of a good school: Holbrook Primary School

Holbrook School Lane, Horsham, West Sussex RH12 5PP

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Inspection dates: 27 and 28 June 2023

## Outcome

Holbrook Primary School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at Holbrook. They learn in a school that treats and values pupils as individuals. From the early years upwards, children are encouraged to do their very best. Strong relationships demonstrate the school's vision of 'Aiming high, succeeding together'.

Children in Reception get off to a great start. An exciting learning environment and excellent routines make sure that children settle quickly and make friends. Pupils feel very safe. They appreciate the high levels of care staff show them. Pupils are confident to speak to adults if they have a concern or worry. Incidents of bullying are rare and pupils trust adults to deal with these effectively.

Leaders are ambitious for every pupil to succeed. All pupils benefit from effective emotional and academic support. As a result, pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well. Teachers set high expectations for learning and behaviour. Pupils persevere in lessons to meet these and work hard. There is little low-level disruption in class. Pupils have strong attitudes to learning. They especially enjoy the many opportunities to discuss their work to help deepen their understanding. 'You really have to think to get answers,' one Year 6 pupil explained.

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

Leaders have developed an ambitious curriculum, which stimulates pupils' thinking and consolidates their learning. Pupils find their learning exciting and engaging. Subject leaders have sequenced the essential knowledge pupils need to know. In most subjects, this enables pupils to build knowledge coherently and achieve well. For example, in physical education, learning focuses on agility, balance and coordination. As a result, pupils continually revisit knowledge and deepen their understanding. However, in a few subjects where subject leaders are new, the curriculum does not identify specific steps in learning precisely enough. In these subjects, pupils do not always achieve as well as they could.

Leaders describe reading as the 'the gateway' to all learning and make it a top priority. Pupils learn phonics through a well-structured, consistent approach. Children in Reception learn letter sounds from day one and can soon build and read words. If children fall behind, teachers take swift action to help them catch up. Children in early years are surrounded by rich experiences of books. Older pupils read many different class books together. Pupils enjoy these shared reading sessions, where the whole class discuss their learning. This is one of many ways in which pupils develop a love of reading. By Year 6, pupils are confident readers, reading with fluency and comprehension.

Pupils learn mathematics well. Children in Reception learn numbers quickly. They count confidently and can name common shapes, such as rectangle and circle. Children have many opportunities to apply their knowledge of number in practical activities, such as counting the legs of insects as part of a minibeast topic. Older pupils use correct mathematical language consistently well when justifying their answers in reasoning and problem-solving.

Early years staff are highly skilled. They know exactly what young children need to learn effectively. Teachers across the school have good subject knowledge. They provide stimulating and motivating lessons that capture pupils' interest well. Teachers regularly review the progress of pupils with SEND and quickly intervene if they are falling behind. Teachers encourage pupils to apply their knowledge in one subject to their learning in others. Pupils enjoy this. For example, Year 6 pupils use their computing and mathematics knowledge to make a spreadsheet to work out project costs in design technology. Furthermore, younger pupils use their scientific knowledge to help them draw accurate diagrams of insects in art.

Leaders have established a culture of strong support for all staff. There are high levels of trust in the school. Staff appreciate the opportunities available to develop professionally. Staff feel that leaders support them well to focus on the tasks that make the most difference to pupils' learning.

Leaders are rightly proud of their work to promote pupils' wider development. Pupils are tolerant and accepting of others. School staff are excellent role models. Older pupils, in turn, act as superb role models for younger pupils. They are proud of their contribution to the school. They enjoy helping younger pupils as reading ambassadors or sports leaders. Pupils are eager to help the school community. They have many opportunities to help improve the school, including through discussions with school governors.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, including governors, have developed a strong culture of safeguarding. Safeguarding is seen as everyone's responsibility. Staff are very well trained. They know exactly what to do if they have a concern about a pupil. Incidents are recorded in detail and follow up actions are implemented quickly. Leaders work hard to engage effectively with outside agencies to ensure families get the support they deserve.

Pupils feel safe in school. Regular lessons in safety, covering stranger danger, water safety and internet safety support pupils' good decision making. Older pupils have a clear understanding of the threats and opportunities offered by social media platforms.

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

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

- In a few foundation subjects, leaders have not identified the sequence of knowledge pupils need to learn precisely enough. As a result, some pupils do not build knowledge and deepen their understanding as well as they could. Leaders need to make sure that subject leaders continue to develop the curriculum, so that the important knowledge that pupils need to learn and when they need to learn it is identified in full.

## **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 February 2018.

## **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>	125965
<b>Local authority</b>	West Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10269023
<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>	418
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Shirley Gardner
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ian Holmes
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.holbrook.co.uk">www.holbrook.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	6 and 7 February 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average-sized school
- Before-school and after-school provision is managed by an external provider.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first 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 met with headteacher and other school staff.
- The inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. The inspector also spoke on the telephone with a representative of the local authority and a school improvement advisor.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, the inspector met with the subject leaders,

looked at curriculum planning, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector spoke with staff, pupils and governors. He met with the school's designated safeguard lead to review the provision for safeguarding and review records and actions. He also looked at safeguarding records and reviewed information about the safer recruitment of staff.
- The inspector spoke to staff and groups of pupils from different year groups. He observed behaviour in classrooms and at break and lunchtimes.
- The view of staff and pupils, including responses to Ofsted's online staff and pupil surveys, were taken into account.
- The responses to Ofsted Parent View, including written responses, were also taken into account.

### **Inspection team**

Bill James, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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