

Inspection of a good school: Honington Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Malting Row, Honington, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP31 1RE

Inspection dates:

14 and 15 July 2021

Outcome

Honington Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school is a calm, caring and friendly place to be. Pupils learn and play well together. Behaviour is good. Pupils feel safe and free from bullying. Parents and carers say that 'Honington is a lovely, friendly school,' and that 'it is a caring, nurturing school where staff genuinely care about children'.

Leaders know the school and its community well. Over half of all pupils are from families from the nearby airbase who can leave or join the school at short notice. Staff provide good pastoral care so that new pupils are welcomed and settle quickly.

Pupils learn a broad, balanced curriculum. It is further enriched by a wide range of special activities across a range of different subjects. These activities stimulate pupils' interest and enjoyment of school.

Leaders prioritise the teaching of reading. As pupils move through the school, they develop a love of reading. Pupils' written work is not always neatly presented. In mathematics, pupils of all abilities achieve well. Pupils talk positively about mathematics; for many of them, it is their favourite subject.

The COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic has limited leaders' monitoring of the impact of new curriculum plans on how well pupils achieve. Plans are in place to improve this next year.

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

Early reading is suitably prioritised. Systematic teaching of reading begins in the Reception class and continues until pupils can read fluently. Daily sessions learning phonics help pupils to recognise letters and sounds and blend them together to read.

Books are suitably matched to pupils' reading ability. Staff monitor how well pupils are doing and provide targeted support for those who need it. By the time pupils leave school, most of them are confident readers. Pupils volunteer to read aloud in lessons. Pupils who met with the inspector talked enthusiastically about the books they read for pleasure.

Significant improvements have been made in mathematics. Revised planning and a new calculation policy have been put in place. Guidance from the subject leader is ensuring that teachers understand how to use the new curriculum plans. Training for staff has given them more confidence in teaching problem-solving using a wider range of resources. This helps pupils to make strong progress in mathematics.

Subject leaders are given time to lead improvement. Since the previous inspection, all staff have worked together to improve the quality of subject planning throughout all year groups. 'Milestones' in each subject have been introduced to show what pupils are expected to learn during their journey from Reception to the end of Year 6. Teachers are using these plans to present learning in an organised, orderly way. However, due to changes in the way the school has operated during the COVID-19 pandemic, there is some variation in the implementation of these plans, particularly in subjects taught in the afternoons. Leaders also acknowledge that during the pandemic, pupils' handwriting and presentation have deteriorated and are not as good as they should be.

In the Reception class, children experience a suitable blend of teacher-led and child-initiated play. They make full use of the indoor and outdoor areas to learn and play together safely. For example, children love dressing up as pirates and princesses, exploring together and finding things out for themselves. Staff intervene effectively to develop children's ideas, check their understanding and keep them safe.

Leaders are experienced in identifying pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and putting in place suitable support for them. The special educational needs coordinator knows these pupils and their families well. Teaching assistants offer one-to-one and small group support in classes. Teachers are experienced in modelling learning and setting activities for pupils to do independently. This enables staff to work effectively alongside pupils who are finding work difficult and help them with their learning.

The school has a caring and supportive ethos. Behaviour in lessons is good. At breaktimes, pupils play games together or chat in friendship groups. Pupils are polite and respectful. Their enjoyment of school is shown in their regular attendance.

Staff have no concerns about workload. They feel well supported by leaders.

In discussions with senior leaders, we agreed that their monitoring and evaluation and checking of how well pupils achieve in all subjects may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All of the necessary checks are made when appointing adults to work with children. All staff recognise their role and responsibilities in keeping pupils safe from harm.

Safeguarding is prioritised. Four senior staff are trained as designated safeguarding leads. Procedures to follow up concerns raised by staff are robust. Leaders take timely actions to keep pupils safe from harm. Leaders can account for all pupils who have left the school roll in recent years.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There have been limitations on how frequently and effectively leaders have checked the impact of the quality of education on how well pupils achieve. Leaders should strengthen the monitoring of the quality of education, particularly in foundation subjects, to check that curriculum plans are implemented fully and be able to gauge the impact this has on how well pupils achieve.
- Pupils' presentation of their work, particularly their handwriting, is not consistently good enough throughout the school. Leaders need to agree among staff a common approach that all will implement to improve the quality of pupils' handwriting and the presentation of their work.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that a good school could now be better than good, or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in July 2016.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for published performance information about the school [here](#).

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	124702
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10193979
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	170
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Linda Howe
Headteacher	Lauren Moore
Website	www.honington.edublogs.org
Date of previous inspection	24 May 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Honington Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school in rural Suffolk.
- The school experiences a high turnover in pupils with families based at a nearby airbase arriving and departing at short notice.
- The majority of pupils are White British. Very few are from ethnic minority backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is below average. The proportion of pupils eligible for the service pupil premium is above average.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school, and has taken that into account in his evaluation.

- The inspector met with the headteacher and her team of senior leaders, a range of middle leaders, teachers and teaching assistants, two members of the governing body and two groups of pupils.
- The inspector did deep dives into early reading, mathematics and all foundation subjects taught during the inspection. This included discussions with subject leaders, visits to lessons, meetings with pupils and teachers, and scrutinising pupils' work.
- The inspector focused on four other aspects of the school's work: safeguarding, pupils' wider development, staff workload, and gaming and off-rolling.
- The inspector considered 26 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey, 20 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and 19 responses and free-text comments to the parent questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

John Mitcheson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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