

Inspection of a good school: Hollyfast Primary School

Hollyfast Road, Coundon, Coventry, West Midlands CV6 2AH

Inspection dates: 19 to 20 September 2023

Outcome

Hollyfast Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a time of exciting change at Hollyfast Primary. A new curriculum and a sense of enthusiasm enrich the life of this community. Every day, happy pupils thrive, surrounded by kindness and care. This is a school that is committed to getting it right for pupils.

As the new curriculum starts to have an impact, the motto 'Aim high, grow within and reach beyond the stars' is becoming a reality for all pupils. Rewards assemblies, opportunities to nominate peers for awards, and activities, such as mindfulness and yoga, promote a sense of self-belief and confidence for pupils. Shared learning with families fosters ambition and high expectations for every pupil.

Pupils know that staff care for them. The school goes the 'extra mile' to work with pupils and families when they need help. Consequently, pupils attend well, and their behaviour is calm and purposeful across the school. Pupils feel safe because they are confident that staff would quickly help them if they thought bullying was happening. Inspectors agree.

Achievement is recognised in many ways at Hollyfast. An impressive range of opportunities helps pupils develop interests and hobbies. Craft, dance, gymnastics, tennis and chess are just some ways that inspire pupils to have healthy minds and bodies.

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

Recently, there have been significant changes to the curriculum. When the new leadership team was appointed, they identified some aspects of the curriculum that they felt needed change. Tenacity and drive have underpinned how the school have gone about these changes. However, as some of this curriculum is new, the school has not yet had the chance to review its implementation. This means that, at the moment, the school is unsure if the curriculum in those subjects has had the intended impact.

While exciting and innovative, the changes to the curriculum have created some challenges for the school. The new curriculum for some subjects differs significantly from

what was in place before. Consequently, some pupils do not always have the prior knowledge to understand the current lesson or see how this learning relates to what they might have learned.

The school rightly has high expectations for what pupils should learn and when. The most important learning pupils need to acquire from every lesson is precisely outlined in detailed documents. However, while some staff regularly check in with the pupils to ensure they understand and can remember what they have learned in the lessons, others do not. This means that the school cannot assure themselves that all pupils get the most from lessons and learn the curriculum in that lesson.

Expectations are high for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Because their needs are identified quickly and thoroughly understood, they thrive alongside their peers in class. There is a deep commitment that pupils with SEND experience regular success in their learning and as community members.

From the first days in the early years, phonics is taught, and a love of books is promoted. When pupils need more help or might fall behind, the school acts swiftly to give more support. Pupils enthuse about what they are reading and very quickly build a preferred author or style of books. Some older pupils told inspectors that they particularly like it when their teacher reads as creative storytellers rather than as teachers.

Mutual respect and positive relationships permeate all classes. Pupils pay close attention to their learning from the very youngest to the oldest. Inspectors saw no examples of low-level disruption. When behaviour has, in the past, been challenging, the school has acted swiftly to ensure the pupil gets the support they need to return to learning.

The school has high expectations that pupils develop as responsible citizens who are keen and excited learners. Opportunities to become play leaders and well-being, values or reading ambassadors enthuse a sense of responsibility. Regular opportunities to support local and national charities are carefully planned and promoted. Pastoral support for pupils or their families who might need additional support at challenging times is a strength.

Parents and staff combine in their optimism about the changes at the school. They know that there has been a great deal of change recently, but they know that these changes are made with the best interests of pupils at heart. Staff feel that the school is well led and managed. In this time of significant change, they value the support provided to them for their emotional well-being by caring leaders and dedicated governors.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school has not yet ensured that all pupils have the essential previous knowledge to access the intended learning from the new curriculum. This means that in some lessons, they cannot link to what they already know. The school needs to continue identifying the existing gaps in pupils' learning and ensure they are filled before new knowledge is introduced.
- In some lessons, teachers do not routinely check on what pupils have learned and understood from that lesson. This results in some pupils not being ready for the next steps in their learning. The school should ensure that all staff are skilled in and aware of the school-preferred assessment systems and implement them consistently.
- As some aspects of the school's curriculum are relatively new, the school has not yet had the opportunity to review how well they are implemented over time. Consequently, not all subject leaders have a detailed enough understanding of how well pupils learn in their respective curriculum areas. The school should support subject leaders to evaluate the curriculum's impact on pupils' learning.

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 November 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

Unique reference number	103639
Local authority	Coventry
Inspection number	10290531
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	638
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Steve Thomas
Headteacher	Gary Watson
Website	www.hollyfast.com
Date of previous inspection	19 April 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new headteacher took up post in January 2022.
- A new deputy headteacher was appointed in September 2022. Two new assistant headteachers joined the leadership team at that same time.
- A new assistant headteacher joined the leadership team in January 2023 and a new special educational need coordinator recently joined in September 2023.

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.
- During the inspection, inspectors completed deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics, and art. In these subjects, they visited lessons, looked at pupils' work, and talked with pupils and staff about how these subjects were taught. Inspectors also looked at other subjects in less detail to check how they were planned and taught.
- Inspectors observed informal times to evaluate safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- During the inspection, the inspectors had formal meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject teachers, governors, teachers, and pupils. They also talked informally with parents, carers, pupils and staff to gather general information about school life.
- An inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority. A conversation was also held with members of the governing body.

Inspection team

Chris Pollitt, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Antony Bradshaw

His Majesty's Inspector

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