

The Hollins

Hollins Lane, Accrington, Lancashire BB5 2QY

Inspection dates

6–7 December 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Senior leaders, including governors, have acted with vision and rigour to overcome the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Consequently, this remains a good school.
- Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural education is excellent. Accordingly, pupils thrive in the school's happy, safe and positive environment. Furthermore, they are well prepared for their life outside and after school by this outstanding provision.
- Leaders, including governors, understand the school's strengths and areas for development accurately. Consequently, their plans to improve the school are precise and effective. For example, standards in English have risen significantly since the last inspection and are now a strength of the school.
- Leaders use additional funding for disadvantaged pupils imaginatively and effectively. Therefore, the attendance, behaviour, outcomes and next steps of this group of pupils are good.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are very well supported because leaders and teachers know these pupils well. Accordingly, they attend regularly and make the progress that they should.
- School leaders plan Year 7 pupils' transition from primary school carefully. Consequently, these pupils settle well and are happy.
- Leaders use Year 7 catch-up funding well. They plan, monitor and evaluate activities to ensure that pupils with low starting points in literacy and numeracy catch up with others effectively.
- Safeguarding is effective. Pupils say that they feel safe at school. Staff are well trained and vigilant in supporting pupils' safety and well-being.
- Pupils' conduct around the school is good. They have strong attitudes to learning and attend regularly. Relationships with their peers and staff are positive.
- Pupils' outcomes are broadly in line with others nationally across a broad range of subjects. They are especially strong in English, geography and art. However, they are variable in history and modern foreign languages.
- Leaders have provided training for teachers to ensure that pupils with high starting points are set work that challenges them routinely. This has led to improved teaching of these pupils recently across a range of subjects, but variability remains.
- Leaders review the curriculum regularly. Consequently, most pupils follow a broad range of subjects that meet their interests and needs. However, option choices currently available for pupils with low starting points in key stage 4 do not support their outcomes and next steps effectively.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve outcomes in history and modern foreign languages by eradicating variation in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in these areas.
- Sustain improvements in teaching so that pupils with high starting points are challenged routinely and make the progress that they should across a broad range of subjects.
- Continue to refine the curriculum in key stage 4, so that pupils with low starting points are provided with examination option subjects that support their outcomes and next steps effectively.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- School leaders have acted effectively on recommendations to further improve the school made at the previous inspection in October 2013. Consequently, pupils continue to receive a good standard of education at the school.
- Senior leaders have an accurate view of the school's effectiveness. They recognise its strengths and areas to further develop precisely. Consequently, leaders' plans are sharply focused on the areas of the school that need additional support. Senior leaders have demonstrated the capacity to make any improvements required. For example, pupils' outcomes in English have become a strength of the school since the last inspection because of strong improvement planning and the actions that followed.
- Leaders' plans for the school are underpinned by a clear vision, which places the standard of pupils' education at its heart. For example, leaders are determined that only teachers with strong subject knowledge are successful when making appointments. This has, for example, meant that pupils are routinely taught by specialist staff in English and mathematics. This has resulted in improved and strong outcomes since the last inspection.
- School leaders use the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils imaginatively and effectively. Leaders support disadvantaged pupils to engage in a range of creative and academic activities, ensuring that disadvantaged pupils at the school are aspirational. Consequently, the attendance, behaviour, destinations and outcomes of most disadvantaged pupils are good. Leaders plan, assess and review actions for these pupils precisely, so they are sure of those which have worked well.
- The use of Year 7 catch-up funding is effective. Pupils who are entitled to this additional support in literacy and/or numeracy make good progress and most catch up with their peers. Inspectors listened to Year 7 pupils who joined the school with lower than average levels of reading. These pupils were making strong progress.
- Subject leadership is good overall, and leaders routinely monitor or manage actions to improve the subjects that they lead effectively. For example, in English, leaders have introduced and embedded high expectations, thus ensuring that pupils' work is challenging consistently. This has led to good outcomes since the last inspection. In a minority of areas, such as modern foreign languages and history, subject leadership is less effective. Most pupils and parents say that they receive a good standard of education at the school.
- School leaders have a precise view of the quality of teaching at the school. Leaders joined inspectors in lesson observations and were able to identify strengths and the areas where there is variability accurately. These areas, such as planning work to ensure that pupils with high starting points make the progress that they should, have been a focus for staff training to support them in improving the quality of teaching. Staff, including those who are newly or recently qualified, are positive about the impact training has in improving the quality of teaching. In many areas and across all year groups, pupils are now being taught more effectively than at the time of the last inspection.
- Performance management systems and practice are effective because they have

sustained and improved good teaching and leadership since the last inspection. Staff do not automatically receive a pay progression when they are eligible. They need to provide compelling evidence that they have supported strong progress of the pupils whom they are accountable for.

- The curriculum that pupils follow is effective. It is especially strong in key stage 3 where the courses that pupils follow routinely match the needs and interests of all pupils. Leaders accurately recognise that at key stage 4, although the curriculum meets the needs of most pupils, changes are required to ensure that a small group of pupils with low starting points are provided with courses that best fit their needs. These pupils currently do not make the progress that they should in their option subjects.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a real strength of the school. The multitude of initiatives and activities are led and managed well, which ensures that pupils' development in this area runs through every aspect of school life. Consequently, pupils' preparation for life in modern Britain, including their rights and responsibilities, is excellent.
- School leaders provide a wide range of extra-curricular options, which are popular with pupils. They include sports, arts, academic and other activities, and clubs. Most pupils who responded to the questionnaire at the time of the inspection said that they attend extra-curricular activities regularly.
- Leadership of careers education, information, advice and guidance is effective. Accordingly, almost all pupils who completed Year 11 in 2016 moved on to education, employment or training.
- Staff who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire at the time of the inspection were overwhelmingly positive about the school's leadership. This picture was matched by the parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. The school and its leadership are well respected in the local community. Accordingly, the number of pupils who apply to join the school each year regularly exceed the places that are available.

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective. Governors have supported and challenged school leaders to make the improvements identified at the time of the previous inspection successfully. For example, standards in English are now routinely good. Governors understand the school's strengths and weaker areas. Consequently, the educational performance of the school continues to improve.
- Governors' vision of high expectations and only the best standards for pupils at the school underpins the good teaching seen by inspectors. For example, in mathematics, governors have been instrumental in ensuring that only teachers with strong subject knowledge are appointed. Accordingly, current pupils are making the progress that they should.
- Governors monitor the leadership of the school and the performance of its staff effectively. Teachers and leaders are held to account routinely for the progress of pupils at the school, which has resulted in good outcomes.
- Governors are effective in their responsibilities regarding keeping pupils safe. For example, those who sit on interview panels have undertaken safer recruitment training.

- Governors audit their skills and expertise accurately. Accordingly, they have assured that their knowledge and application of financial capability are effective and used strategically to sustain the good quality of pupils' education at the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff, including non-teaching staff, are vigilant in identifying potential risks to pupils, such as radicalisation, pupils' mental well-being, bullying and sexual exploitation. Concerns are reported and acted on effectively. Consequently, there is an effective culture of safeguarding at the school.
- Leaders maintain good-quality safeguarding records. There are systematic procedures for checking the backgrounds of staff when they are appointed. The school's use of safer recruitment training and systems is effective.
- School leaders work effectively with parents, carers and external agencies, and act swiftly when required. Checks made by inspectors demonstrated that referrals are followed up in a robust manner and that record-keeping is good.
- Most pupils, parents and staff say that pupils are safe and well looked after. Pupils' physical and emotional well-being are supported effectively. For example, each pupil who joins Year 7 has an appointed adult who is responsible for monitoring their mental well-being. Leaders and teachers ensure that pupils have a clear understanding of the risks which might affect them and how to keep safe, including e-safety. Pupils know whom to report concerns to and how to do this. The school has filters in place to prevent inappropriate internet usage.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment across a broad range of subjects and year groups are good. School leaders have addressed areas identified at the time of the last inspection for further improvement successfully. Consequently, most pupils make the progress that they should.
- School leaders have introduced systems to monitor and evaluate the standard of teaching at the school typically. These are effective, so leaders have a precise and accurate view of teaching. They recognise the many areas of strength such as English, art and geography, and those where some variability remains, including history and modern foreign languages.
- Most teachers assess pupils' work in line with the clear expectations set by school leaders. Accordingly, in these areas, pupils are clear where they need to improve their work and are given guidance and time to do so. School leaders accurately identify the few areas where there is variation from the expectations that they set and pupils' misconceptions are not routinely picked up on.
- Most teachers have strong subject knowledge, including in English and mathematics. Accordingly, they plan and use questioning to support pupils' learning effectively. In physical education, questioning is very strong. It ensures that pupils think deeply about their learning and respond with detail, depth and fluency. Consequently, pupils are

motivated and challenged effectively and make strong progress, including those with high starting points.

- Senior leaders say that, previously, some teachers have not used the information they have about pupils to plan work at the correct level. They have provided training for teachers to rectify this recently, especially to ensure consistently good progress for pupils with high starting points. Inspectors saw that most-able pupils were being given work that challenged them more regularly than was the case previously, and that the progress of these pupils had improved because of this. However, leaders accurately identify a few remaining areas where pupils with high starting points are not provided with the challenge that allows them to make the progress that they should, including in history.
- Many pupils begin Year 7 as strong readers, and this is sustained throughout the school because they are provided with opportunities to read regularly. They read books and articles from a wide range of genres with accuracy and enjoyment. The reading of pupils who join with low starting points is improved effectively. Most of these pupils catch up with their peers by the end of Year 7 because the funding that is provided for this purpose is spent well. Accordingly, these pupils are supported to access the wider curriculum effectively and make the progress across a broad range of subjects that they should.
- Most pupils join the school with good writing skills which many teachers build on effectively. For example, in English, teachers regularly provide pupils with opportunities to craft sophisticated pieces of extended writing so that these pupils make the strong progress that they should. In geography, pupils routinely write extended responses with clarity and precision, enabling them to access more challenging questions successfully. However in history, pupils, especially those with middle and high starting points, do not make the progress that they should because, too often, they are not challenged by the writing tasks that they are set.
- Teachers manage behaviour successfully. They ensure good conduct and attitudes to learning. Accordingly, most pupils take care over the presentation of their work, bring the correct equipment and behave well.
- The small number of pupils who attend alternative provision are taught well. Consequently, they are successful when moving on to further education, employment or training.
- School leaders monitor and evaluate homework effectively. Leaders' views that homework is set regularly and that the work is usually of an appropriate standard matches those of most of the parents who responded to Parent View.
- School leaders have reviewed the reports that they send home to parents about pupils' progress recently. They are developed in consultation with parents. Leaders provided inspectors with examples of the reports that are sent home. They include clear information about pupils' recent outcomes. Consequently, most of the parents who responded to Parent View said that they receive valuable information from the school about their child's progress.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils' learning about fundamental British values is excellent. This aspect of the curriculum is a priority for school leaders, who see it as everyone's responsibility. Accordingly, it is expertly led and managed. Pupils are aware of their responsibilities as responsible citizens and their ability to 'inspire change through action'. Pupils support fair trade and have won sustainability and enterprise awards. Pupils have many opportunities to learn about other faiths and cultures, including visits to places of worship. Accordingly, they respect differences and tolerate views that are different from their own. Pupils say that racism or homophobia has no place at the school, which is a Stonewall Champion.
- Pupils' transition from primary school is led and managed expertly. Inspectors spoke to pupils in Year 7 who said that the support they were given had helped them to settle into their new school well. For example, Year 7 pupils have a designated playground with activities organised for them that are age related, which has helped support their transition. Year 7 pupils say that they value the emphasis placed on their physical and mental well-being. Staff visit primary schools and use the information provided effectively. They ensure that teachers and other adults are aware of pupils' educational backgrounds and requirements, including those who have SEN and/or disabilities, before pupils start Year 7.
- Pupils value the emphasis that school leaders place on their physical and mental well-being. They accurately see this as a firm commitment. For example, the healthy options available to pupils in the school's canteen reflect their learning about how to maintain a healthy diet. Staff have a sharp focus on pupils' mental health and report any concerns quickly. Consequently, pupils say that they are happy, safe and well cared for.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare at the school because of their excellent social, moral, spiritual and cultural education. On the rare occasion that bullying happens or is likely to happen, pupils know how to report it. They are confident that it is dealt with by school staff quickly and effectively.
- Pupils know how to identify dangers and remain safe online. They receive regular reminders in this area. Pupils are further supported by the online safety systems established by school leaders.
- Pupils whom inspectors met during the inspection spoke very positively about their school. They say that they are valued as individuals and that they are taught to value others, including those with different beliefs and views, regularly and effectively. They said that they would recommend the school to others.
- The school provides effectively for the personal development and welfare of the very small number of pupils who attend alternative provision.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' attendance overall is broadly in line with the national average, including for disadvantaged pupils. School leaders have been effective in encouraging many pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and have been persistently absent in the past to attend school more regularly. Consequently, the attendance of these pupils is improving and getting closer to that of others nationally.
- Pupils behave well in lessons. They have positive attitudes to learning and take pride in their work.
- Leaders ensure that the school environment is well maintained. Consequently, most pupils treat the school environment with respect and do not leave litter lying around. At breaktime and lunchtime, and at the change of lessons, most pupils move around the school in an orderly manner. They arrive punctually to lessons.
- School leaders manage effectively the attendance, behaviour and safeguarding of the small number of pupils who attend alternative provision.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' progress across a broad range of subjects, including provisional 2017 examination results, is routinely in line with the national average.
- Inspectors' analysis of pupils' current work shows that progress is good across a broad range of subjects. In English, art and geography, pupils' progress is especially strong. In mathematics, where examination outcomes dipped in 2017, most current pupils are working at the level expected of their age and are making the progress that they should. School leaders have an accurate picture of where pupils achieve well and where actions to improve outcomes noted at the last inspection have been effective, such as in English. They also recognise the few remaining areas where variation remains, notably in history and modern foreign languages.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making stronger progress than was the case at the time of the previous inspection. Although provisional 2017 examination outcomes indicate that disadvantaged pupils' progress at the school was less than others nationally, the work seen by inspectors shows that their current outcomes are good across a broad range of subjects. This is because the leadership of pupil premium funding is effective.
- The progress of most-able pupils is improving but remains variable. School leaders have prioritised the eradication of this variability recently. Consequently, in some areas there are stronger outcomes for most-able current pupils. However, school leaders correctly identify a small number of areas, such as history, where teachers do not routinely set the most able pupils work that challenges them.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities have their individual requirements identified and met well. They are provided with a good balance of challenge and support. Accordingly, their outcomes are generally good across a broad range of subjects and they move on to further education or training successfully.
- Leaders monitor the outcomes of the very small number of pupils who follow alternative provision effectively. Consequently, they make good progress.
- Pupils attain good outcomes across a broad range of subjects. Consequently, the

proportion of pupils who progress to further education, employment or training has improved rapidly and is in line with the national average.

School details

Unique reference number	119757
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10036751

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	800
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Downham
Headteacher	Steve Campbell
Telephone number	01254 233 500
Website	www.thehollins.com
Email address	enquiries@thehollins.com
Date of previous inspection	8–9 October 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students and those supported by the pupil premium funding is in line with the national average.
- The number of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities supported by the school is below the national average. The number of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below the national average.
- The school uses alternative provision for a small number of pupils at The Alternative School Accrington.
- The school is a teaching school and leads a local alliance of schools.

Information about this inspection

- Meetings took place with school leaders, teachers, members of the governing body and a local authority representative.
- Discussions were held with pupils and students to gather their views on issues including safeguarding, support for their mental well-being, bullying, behaviour, teaching, careers guidance and the curriculum.
- Inspectors examined a range of supporting documentation such as the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, the school's assessment information, the school's pupil premium plan, minutes of governing body meetings, attendance and behaviour records, and safeguarding documentation.
- Inspectors considered 78 responses to the Ofsted online pupil questionnaire, 45 responses to the Ofsted online parental questionnaire and 51 responses to the Ofsted online staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors conducted learning walks and lesson observations across a range of subjects and year groups. They were accompanied by school leaders on some of these lesson observations.
- Inspectors scrutinised the work in pupils' books by undertaking a work analysis with school leaders.

Inspection team

Stephen Ruddy, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Phil Hyman	Ofsted Inspector
David Roberts	Ofsted Inspector
Debra Wood	Ofsted Inspector
Helen O'Neill	Her Majesty's Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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