

Inspection of an outstanding school: Holly Grove School

Burnley Campus, Barden Lane, Burnley, Lancashire BB10 1JD

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 June 2023

Outcome

Holly Grove School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Holly Grove School is full of joy. Pupils arrive each day full of smiles and excitement for the day ahead. They are greeted warmly by the kind, caring staff. Exceptionally close, friendly relationships between staff, pupils and their parents and carers mean that this is a happy place to be. Pupils said that they feel safe and loved.

Leaders are determined that every pupil at the school will flourish. Pupils meet leaders' high expectations of their behaviour and achievement. Skilled staff ensure that pupils' varying special educational needs and/or disabilities are well catered for. Pupils make strong progress both academically and personally. Staff make every effort to prepare pupils for their next steps.

Pupils benefit from a wealth of opportunities to develop their independence, confidence and self-esteem. For example, pupils in key stage 1 and 2 spoke with pleasure about their residential trips. They take part in orienteering, caving and climbing as part of a visit to the Lake District.

Pupils are happy at the school. They look forward to the school day and enjoy spending time with each other. At lunchtimes, pupils chat happily with their friends and adults. Leaders keep a very careful check on pupils' behaviour. They know exactly what to do to resolve any bullying should it ever occur.

What does the school do well?

Leaders have put in place an ambitious and engaging curriculum. This meets the varied needs of pupils very well. When pupils start at the school, staff spend plenty of time getting to know them and their families. This ensures that pupils settle quickly.

Across subjects, leaders have organised the curriculum in a logical way. Starting from the early years, through to the end of Year 6, pupils build their learning in well-ordered, small steps. Teachers personalise curriculum plans to account for pupils' specific learning needs.

In lessons, teachers make careful adaptations to enable pupils to learn successfully. For example, in mathematics, pupils use plenty of practical equipment to strengthen their understanding.

Leaders have placed developing pupils' reading and communication skills at the heart of the curriculum. Pupils continue to build their phonics knowledge for as long as necessary. Their reading books are carefully matched to the sounds that they are learning. Teachers share a wide range of engaging texts with pupils. Starting from the early years, teachers make sure that story time is fun. The vast majority of pupils develop effective reading and communication skills. Many become confident, fluent readers.

Staff help pupils to develop a secure understanding of the world beyond Holly Grove. This starts in the early years where children develop confidence in visiting the community, including the library and the supermarket. Staff plan many engaging activities which bring pupils' learning to life. For example, pupils benefit from plenty of trips and visits, for example to the theatre, a farm and Pendle Hill. They also benefit from taking part in inter-school sports competitions. Pupils were keen to tell inspectors of their recent success in a football tournament.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. In lessons, they learn to concentrate. This starts in the early years, where children play and learn well together. Pupils move around the school in a calm way. Well-trained senior leaders and members of the 'BEST' team provide expert, well-planned and effective help to pupils who need it. Pupils are keen to win 'star of the day' for their excellent behaviour.

Staff benefit from very regular training opportunities. This gives them the expertise to support pupils well in their learning. For example, staff have a secure understanding of pupils' sensory needs. They provide expert support to ensure that pupils are ready to learn.

In lessons, teachers make frequent checks on pupils' learning. They use these checks to ensure that pupils are making the progress that they should through the curriculum. Where this is not the case, staff provide carefully planned support.

Leaders work closely with a range of professionals to ensure that pupils' full range of needs are met. For example, occupational therapists, specialist teachers and physiotherapists work with school staff to provide support precisely matched to pupils' needs.

Leaders' efforts to support pupils beyond the curriculum are exemplary. Through a carefully planned 'work-related pathway', leaders ensure that pupils develop personally, for instance in managing their feelings and self-awareness. They enjoy taking part in different lunchtime clubs, such as science, art and choir. Pupils spoke with pride about the parts they played in the school production of 'The Jungle Book'. The members of the school council are fully involved in school life; for example, they help with important decisions about school lunches.

Governors keep a careful check on how well pupils are achieving. They visit the school regularly to ensure that leaders are taking the right actions to maintain high standards.

Adults in school form a happy, hard-working and dedicated team. Staff were keen to share examples of how leaders have supported them with professional development. They said that leaders are successful in promoting staff well-being. Staff have an overwhelmingly positive view of the school. They share leaders' determination to make a real difference to the lives of pupils and their families.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders work closely with staff, pupils and parents to keep pupils safe. Staff know pupils extremely well. This means that they quickly spot any changes in pupils' behaviour or other concerns. Staff provide pupils and their parents with effective support and guidance. When required, leaders work very closely with a range of agencies, including the school nurse. This ensures that pupils and their families get the help they need.

Pupils learn how to stay safe. They learn about fire safety and road safety. Pupils know how to report concerns they encounter when working and playing online. They also learn about healthy relationships and the importance of saying no.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 outstanding in May 2014.

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](#)' 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	135014
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10241740
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	115
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Nicola Whyte
Headteacher	Karen Alty
Website	www.holly-grove.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 June 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school provides for pupils with a range of needs, including moderate learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties and profound and multiple learning difficulties. Many pupils have autistic spectrum disorder. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading and communication, mathematics, and physical education and physical development. For each deep dive, they met with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. An inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult. They also looked at the curriculum in some other subjects.

- The inspectors spoke with pupils about school life, including behaviour. An inspector met with the school council.
- Inspectors held meetings with a range of staff, including with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and assistant headteachers.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the governing body. She also spoke with a representative of the local authority and with the school adviser.
- The inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View. They spoke with parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff. There were no responses to the pupil survey.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of documentation relating to safeguarding. They spoke with staff to understand how they keep pupils safe. An inspector viewed the school's record of checks undertaken on newly appointed staff.
- The inspectors spoke with a range of staff to discuss leaders' support for them.

Inspection team

Elizabeth Stevens, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Claire Hollister

Ofsted Inspector

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