Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Hollybrook Infant School

Hollybrook Infant School, Seagarth Close, Southampton Hampshire SO16 6RN

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 June 2025

Outcome

Hollybrook Infant School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The executive headteacher of this school is Marcella Dobson. This school is part of Hamwic Education 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), Robert Farmer, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Gary Plummer.

What is it like to attend this school?

Hollybrook Infants is an effective school. It has very high expectations for its pupils. Children get off to a great start in the early years, where they quickly settle and learn important school routines. They build on this effectively as they move through key stage 1, and so pupils achieve well.

Inclusivity is at the heart of this school. This builds a strong sense of community with pupils keen to celebrate their peers' uniqueness in the highly valued, weekly 'VIP' award. This memorable and meaningful recognition experience cements the strong sense of belonging in the school for all pupils.

Pupils behave extremely well. They attend regularly. Staff secure strong, nurturing relationships with pupils. In class, pupils listen attentively, and they are highly motivated. They demonstrate high levels of respect and kindness towards staff and each other.

The school offers a wide range of enrichment opportunities. Pupils benefit from carefully planned opportunities such as visits to local zoos and gardens, which brings their learning to life. They enjoy clubs such as choir, dance and karate. Pupils also relish opportunities for responsibility, such as supporting their peers as 'well-being champions'. These experiences help to build their skills and explore their talents beyond the classroom very effectively.

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

The school has developed an ambitious, carefully sequenced curriculum. It ensures that pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well across subjects. The school has precisely identified the important knowledge pupils are to learn. Staff use this effectively in order to help pupils make useful links in their learning.

The school has established a strong reading culture. Pupils read ambitious texts and enjoy a broad, rich range of literature. The phonics programme is delivered with precision by skilled staff. Effective, extra support is given to those who need it. This helps pupils to rapidly become confident and fluent readers. Furthermore, pupils use their knowledge of new sounds well to write and spell increasingly sophisticated words. Pupils regularly practise different sentence structures, and many are now producing writing content of a high quality for their age.

Typically, teachers provide pupils with useful opportunities to rehearse and repeat key concepts and knowledge. For example, in mathematics, opportunities to revisit prior learning ensures pupils have a secure understanding of early number. Staff make effective use of a wide range of resources to ensure that pupils usually learn well. However, occasionally, staff explanations and the activities that pupils complete do not link closely enough to the intended curriculum. When this happens, pupils do not deepen their knowledge as well as they should.

In the early years, staff help children to develop increasing levels of independence, curiosity and enjoyment in their learning. High-quality interactions with adults help children to deepen their knowledge of the curriculum. Early years staff ensure that children have a secure understanding of early reading and mathematics, so that they can build on this knowledge through the school.

The support for pupils with SEND is effective. The school identifies needs quickly and ensures well-planned support is in place. The school ensures that teachers get the information that they need to support pupils effectively. Staff work with a range of professionals to provide specialist help where needed and this support is positively impacting on pupils' outcomes.

The school's support for pupils' emotional well-being is strong. Pupils are supported well to learn how to manage overwhelming emotions, such as anxiety. Staff apply the school's behaviour expectations consistently. They use different rewards effectively in order to incentivise positive learning behaviours. As a result, pupils develop important character traits, such as resilience, and develop high levels of self-control.

The school supports pupils' personal development effectively. Pupils develop an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships and online safety. Pupils develop respectful attitudes towards those who are different to themselves. The bespoke 'Leadership Awards' focuses on public service, personal development, oracy and rights

awareness. These experiences help build essential life skills, ensuring pupils accumulate a broad range of practical experiences that prepare them well for the future.

Leaders, including those at trust level, have a clear vision and accurate understanding of what is working well and the next steps to improve provision further. Staff work cohesively together putting pupils' interests at the heart of any decisions. The school engages well with parents, carers, pupils and staff and responds positively to their views.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There are some inconsistencies in how well the curriculum is delivered. This means that pupils' learning across subjects is variable. The school should ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills to select appropriate activities and explain subject content effectively.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 school to be good for overall effectiveness in February 2020.

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	138898
Local authority	Southampton
Inspection number	10379866
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	170
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Gary Plummer
CEO of the trust	Robert Farmer
Executive Headteacher	Marcella Dobson
Website	www.hollybrookschools.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	4 and 5 February 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a member of the Hamwic Education Trust.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- 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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. They also met with members of the governing body and representatives of the trust.
- The inspector focused inspection activity on the following groups of subjects: English and mathematics; history, music and religious education. For each group of subjects,

the inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- During the inspection, the inspector met with a range of pupils to discuss their views about the school and talked to them informally during social times.
- The inspector reviewed the responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents and carers, Ofsted Parent View. The inspector also took account of staff responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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

Laura James, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector

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