

Inspection of Horn's Mill Primary School

Denbigh Close, Helsby, Frodsham, Cheshire WA6 0ED

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 March 2024

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Good

Early years provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

The school is highly ambitious for the achievement of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The academic, personal, social and emotional support that the school provides contributes strongly to how well pupils achieve.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They described it as a big family. There are strong relationships between pupils and staff. Pupils are polite and well mannered. They speak confidently and articulately with visitors. Pupils are proud of the positive contribution that they make to their school and to the wider community. For example, they enjoy litter picking at the local park, in partnership with the parish council.

Classrooms are calm and purposeful. This allows pupils to do their best in lessons. Pupils are inquisitive and display highly positive attitudes towards their learning.

Pupils have a very well-developed understanding of equality and diversity. They revel in their many responsibilities, including as head pupils or members of the school council. A rich variety of visits and after-school activities enhances pupils' learning across the curriculum. For example, during the inspection, pupils were thoroughly engaged in rehearsals for a musical extravaganza. Pupils also spoke with pride at their involvement in a mathematics competition at the local high school.

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

Children get off to a flying start in the Reception class. The provision for children's development in the early years is exceptional. Staff know children well and establish excellent routines that support children's learning very well. The curriculum is highly ambitious and designed to engage children, who are inspired to learn and focus well. Children use their mathematical and phonics knowledge confidently and fluently. They relish talking about and explaining the work that they are doing. They are very well prepared for their move into key stage 1. The school builds highly positive relationships with parents and carers from the start of the children's learning journey.

The school has designed an ambitious curriculum that meets the needs of the diverse school population. The governing body has effective systems to support and challenge the school to further improve the quality of education that pupils receive.

The curriculum carefully sets out the knowledge and vocabulary that pupils should learn across all year groups. However, in a few subjects, it is less clear what pupils should achieve by the end of each topic. This hinders teachers from knowing what pupils should know and be able to do. This makes it difficult for teachers to build on pupils' prior knowledge.

Staff have secure subject knowledge. In most subjects, they use effective strategies that enable pupils to secure and recall their learning. For example, additional teaching and revisiting prior learning in many subjects help pupils to build a secure understanding of new concepts. Teachers check that pupils have understood what has been taught.

Typically, pupils progress well through the subject curriculums. They achieve well overall. However, the high absence rates of some pupils have a negative impact on how well they learn. The school knows the barriers that prevent some pupils from attending regularly. It works effectively with families to ensure that pupils are in school and learning all that they should.

There is high ambition for pupils with SEND. The school ensures that these pupils are swiftly identified. Pupils receive effective support during lessons so that they can access the same curriculum as their peers.

Reading is an important part of school life. Well-trained staff deliver the phonics programme effectively. They quickly identify pupils who may need additional support. Pupils, from the start of the Reception Year, accurately learn the sounds that they are taught. They use their phonics knowledge to help them confidently read unfamiliar words. Older pupils develop their fluency further to become successful, independent readers.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent. They follow routines impeccably. Pupils are resilient when faced with challenges, and they work hard during lessons. Pupils are determined and focused.

The programme to support pupils' personal development is exceptional. Pupils become confident individuals, with a strong sense of moral and social purpose. For example, they value the opportunities to work and sing with pupils from other schools. The school shares news stories with pupils to help them gain a deep understanding of events that happen around the world. Pupils know how to keep themselves healthy. In addition, they have a strong understanding of how to keep themselves safe when online. The school encourages pupils to celebrate difference and to feel empowered to be who they want to be.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They feel well supported. For example, staff worked collaboratively to design the curriculum. This helped to reduce their workload. Positive teamwork permeates the school. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly full of praise for the nurturing approach taken by the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, the endpoints that the curriculum is building towards are not clearly defined. This hinders teachers from designing learning that helps pupils to build on their prior learning. In these subjects, the school should set out what pupils are expected to know by the end of each topic so that they can build their knowledge over time.

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	111129
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10321316
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	204
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Nicola Cash
Headteacher	Sharon Wyatt
Website	www.hornsmill.cheshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	5 February 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not make use of alternative provision for pupils.
- Several new staff have been appointed since the last inspection.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement 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 spoke with the headteacher and with other leaders and members of staff. They also spoke with the chair and other members of the governing body.
- The lead inspector spoke with representatives of the local authority.
- 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 carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and geography. They spoke with curriculum leaders of these subjects. Inspectors also visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work, held discussions with teachers and spoke with pupils. They observed some pupils from Years 1 to 3 read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors considered the curriculum in some other subjects. They met with leaders and looked at examples of pupils' work in these subjects.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and around school. They also observed pupils at lunchtime and while they played outside at playtime.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also met with parents before school.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and for pupils.

Inspection team

Ian Shackleton, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Valmai Roberts	Ofsted Inspector

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