

Inspection of a good school: Holmwood School

Kensington Drive, Great Holm, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire MK8 9AB

Inspection dates:

26 and 27 March 2024

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might be outstanding if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Jess Elford. This school is part of Inspiring Futures Through Learning Multi Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Sarah Bennett, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Marilyn Hubbard.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love being part of this vibrant and nurturing school. They are proud to attend Holmwood, where kindness, care and compassion are at the heart of the school community. Pupils feel very secure and well looked after. Children develop exceptional attitudes to learning in the early years. This commendable behaviour continues throughout the school.

The school sets high expectations for what pupils can achieve, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils rise to these expectations and with careful support and challenge achieve highly across the curriculum. They work hard and are resilient learners.

Pupils appreciate the broad range of wider activities, including trips and learning about nature in the 'Fun Forest', an outdoor forest area. Pupils enjoy a variety of school clubs and activities, including participating in a rock band. They hold positions of responsibility, such as playground leaders and youth council members. These responsibilities enable pupils to make a considerable impact on the school.

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. One parent's comment was typical of many when stating, 'I am very happy with my son attending Holmwood. He is very happy there and thriving academically, socially and emotionally.'

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

The school ensures that pupils receive a high-quality education. It has created an ambitious, thoughtful and engaging curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils. The curriculum identifies the key knowledge that pupils should know and remember in each subject. This leads to pupils developing a rich body of knowledge and producing work of high quality in different subjects.

Teachers demonstrate very secure subject knowledge. They deliver lessons clearly and consistently effectively. Teachers revisit pupils' learning. This helps pupils to make connections and deepen their learning even further. Teachers select activities expertly to help pupils remember and build essential knowledge.

Pupils learn with determination and enthusiasm through engaging activities. Teachers understand the potential barriers to learning that pupils face and provide well-chosen support. They check pupils' understanding diligently. Teachers use this information to adapt their teaching skilfully to ensure that they address any gaps in pupils' knowledge promptly.

Children get off to an excellent start in the early years. They flourish due to high levels of care, strong expectations and a supportive environment. The clear routines and structures from early years continue throughout the school. Staff provide experiences and opportunities that support children in becoming very inquisitive learners. For example, adults read to children about minibeasts, while children also observe a worm wriggle around in the garden. This excitement generates much discussion while developing children's language skills.

The school has a tremendous understanding of how to ensure that pupils with SEND can access the full curriculum effectively. The identification processes for pupils with SEND are rigorous. Staff use adaptations and personalised support to meet pupils' individual needs very effectively. For example, teachers provide extra teaching for pupils with SEND in advance of a lesson so that pupils can access learning very successfully alongside their peers.

The school's approach to reading is systematic and highly ambitious. The school places reading at the centre of the curriculum. Staff receive high-quality training. They teach phonics with great skill and expertise. Pupils read books that precisely match the sounds that they are learning. They swiftly become assured and fluent readers. Staff check regularly to ensure that pupils are 'on track' with their reading. When needed, staff provide additional support to help pupils catch up quickly.

The school's emphasis on pupils' wider development is meticulous so that their learning goes beyond the classroom. The trust's 'Childhood Pledge' enables pupils to participate in well-considered experiences and activities. This helps to develop their talents and interests and prepares them well for life in modern Britain. Pupils learn how to be safe online and how to keep healthy. Staff ensure that pupils understand what it is to be a good citizen. Community activities, such as litter picking, cultural celebrations and donating food to local charities, help pupils become valued community members. Staff

interweave the teaching of British values through the curriculum based on the school values. Pupils learn about different families and healthy relationships.

Leaders, including governors and trustees, work together very effectively. Everyone has determination and ambition for all pupils. They have an accurate oversight of the school. They carry out their roles with diligence and fulfil their statutory duties. Experts from the trust give advice and appropriate challenge to the school. The well-chosen support from the trust has been significant in the school's success. Staff appreciate their professional development opportunities. These help them support the pupils effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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 predecessor school, Holmwood School, to be good in June 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](#)' 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

Unique reference number	147381
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	10296452
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	200
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Marilyn Hubbard
CEO of the trust	Sarah Bennett
Headteacher	Jess Elford
Website	www.holmwoodschool.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Holmwood School converted to become an academy school in October 2019. When its predecessor school, Holmwood School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- This school is part of Inspiring Futures Through Learning Multi Academy Trust.
- The school's local governing board is also responsible for the oversight of two other trust schools.
- The school runs its own breakfast club.
- The school does not currently use alternative providers.

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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, staff and pupils. The inspector also met with a representative of the board of trustees, the local governing body, the CEO and representatives of the trust.
- The inspector met with a range of pupils to discuss their views about the school and talked to pupils during playtimes and in lessons.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also looked at samples of pupils' work across some other subjects.
- Responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents, including parents' free-text comments, were considered. The inspector also considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff. The pupil survey was available to the school, but there were no responses.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; evaluated safer recruitment practices; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; met with the designated safeguarding lead and deputy safeguarding leads; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

Darren Aisthorpe, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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