

Inspection of Holywell Village First School

Holywell, Holywell Village, Whitley Bay, Northumberland NE25 0LN

Inspection dates:	21 and 22 January 2025
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Holywell Village First School embody the school's values of being 'respectful', 'ready to learn' and 'thoughtful, caring and kind'. Pupils show high levels of respect for all, including those different to themselves. They speak politely and confidently with visitors and describe how much they enjoy school.

Staff help pupils to reflect on their own behaviour well. Pupils learn how to understand and manage their emotions. Pupils also support one another well in managing their behaviour. They are exceptionally well behaved throughout the day. Pupils are safe and happy at this school.

The school has a culture of very high expectations for all pupils. There is highly effective support for pupils' learning. From a young age, children enjoy learning and engage in lessons with great enthusiasm.

The school's ambitious curriculum gives all pupils many rich opportunities to develop new knowledge. For example, children use maps to plan out a cycle route to the coast. They then ride bikes on the trail they have planned. Pupils can remember previous learning in extraordinary detail. Over time, pupils learn to describe complex ideas extremely well. Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage in their education.

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

The highly ambitious curriculum has been well designed to support learning from the early years upwards. The school offers pupils a wide range of valuable experiences that make learning memorable. Artefacts are used routinely in lessons to engage pupils well and to bring ideas to life. Pupils can link ideas across subjects and discuss them in impressive detail. In history, pupils learn important insights into Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. This knowledge informs their deep understanding of the similarities and differences between modern counties in geography. Staff systematically check what pupils can do. They make sure that pupils' learning is secure before moving on to more difficult areas of the curriculum.

The school ensures that reading has a high priority. There is an exceptionally consistent approach to the teaching of reading. In the early years, children learn about syllables quickly through strategies, such as clapping out sounds. Well-trained staff deliver phonics to older pupils effectively. Teachers provide frequent opportunities for pupils to practise and learn new sounds in all subjects. This ensures pupils quickly become accurate, fluent and confident readers. Pupils needing additional help with reading receive carefully targeted support. This helps them to catch up quickly. Pupils enjoy visits from local authors. In library visits, pupils choose from a wide range of books that match their phonics knowledge. They develop a strong love of reading. Pupils also develop writing and speaking skills rapidly across the curriculum.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary in lessons and around the school. Adults remind children of the school values regularly. This helps to ensure that pupils show respect for others and can focus on their learning.

The school has a well-planned programme to develop pupils as future citizens. Staff encourage pupils to advocate for what is important to them. Pupils show an impressive knowledge of a wide range of cultures and religions from around the world. Pupils know to treat others, including those who are different to themselves, with tolerance and respect. They benefit from a carefully considered programme of extra-curricular activities, including martial arts and craft club.

Pupils receive an early exposure to a wide range of careers. This includes visitors to school, who talk about the jobs that they do. From the early years upwards, pupils learn about jobs alongside learning the curriculum. Pupils show a detailed understanding of a range of jobs that they could do and how to achieve them. For example, they talk about becoming an archaeologist and the need to go to university for some jobs.

The school supports pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) very well. The school is highly skilled in identifying the specific needs of pupils. Staff support pupils effectively within the classroom. Pupils receive carefully chosen interventions to help them keep up. This ensures that pupils with SEND experience a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum alongside their peers. The support they receive helps them keep pace with other pupils.

Staff at all levels feel very well supported at the school. They benefit from high-quality subject-specific advice, training and coaching. They value being involved in decision-making and project work, for example, in the curriculum development teams. The school is considerate of staff's workload and well-being.

Leaders, including those responsible for governance, know and support the school extremely well. Governors provide effective support and challenge to leaders. They have an astute understanding of the school. Governors carefully monitor the impact of leaders' decisions.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	122195
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	10370362
Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	157
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Angela Hall
Headteacher	Sarah Brett
Website	www.holywell.northumberland.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 and 29 January 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Holywell Village First School is a smaller than average-sized first school.
- The school has a Nursery class and provides part-time places.
- There is a separate out-of-hours care provider on the school site, which is not part of the school.
- The school does not make use of 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 deputy headteacher, subject leaders, staff and pupils. They also met with a local authority representative, the chair of the governing body and other governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography and design and technology. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Pupils' behaviour and safety were evaluated in lessons and at lunchtime. The inspectors also listened to the views of pupils.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.
- Inspectors reviewed the responses to the Ofsted Parent View online survey and spoke to several parents at the start and end of the school day. Inspectors also reviewed the staff survey.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation related to governance, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

David Bailey, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Katie Lowe

Ofsted Inspector

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