Inspection of Holt Farm Junior School

Ashingdon Road, Hawkwell, Rochford, Essex SS4 1RS

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 February 2024

Overall effectiveness	**Good**
The quality of education	**Good**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Good**
Personal development	**Good**
Leadership and management	**Good**
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is Claire Richardson. This school is part of the South East Essex Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Andrew Cooper, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Neal Misell.

What is it like to attend this school?

Holt Farm Junior School provides a happy, caring and welcoming place for pupils. Pupils meet the high expectations set for them. They behave well and understand and apply the school's 'GRIT' values of growth mind-set, resilience, independence and tenacity.

The school is calm and orderly. Pupils get along well together. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive. Pupils are polite and well-mannered. Many like playing sports and games together during breaks. Pupils say that staff are fair when dealing with any behaviour issues. Pupils are confident that staff will deal with any problems if they occur. This contributes towards pupils feeling safe in school.

Pupils access a curriculum that supports them to achieve well. They enjoy learning and try their best in all they do. When they find tasks difficult, pupils value the help they receive to be able to move on successfully in their learning.

Pupils embrace leadership responsibilities in school. They take on roles, such as digital leaders, school councillors and senior prefects. The school provides a range of extra-curricular clubs to nurture pupils' talents and interests. For example, many pupils attend coding club, football, netball and dance.

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

The school's carefully planned curriculum helps pupils develop subject-specific knowledge and understanding. This prepares them well for secondary school. The important knowledge that leaders want pupils to know is clearly set out and builds up over time. Pupils revisit and remember important knowledge and subject-specific vocabulary. This gives them the skills they need to be confident and articulate in all curriculum areas.

Mostly, staff teach the curriculum well. They use their effective subject knowledge to introduce new concepts clearly. They check pupils' understanding using well-considered questions. This means pupils in most instances develop detailed knowledge. However, in a couple of areas, the curriculum is less well developed. Staff are less secure in delivering aspects such as mathematical reasoning. As a result, some pupils develop gaps in their knowledge.

Leaders are determined that pupils will become fluent readers. Reading is at the heart of the curriculum. Pupils encounter a varied range of well-selected texts. Teachers quickly identify pupils who need help with reading and provide effective extra support. They carefully plan reading activities to help pupils develop their vocabulary and comprehension. Consequently, pupils read fluently, confidently and enthusiastically.

Typically, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn successfully. Staff often make appropriate adaptations to learning so that pupils with

SEND access the same full curriculum as their peers. Leaders have recently improved the speed and accuracy with which some pupils' needs are identified. However, there are a few pupils with SEND who do not routinely get the full support that they need. Therefore, on these occasions, pupils with SEND do not do as well as they might.

Pupils exhibit positive attitudes to learning. They attend well. In lessons and around the school they demonstrate maturity, self-control and cooperation. Adults provide effective support for pupils' social and emotional needs. Pupils are taught the school's 'High 5 Expectations', which they use effectively in their day-to-day life to be reflective, honest, kind, safe and hard-working.

The school prioritises pupils' personal development. Pupils learn about other cultures and different relationships. They relish the visits, activities and clubs on offer. These help them to develop their talents and their understanding of the world. Every pupil has the opportunity to learn a musical instrument. Pupils enjoy taking part in concerts, sporting and artistic activities. Pupils are well prepared for life as a citizen in modern Britain.

Governors and the trust ensure that pupils receive a good quality of education. The trust provides bespoke training, which leaders make excellent use of. Leaders have an accurate view of the school's many strengths and what it needs to do to improve further.

Leaders consider staff workload in their plans and ensure that staff are given the time and resources to do their jobs well. Consequently, staff feel valued for what they contribute to the school.

Parents and carers are positive about, and supportive of, the school. The parent council aids helpful communications between home and school. Families appreciate the school's engagement with them.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some areas of the curriculum are not as well developed as others. Staff are still developing their subject knowledge in the leaders' intended curriculum. This means some pupils develop gaps in their knowledge. The school should provide staff with the support they need to deliver effective teaching approaches so that pupils have the same depth of knowledge across all areas of the curriculum.
- The school sometimes does not ensure staff make the appropriate adaptations for pupils with SEND to ensure pupils can access the curriculum as well as they

should. This means these pupils do not routinely do as well as they should. The school needs to check that pupils with SEND get a consistently effective quality of support with their learning to help them achieve the best possible outcomes.

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	141170
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10287122
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	297
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Neal Misell
CEO of the trust	Andrew Cooper
Headteacher	Claire Richardson
Website	www.hfjs.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	8 and 9 March 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has appointed a new headteacher since the previous inspection.
- The school is part of the South East Essex Academy Trust.
- The school does not currently use alternative education provision.

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.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, art and design, computing and geography. For each deep dive,

inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector listened to some pupils read to an adult they knew.

- Inspectors discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The inspection team held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, teachers and support staff.
- The lead inspector met with representatives of the trust, including the trust director of education, the trust director of people and the trust inclusion manager. He also met with the CEO of the trust.
- 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.
- The inspection team took account of a range of other information, including the school's development plans, school policies, and governing body and trust minutes.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at other times around school. They met with groups of pupils to discuss behaviour in the school.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents, carers, staff and pupils through conversations and responses to Ofsted's surveys.

Inspection team

Nick Rudman, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Laura Hewer	Ofsted Inspector
Danny Wagstaff	Ofsted Inspector

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