

# Inspection of Holmesdale Infant School

The Avenue, Dronfield, Derbyshire S18 2LR

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Inspection dates:	24 and 25 September 2024
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged outstanding for overall effectiveness at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since July 2013. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

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

Pupils, parents and carers praise the school's happy and nurturing ethos. Parents typically say that their children are well cared for by dedicated, approachable staff. Pupils use words such as 'kind' and 'amazing' to describe their teachers.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. They respond to teachers' high expectations and follow well-established routines. Pupils enjoy earning rewards, such as 'star of the day', 'sports star' or 'creative star'. These opportunities motivate pupils to try hard and do their best, in line with the school's motto to 'be the best me I can be'.

The school promotes pupils' physical and mental health and well-being effectively. For example, the very well-developed and spacious outdoor areas provide plenty of scope for energetic and imaginative play. Pupils can also experience nature through the wildlife areas as they regularly explore the outdoor environment. There is a range of after-school activities offered by the school, to nurture pupils' talents and interests. Visits to museums and activity centres enrich pupils' experiences beyond the local community.

Children in the early years get off to a strong start, due to the recent, widespread improvements in this part of the school's provision.

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

The school has undergone numerous challenges since the last inspection. Following a period of turbulence, the school is now in a position of greater stability and rapid improvement under the current leadership.

The school has reviewed and revised the curriculum in all areas, including in the early years. The curriculum now reflects the school's ambition for all pupils to receive a high-quality education that prepares them well for their next steps. The key knowledge and skills that pupils should learn are set out in sequence, so that pupils know and remember more over time.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are a high priority for the school. Their needs are quickly identified. Pupils with SEND receive personalised support to access the curriculum. They are valued and included in the life of the school.

Reading is at the heart of the school's curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to develop a love of books and reading through features, such as the 'book suitcases' and the well-stocked class reading areas. The school has recently adopted a new, more systematic approach to the teaching of early reading and phonics. Staff are receiving ongoing training to deliver the new approach with consistency. As a result of the transition, some pupils have gaps in their phonics knowledge. The school has begun to provide extra sessions for those pupils to ensure that they develop as quickly as they should in reading fluency and confidence.

Across other subjects, such as mathematics and geography, pupils are enthusiastic learners. For example, in geography, children in the early years could readily identify key

features on a local map, such as the church and their school. Older pupils were enjoying learning about local landmarks and contrasting those with famous places in London. Staff plan and deliver interesting activities that reflect the revised curriculum. Lessons help pupils to successfully build on their existing knowledge and skills. Staff are alert to any misunderstandings and step in quickly to provide support.

The school's early years provision is being transformed by the changes that have recently been introduced. This applies both to the curriculum and also to the design and resourcing of the indoor and outdoor areas. Children's learning and development are effectively promoted through the purposeful activities across the provision. Well-trained staff prioritise children's language development and early reading and mathematics in their day-to-day interactions. Children are increasingly well prepared for their next steps in key stage 1.

The curriculum supports pupils' wider personal development and their awareness of key values, such as respect and equality. They learn about these concepts in an age-appropriate way.

Governors share leaders' vision and ambition for the school. They fulfil their role very well, providing well-informed support and challenge. Staff speak very positively about the school, praising the support they receive for their workload and well-being and are proud to be a part of the school community.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- The revised early reading curriculum is in the early stages of implementation. The impact on pupils' reading fluency and confidence is not fully realised. Some pupils have residual gaps in their phonological knowledge that have now begun to be addressed. The school should ensure that the ambitious new curriculum for early reading and phonics is securely embedded and consistently implemented to enable all pupils to quickly develop as fluent, confident readers.

## **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>	112680
<b>Local authority</b>	Derbyshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10347361
<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	149
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Dawn Curry
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sarah Lockwood
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.holmesdale.derbyshire.sch.uk">www.holmesdale.derbyshire.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	2 and 3 July 2013 under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school does not currently 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. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior and curriculum leaders. The lead inspector met with several members of the governing body, including the chair. The lead inspector held a discussion with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, and spoke to some pupils about their learning. The lead inspector observed some pupils read to a member of staff they know.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum, reviewed curriculum planning and visited lessons in some other subjects.
- Inspectors observed behaviour in lessons and at other times around 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.

### **Inspection team**

Christine Watkins, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

George Huthart

Ofsted Inspector

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