

Inspection of a good school: Holbrook Primary School

Gateside Road, Coventry, West Midlands CV6 6FR

Inspection dates:

11–12 February 2020

Outcome

Holbrook Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and safe at this school. They are positive about school and say that they 'enjoy school because teachers are kind'. They enjoy learning and want to learn more. Pupils have delightful manners and are respectful to each other and adults.

School is calm and orderly. Pupils behave well in class and are keen to focus on their work. Pupils agree that their friends behave well nearly all the time. Bullying is not tolerated here. Teachers ensure that bullying is sorted out on the rare occasion it occurs. Pupils said there are numerous staff they could ask for help.

Leaders and teachers work well together. There is a real sense of teamwork. Leaders ensure that parents have many chances to work alongside the school. There are strong links with parents and the wider community.

Leaders are passionate for their pupils to do well. They work hard to provide pupils with invaluable real-life experiences. For example, there are trips to Warwick Castle, Coventry Cathedral and a residential trip to Snowdonia. Parents are very positive about the school and value the range of learning offered to the pupils.

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

Children settle quickly into Nursery and Reception. Staff develop warm relationships with them. They guide children so that they understand and follow routines. Leaders review children's learning and make sure there is a focus on communication and language. Nursery children now use the same phonics approach as Reception. This gives children a fast start in learning their sounds for reading. Teachers provide a wide range of activities both inside and outside the classroom. Pupils particularly enjoy talking and exploring while playing in the 'mud kitchen'. Staff share nursery rhymes, such as 'Hickory Dickory Dock'. Children join in enthusiastically and practise singing the words. Pupils' use of language is improving.

Leaders make sure that reading is a key focus of the school. Staff teach reading well due to their good subject knowledge and regular training. As a result, most pupils read fluently by the end of Year 2. Some pupils do not have the necessary knowledge to fully understand what they have read. For example, despite reading fluently, pupils did not understand 'anchor' or 'harbour'. Leaders have planned more opportunities for pupils to acquire knowledge through first-hand experiences outside their local area.

Leaders' actions have led to a love of reading. Teachers use daily story times to excite and engage pupils. Pupils describe how they enjoy reading and say they read regularly. Older children confidently talk about favourite authors and recall a range of stories. Parents visit lessons to watch teachers read stories to their children.

Plans for the teaching of writing are well sequenced. Pupils learn about different types of writing. Over time they develop age-appropriate skills and think carefully about their word choices. For example, Year 3 pupils could talk confidently about noun phrases, expanded noun phrases and adjectives. Errors in basic skills such as letter formation and spelling are not consistently picked up by staff. This allows misunderstandings to remain.

The headteacher and her team are passionate about pupils' learning in a range of subjects. Pupils enjoy a rich, broad curriculum. For example, pupils learn Spanish, to play the violin and steel pan drums. Leaders have created detailed plans for most subjects. This means teachers know which knowledge and skills to teach and when in different year groups. In some subjects like design technology, art and science this order of learning is less clear. This leads to some gaps in learning.

This is an inclusive school. Leaders make sure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) study the full range of subjects. Pupils with SEND are well prepared for their lessons.

Leaders develop close links with families. Parents attend modelled reading sessions, celebratory assemblies and coffee mornings. In addition, leaders run parent workshops on online safety and mental health.

Leaders also work with parents on attendance. Pupils' attendance has improved and is now the same as other schools nationally. However, a few pupils are absent for long periods of time, which affects their learning.

Leaders and staff help pupils gain wider knowledge and life skills. Pupils learn how to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy. They visit the theatre and have the chance to go on a residential trip to North Wales. These wider opportunities are a strength of the school because they allow pupils to discover and make the most of their skills and talents.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils are well cared for and safe in school. They learn how to keep themselves safe on the internet. They explain which personal information they must not share. Pupils know how to look after their mental health. They suggest having time to relax and think about positives.

Regular training ensures that all staff are up to date with their safeguarding knowledge. All staff know how to keep children safe and which procedures they must follow. They report any concerns to leaders who deal with them quickly. The recruitment of staff is diligently checked. Safeguarding records are well maintained.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders work tirelessly to take all appropriate action to improve the attendance of pupils. However, there remain a few pupils who have long periods of absence from school. This absence impacts on their learning. Leaders should continue to challenge and support the families of children who are regularly absent so that periods of long absences reduce.
- The order and sequencing of pupils' learning are effective in most subjects. Pupils can build on what they already know and can do. This is not the case in subjects such as art, design technology and science. As a result, sometimes pupils do not practise the right skills at the right time. This leads to some gaps in learning. Leaders should continue their work to modify and sequence subject plans to ensure skills develop from year to year.
- Teachers and support staff do not routinely identify basic letter formation or spelling mistakes made by pupils during lessons. Pupils end up repeating the same mistakes. Staff should check pupils' work thoroughly to identify errors and support pupils to correct their mistakes.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 8–9 June 2016.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	103676
Local authority	Coventry
Inspection number	10122586
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	645
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mrs Ruth Westbrook
Headteacher in charge	Mrs Tamara McCarthy
Website	www.holbrookprimary.com
Date of previous inspection	8–9 June 2016

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, the deputy head left in April 2019 as she became a headteacher at another school.
- In September 2019, the three assistant headteachers were promoted to be deputy headteachers in the school.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, we met with the headteacher and her leadership team. We spoke to them about the quality of education provided by the school, the pupils' wider development, pupils' behaviour and staff workload. We met with members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- We focused on reading, writing and science and considered other national curriculum subjects by speaking with staff and pupils.
- We visited classrooms to watch pupils learn and look at their books. We also watched pupils at playtimes and lunchtimes. We spoke to pupils about their work and discussed the curriculum with them. We also checked what pupils were learning in different subjects.

- We spoke to parents at the start of the school day. We reviewed the 74 responses to Ofsted Parent View and considered the 13 free-text responses.
- We considered the 15 responses to Ofsted’s staff questionnaire.
- We met formally with a group of pupils from the school council and spoke informally to pupils throughout the inspection.
- We listened to several key stage 1 pupils read and spoke to them about their reading.
- We reviewed a range of safeguarding information, including the checks that leaders make on staff prior to employment. We checked the school’s safeguarding procedures and training records.

Inspection team

Mark Cadwallader, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Sian Williams

Ofsted Inspector

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