

# Inspection of a good school: Holden Lane Primary School

Ralph Drive, Sneyd Green, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST1 6JS

---

Inspection dates:

5 and 6 March 2024

## Outcome

Holden Lane Primary School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Holden Lane is a small school with a big heart. Parents, staff and pupils are united in the view that this school is a 'special place to belong'. Strong relationships contribute to why pupils report feeling safe and happy at school. Pupils feel that their voice really matters and that those who care for them will always be there in their time of need.

Pupils perform well in their learning, particularly in mathematics and reading. Their attitudes to their learning are highly positive and they give their best to all they do.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Disruption to learning is rare and those that require support receive this from highly skilled members of staff who understand them well. Pupils demonstrate exceptional character. They are resilient to setbacks and develop independence when learning.

The school is a place where pupils develop leadership skills. Many are provided the opportunity to hold important positions of responsibility. Well-being ambassadors, prefects and sports leaders are just a few of the roles that pupils hold. They demonstrate high ambition for their futures and many feel that the opportunities provided to them develop their talents and interests.

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

Leaders are inspirational and ensure that key decisions always place the pupils at the heart of what is being done. They know their community exceptionally well and lead in a calm and consistent manner, which creates a calm and purposeful ethos. Leaders have built a dedicated team of staff who are committed to doing their best for the community and who constantly strive to improve what they do. Parents speak highly of how well cared for their children are and the progress they make.

The school ensures that staff are well trained to meet the needs of pupils. A coaching model makes sure that everyone has the opportunity to improve. Staff feel well

supported. They know that their well-being really matters and their hard work is acknowledged. For example, there is effective use of assessment at this school that staff feel is purposeful and not overly burdensome.

The outcomes that pupils achieve reflect the high-quality provision in place. This is especially the case in mathematics and English, where many pupils are working at the expected standard when they leave the school. There have been recent developments to the curriculum in some subject areas. The school makes certain that the intended learning sequences now build pupils' knowledge in a more progressive way. However, in some subjects, some pupils cannot recall the key knowledge and skills needed for future learning.

Children learn to read as soon as they enter the school and most go on to read fluently by the time they leave key stage 1. Pupils enjoy reading and being read to by their teachers, and benefit from reading carefully selected books from different time periods and cultures. Those that need support to catch up with their reading are often supported quickly, meaning that they can keep up with their peers.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are extremely well supported. In lessons, they receive high-quality support to access the same learning as their peers. The identification of learning needs is clearly communicated to staff on learning plans. These are created with the support of external agencies, who work closely with the school to remove barriers to learning. Parents and pupils feel that they are really happy with the support they receive.

Pupils behave with maturity and respect. They are immensely proud of their school and feel that they have a responsibility for making it a 'nice place' to be. Pupils welcome visitors with curiosity and kindness and are eager to show them their school. They speak with clarity about the importance of being inclusive. Pupils know that the STARS values of safety, trust, achievement, respect and support are there to support them to show tolerance and respect to each other.

The wider development of pupils is exceptional. Pupils enjoy and benefit from rich opportunities to do things that they may not otherwise do. For example, trips to Manchester on public transport to learn how to cook teach them life skills to develop their independence. Pupils show high levels of self-reflection and say that this is something that is modelled to them by the adults that support them. One pupil summed up the wider view that they attend a 'happy school, which feels like a family'.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- Staff do not always ensure that pupils have a secure understanding of the key knowledge and skills needed for future learning in some subjects. As a result, pupils struggle to make connections between what they already know and new learning. The school should ensure that staff implement the curriculum effectively checking so that pupils remember more over time.

## 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 May 2013.

## 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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	124021
<b>Local authority</b>	Stoke-on-Trent
<b>Inspection number</b>	10290559
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	225
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	David Walley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Clare Thomas
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.holdenlane-pri.stoke.sch.uk/">www.holdenlane-pri.stoke.sch.uk/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	19 April 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- This school does not use alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspectors met with a range of leaders, including those responsible for the curriculum, teaching and learning, behaviour, attendance, personal development and safeguarding.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, physical education and history. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors also considered the curriculum in other subjects.
- The lead inspector also spoke with three members of the school's governing body, including chair and vice of governors.
- The lead inspector met with the local authority school improvement adviser online and a previous school improvement adviser.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's Parent View and the free-text comments from parents.
- Inspectors considered the responses to staff and pupils surveys.

### **Inspection team**

Tony Bradshaw, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Alexandra Beardmore

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2024