

Inspection of Holmwood School

Saltersgill Avenue, Easterside, Middlesbrough TS4 3PT

Inspection dates:	8 and 9 October 2024
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are extremely well supported at Holmwood School. The school has high expectations for what pupils can achieve. They receive an exceptional quality of education. Pupils who have had previously difficult school experiences flourish. They achieve very well and leave the school well prepared for their next steps in education.

Staff, led by inspirational leaders, have created a nurturing learning environment. They ensure that the school consistently focuses on meeting the individual needs of pupils. All pupils benefit from an educational offer that is carefully designed to meet their special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This means that pupils progress through the curriculum well.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Staff have a deep understanding of pupils' personal and social needs. Staff expertly respond to pupils and support them to independently manage their behaviour. Pupils' attitudes to learning and attendance consistently demonstrate significant improvements from their starting points at the school.

Pupils' personal development is prioritised. The school creatively supports pupils to develop more broadly. They rapidly develop their abilities to be confident and independent. Pupils feel calm and safe in the school. This ensures that they can learn well and feel settled in education.

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

Pupils learn a rich and well-developed curriculum. Teachers and support staff are knowledgeable. They share a determination that all pupils will progress academically and socially. This includes those pupils who attend the school's specially resourced provision. Staff expertly meet the academic needs of all pupils. For example, they successfully target reading and phonics support to ensure all pupils improve their reading accuracy and fluency. Effective learning interventions strengthen pupils' writing skills and mathematical knowledge. These ensure that pupils with gaps in their knowledge can catch up and keep up with learning. Pupils' work builds in complexity over time. Staff ensure that pupils remember important knowledge and learn to apply it independently. They are given meaningful opportunities to apply knowledge and skills across subjects. This helps pupils to take ownership of their learning and feel pride in the achievements they make.

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are noteworthy. Classrooms are calm and pupils learn without disruption. Pupils learn to develop, and demonstrate, high levels of respect for each other. They value other people's differences and celebrate diversity. Pupils are polite. They engage positively with adults. Caring staff expertly model the behaviours that they expect of pupils. This means that relationships between adults and pupils are respectful and kind. Staff positively motivate pupils to attend school well. Leaders have developed well-embedded systems that promote regular attendance. As a result, pupils attend school very well.

Pupils' personal development is exceptional. It successfully extends into all aspects of school life. All curriculum areas contribute to pupils' wider development. Pupils learn to discuss learning effectively across a range of subjects and topics. The school offers many opportunities that help pupils to develop their artistic and sporting interests, for example horse riding tuition or painting with local artists. Pupils visit local areas of interest through residential trips that broaden pupils' knowledge of their locality. They are well prepared for adulthood. Pupils learn how to use money confidently and how to cook independently. They are involved in community church services and sing at a local care home. This successfully develops their inter-generational understanding.

Staff recognise that leaders are considerate of their workload and well-being. Staff, including early career teachers, appreciate the support that they receive. This includes professional development and regular time to carry out administrative tasks. Governors know the school very well. Some have a background in education. This helps the governing body secure a deep understanding of the school and challenge leaders robustly. They share leaders' vision to build upon the school's already successful practice.

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	111775
Local authority	Middlesbrough
Inspection number	10290007
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	104
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Adrian Lynch
Headteacher	Dennis Ley
Website	www.holmwoodschool.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	28 and 29 September 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Holmwood School is a special school for pupils aged between four and 11 years. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school makes provision for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. Some pupils have additional SEND.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for 10 pupils with SEND. At the time of the inspection, five pupils who are dual registered at other mainstream schools attended the setting.

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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held a wide range of meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, and teaching and support staff in the school. The lead inspector spoke, by telephone, to the chair of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work. The provision for teaching art, geography and science was also closely scrutinised.
- The lead inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- 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.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for pupils, staff and parents. This included any free-text responses to Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

David Mills, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Andrea English

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024