

Holmes Chapel Primary School

Middlewich Road, Holmes Chapel, Cheshire, CW4 7EB

Inspection dates 25–26 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy
	This inspection:	Outstanding 1
Leadership and management	Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils	Outstanding	1
Early years provision	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The outstanding headteacher is an inspirational leader. Her very clear and determined leadership has secured significant improvements in the quality of teaching and the achievement of the pupils.
- Governors are a key strength of the school. They are very knowledgeable about the school's strengths and its priorities for improvement. They provide senior leaders with an excellent balance of support and robust challenge.
- The headteacher, senior leaders, governors and staff, are all highly ambitious for the school and the pupils. They are determined to make the school the best that it can be.
- Pupils' achievement is outstanding. Pupils make excellent progress across the school, and by the end of Year 6 they consistently reach standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are significantly above the national average.
- The high quality teaching evident in all year groups ensures that all pupils achieve exceptionally well. Teachers and teaching assistants are particularly effective in using their questioning skills to check on pupils' learning and move it forwards at a rapid pace.
- The very highest expectations and most effective marking that are apparent in most classes are not consistently evident in all classes in Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Very effective leadership and outstanding teaching ensure that children in the early years make rapid progress from their different starting points and achieve highly. As a result, they are exceptionally well prepared for Year 1.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is outstanding. Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning and enjoy being challenged to think hard. They get on very well with one another both in and out of class, and this contributes to the very positive and caring ethos within the school.
- Pupils say that they feel extremely safe in school because of the high quality support and guidance they receive, and this view is supported by the overwhelming majority of parents.
- The curriculum allows pupils to use and develop their skills in reading, writing and mathematics very well. It also provides them with a broad range of interesting topics, effectively enhanced by school visits and an extensive range of extra-curricular activities.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is developed very effectively. The work of the school fosters good relationships. Any form of discrimination is robustly challenged if it ever occurs.
- Morale is high. Staff are extremely positive about all aspects of the school and are proud of its achievements.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors gathered a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching over time, including observing teaching and learning in lessons and looking at the school’s own progress data and work in pupils’ books.
- The inspectors listened to pupils read and talked to them about the books they have enjoyed and those that they are currently reading.
- The inspectors met with a group of pupils and talked informally with pupils around school.
- Inspectors met with a group of seven governors and members of school staff.
- Inspectors spoke to several parents over the course of the inspection. They also took account of the school’s own consultations with parents and 62 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors also took account of 36 responses to the staff questionnaire completed during the inspection.
- A range of school documents was examined. These included the school’s evaluation of its own performance, the school’s development plan, records of the school’s checks on the quality of teaching, data on pupils’ progress, records of pupils’ attendance, behaviour records and safeguarding documentation.

Inspection team

Neil Dixon, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Terry Bond	Additional Inspector
Jane Holmes	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Holmes Chapel Primary converted to an academy on 1 September 2013. When its predecessor school of the same name was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be good overall.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those supported by the pupil premium funding, is below average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is well below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- In the early years, children attend Reception class full time.
- The school currently holds the Basic Skills Quality Mark and Artsmark Silver awards.
- The Chair of the Governing Body is a National Leader of Governance.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that outcomes for pupils remain very strong by ensuring that the very high expectations and highly effective marking seen throughout the school are consistently evident in all classes in Key Stages 1 and 2.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The outstanding headteacher, very well supported by other senior and middle leaders, provides focused and highly effective leadership. She leads by example and leaves no stone unturned in her drive to secure the best possible outcomes for the school and pupils. Her ambition is shared by all school leaders, including governors. As a result, high standards of achievement, teaching and learning have been attained and the school continues to improve at a rapid pace.
- Senior leaders make regular and rigorous checks on the progress that pupils are making. This information is used very effectively to ensure that pupils are challenged to reach their potential, and to quickly put in place additional support that might be needed to prevent any pupil from falling behind. As a result, all groups of pupils in the school make outstanding progress from their individual starting points.
- Subject and middle leaders contribute strongly to improving provision in their areas of responsibility; they make valuable contributions to checks on the quality of teaching and learning across the school.
- Procedures for monitoring teachers' performance are extremely thorough and rigorous. Teachers have targets very clearly linked to pupils' achievement and progress, and these are taken into account when making recommendations about teachers' pay. Staff have access to a wide range of professional development opportunities which enable them to further develop their skills and knowledge.
- The school's broad and highly engaging curriculum provides pupils with a wide range of interesting topics. These are frequently enhanced by trips out of school or activities run by visitors coming into school, such as Indian dancing and animal handling. Pupils speak enthusiastically about the different residential visits that they have been on; along with a large selection of well attended extra-curricular activities, these further enhance the excellent range of learning opportunities that the school provides.
- The school makes excellent provision for the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, successfully encouraging pupils to develop a strong sense of care and respect for the world around them. The school also successfully promotes and celebrates British values through work on tolerance, freedom and the rule of law. This shows the school's strong commitment to effectively promoting equality of opportunity, fostering good relationships and tackling discrimination, and consequently prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- The pupil premium funding is used very effectively to support the learning of disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils. As a result, disadvantaged pupils throughout the school are making the same excellent progress as their peers.
- The primary physical education (PE) and sports funding is used effectively to enhance pupils' PE lessons by providing them with specialist coaching in a number of different sports and games. This has also led to an increase in teachers' confidence and skills in planning and delivering sporting activities. In addition, pupils' health and well-being benefit significantly.
- School leaders take their responsibilities for keeping pupils safe very seriously, and have ensured that staff have received appropriate training to enable them to do this very effectively. Arrangements and procedures for safeguarding pupils are fully in place and very effective.
- The local authority has an appropriately 'light touch' relationship with this outstanding school because it recognises that the school can improve without significant support. The school also works very effectively in collaboration with a small group of similarly high performing local schools.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is outstanding. The governors are provided with highly focused leadership by the Chair of the Governing Body. They play a significant role in the life of the school, and regularly undertake 'learning walks' and other activities that enable them to see at first-hand how effectively the school is operating. Consequently, governors have a very clear and accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development.
 - Governors have a secure understanding of a broad range of performance data, and receive high quality and detailed information from senior leaders. They are very supportive, but are equally effective in ensuring that they hold school leaders fully to account by asking probing and challenging questions. They undertake regular training to improve their own skills, and ensure that individual governor's skills are utilised to maximum effect within different committees.
 - Governors make sure that pupils' achievement is fully taken into account when considering teachers' performance and making decisions about their pay, and have a clear overview of the quality of teaching across the school. They ensure that the school's finances are sound and well managed, including making sure that the additional funding for PE and sport and the pupil premium is effectively used.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' conduct in class is exemplary. Pupils settle very quickly to work in their lessons and are always ready to learn. They display attitudes to learning that are consistently extremely positive, and they clearly enjoy being challenged to think and work hard. This was seen in pupils' enthusiastic responses in mathematics and science lessons where they had to solve complex problems and understand demanding scientific vocabulary.
- Pupils take great pride in their work, as can be seen in the high standards of presentation across all subjects and in all year groups
- Around school and outside, pupils get on well with each other. At break-times, pupils of all ages play happily together, enjoying the large and well-resourced outdoor areas. Pupils say poor behaviour is rare, and school behaviour records confirm this. Pupils report that, if there are ever cases of pupils 'falling out', staff will help them to sort out their differences and that consequently, such instances are resolved quickly and amicably.
- Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy having the opportunity to represent the school in external events, such as being part of the school's 'Playground Singers' choir or as a member of one of the school's successful sports teams.
- Pupils' punctuality is excellent and their attendance is above average.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Pupils say that they feel very safe in school and are cared for and supported very well. They have a very good knowledge of different forms of bullying, and say that bullying in their school is rare. They report confidently that any concerns that they have had have been very well dealt with by staff.
- Pupils have a very strong knowledge of safety related issues and demonstrate an excellent awareness of how to stay safe on the internet. This is because the school has been very proactive in addressing e-safety matters with both pupils and parents.
- The governing body ensures detailed risk assessments are in place as required, particularly those relating to school trips and residential visits. Thorough checks are made on all adults who visit or work in the school to make sure that all pupils are safe.
- The very large majority of parents who responded to the Parent View or who spoke to the inspectors during the inspection say that their children are happy and feel safe in school.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Pupils make excellent progress and achieve highly because teaching across the school and in a range of subjects is always at least good, and is outstanding over time. Staff know their pupils very well, and have a clear understanding of what they already know and what they need to learn to move their work on further. This knowledge is very well used to plan work which challenges each individual to make the best progress they can during lessons.
- A significant feature of learning throughout the school is the high-quality questioning that is used by teachers and teaching assistants to check on how well pupils understand their work. This ensures that pupils of all abilities are quickly moved on to work that challenges them very effectively.
- Those pupils who need additional support, including pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs, receive very well-planned and focused help from teachers and teaching assistants. This support enables these pupils to catch up rapidly in areas they have found difficult and to make excellent progress from their different starting points.
- Marking and feedback are used effectively to guide pupils to improve their own work and to address any misconceptions or misunderstandings. The school's work to improve the impact of marking on pupils' progress has been very successful, although the very high-quality marking seen in most classes is not yet consistent across the whole of Key Stages 1 and 2.
- The school's well-planned approach to teaching phonics (letters and the sound they make) ensures that pupils are able to use their phonic knowledge to help them to read, and the teaching of reading throughout the school is highly focused and effective. As a result, pupils become confident and successful readers, and are able to talk freely about their favourite books and authors.

- The teaching of writing is outstanding and enables pupils to develop a wide range of writing skills. Teachers challenge pupils to experiment with different sentence structures and to use lively and exciting vocabulary to enhance their writing, and pupils are able to write confidently and fluently across different genres.
- Mathematics teaching is highly effective and a strength of the school. Pupils learn and develop mathematical skills very well and are taught to be comfortable manipulating numbers, which provides them with confidence when faced with new or difficult mathematical concepts, such as calculating square roots or finding the area of multi-sided shapes. Pupils are regularly challenged to test their skills through different problem solving tasks and challenges, which they tackle with relish.
- Pupils benefit from having regular opportunities to develop and practise their English and mathematics skills in other areas of the curriculum, such as writing historical recounts or producing graphs in science.
- Teachers in the very large majority of classes display very high expectations of pupils' work, to which pupils respond extremely well. However, these very high expectations are not consistently evident across all classes in Key Stages 1 and 2.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Achievement over time is outstanding. The standards that pupils reach by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics, are consistently above the national average and continue to rise. Results for 2014 showed that pupils' attainment in Year 6 was significantly above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Inspection evidence from the work in pupils' books and the school's very detailed tracking data shows that all groups of pupils are currently making very strong progress throughout the school. The current cohort of Year 6 pupils are expected to repeat last year's excellent performance in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils throughout the school, including children in the Reception class, make excellent progress and are very well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- The most able pupils achieve very highly because they are consistently challenged with work that encourages them to think hard and apply the skills that they have already developed in a wide range of subjects. As a result, the proportion of pupils reaching the highest levels is well above the national average.
- Disadvantaged pupils currently in the school are making outstanding progress. The pupil premium funding is being used well to close the gaps in attainment and progress between disadvantaged pupils and others in the school and nationally. In 2014, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils at the end of Year 6 was two terms ahead of other pupils nationally in writing and mathematics and in line with other pupils nationally in reading. Disadvantaged pupils' attainment in mathematics was in line with other pupils in the school, but was one term behind in writing and two terms behind in reading. However, the school's detailed tracking information and evidence in pupils' books show that any such gaps are narrowing rapidly.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make outstanding progress from their individual starting points. They benefit from their needs being very accurately identified and appropriate and highly effective support being put in place.

The early years provision

is outstanding

- The majority of children join the Reception class with skills and knowledge that are generally typical for their age. As a result of high quality teaching and a curriculum that is very well focused on their learning needs, they make rapid progress so that the proportions of children reaching or exceeding a good level of development are consistently above the national average. This means that children are very well prepared for their move into Year 1.
- Children are provided with stimulating and well-resourced indoor and outdoor learning areas. Extremely well-chosen activities, some of which are led by adults and others which children choose to tackle themselves, provide a wide range of highly-engaging learning opportunities. High-quality interactions between staff and children help to move children's learning on at a swift pace while also encouraging them to develop their skills as independent learners.
- The early years leader provides outstanding leadership and management. She ensures that children's progress is recorded regularly and accurately, and uses this information to plan stimulating and

challenging activities that further develop their learning. She ensures that children's welfare and safety are given a high priority and consequently, children demonstrate an excellent awareness of their own personal safety and the safety of others.

- Children's behaviour in early years is outstanding. Children quickly develop highly positive attitudes to learning, and activities are undertaken with enthusiasm. Children are happy to take turns and share resources, and work and play in harmony with one another.
- Strong links with parents are a feature of the early years' provision. Parents speak highly of the sense of partnership that they feel, which is fostered through regular meetings and workshops and excellent communication between home and school.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	140083
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	450346

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	374
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Joanna Longman
Headteacher	Helen Scott
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy
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