

Holbrook Primary School

Wych Lane, Bridgemary, Gosport, Hampshire PO13 0JN

Inspection dates

9–10 May 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils do not achieve the standards they are capable of. In 2016, at the end of Year 6, too few pupils achieved age-related expectations in reading and mathematics.
- Teaching, although improving, is not consistently strong enough to enable pupils to catch up from a legacy of weak teaching.
- Significant staffing issues have stalled the improvement of teaching, learning and assessment. School leaders have been thwarted in their attempts to build a consistently strong team due to difficulties in staff recruitment.
- Although most pupils attend school regularly, the number of pupils that frequently miss school is too high. Leaders' work to address this has not yet made enough impact.
- Teachers do not consistently use assessment information to plan activities that build on what pupils already know. Sometimes the work is too hard and sometimes it is too easy. Consequently, pupils' progress is limited.
- The quality of feedback that teachers provide to help pupils understand how well they have progressed in lessons is varied. Sometimes pupils continue to make the same errors in their work without realising they are incorrect.
- Some teachers and learning support assistants lack security and accuracy in their subject knowledge, for example when teaching phonics.
- The teaching of writing, although improving well in English, is not securely developed across other subjects.

The school has the following strengths

- The executive headteacher, ably supported by the head of school, leads with vision and purpose. They have successfully established improvements in behaviour and teaching across the school.
- Leaders, including governors, have a clear understanding of the school's weaknesses. They have taken robust staffing decisions to ensure that teaching in the school improves.
- Strategies to secure improvements in teaching and pupils' outcomes are starting to yield success. Current achievement is improving.
- Pupils' attitudes to school are positive. Pupils are proud of their school and conduct themselves well throughout the school day.
- Children in the early years make a good start to their school life.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Embed the improvements to teaching, learning and assessment so that they are consistently good or better by ensuring that:
 - all teachers have an accurate knowledge of what pupils know, can do and understand in order to plan appropriately challenging learning activities
 - pupils' misconceptions are noticed and pupils are given support to improve
 - there is a high expectation of the standard of pupils' writing across all subjects
 - adults have a secure and accurate understanding of subjects they are teaching, especially phonics.
- Continue to improve outcomes for all pupils by ensuring that:
 - teaching rapidly improves pupils' learning so that pupils catch up with any gaps from previous years
 - rates of absence, particularly persistent absence, continue to reduce, so that most pupils attend school most of the time.
- Increase the effectiveness of leadership at all levels by ensuring that:
 - governors continue their drive to increasingly hold school leaders to account through high-quality questioning and challenge
 - evaluations are sharply focused on the difference that actions make for pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The executive headteacher and head of school have a clear vision and high ambition for their pupils and team. They know the school well and have a secure focus on the next steps for improvement. They make strategic use of high-quality, external support from the local authority.
- Leaders have, rightly, focused on improving teaching, learning and assessment across the school. They rigorously check the quality of teaching, including planning, and provide good support for teachers. Leaders share the good practice that currently exists in the school to help weaker teachers. Local authority monitoring information and school records show that these actions have been effective and teaching has improved. However, leaders have been thwarted in their efforts to consolidate improvements by recruitment difficulties.
- Leaders have worked closely with the local authority and other local providers to ensure that the teachers' assessment of pupils' attainment is accurate. Inspectors' scrutiny of pupils' books indicates that this work is successful. Leaders use this information to hold teachers to account for the progress of their pupils. Leaders match this information to their examination of pupils' books and lessons and take tough decisions when necessary.
- Leaders have established successful processes for supporting pupils' behaviour across the school. Their clear plans have improved the behaviour across the school over the past few years so that behaviour is now good. This has enabled leaders to have a sharper focus on improving teaching and learning.
- Staff are motivated by the range of high-quality, professional training and development that are provided by leaders and the local authority. They told inspectors that they valued the frequent and honest feedback that they received because it helped them to improve their skills. These conversations and the range of relevant training have helped to improve teaching over time. However, leaders are aware that there is still some way to go to ensure that all teaching is as good as the best in the school.
- The inclusion leader ensures that funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils is used effectively. These pupils are making good progress in the resource based provision and across the school.
- The curriculum and the school's grouping structures are frequently reviewed so that they meet the needs of the pupils. Teachers share successes and build on them, helping to engage pupils across the school. However, frequent staffing changes sometimes mean that aspects of the curriculum are changed without leaders fully understanding which aspects were successful.
- Leaders promote an inclusive culture and include activities to celebrate diversity. Visits and trips alongside work in school support the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. However, leaders are aware of the need to develop this work still further and to extend pupils' awareness of life in modern Britain.

Governance of the school

- Governors have provided ongoing support and challenge to school leaders. The governing body recently commissioned an external review to aid it to more robustly hold leaders to account. This has been effective in improving governors' strategies for challenging and probing the impact of leaders' work.
- Governors now ask challenging questions about the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes. They have a good understanding of the current picture and of the school improvement plans. However, sometimes the success measures linked to these plans are too focused on actions rather than the difference these actions will make for pupils.
- Governors carry out their statutory duties well, including those relating to safeguarding. They monitor the spending of additional funding, and understand how spending decisions make a difference for groups, such as disadvantaged pupils. They understand the need to monitor aspects of the school's work, such as the school's website, more closely to ensure that they meet requirements. For example, clear details of the curriculum need to be provided so that parents can easily access this information.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders prioritise pupils' safety and ensure that there are robust systems in place and that these are followed by all adults at the school. Staff receive regular training and updates which keep them up to date with the latest developments and risks, including signs that a child might be at risk.
- Leaders ensure that recruitment checks are rigorous and follow the safer recruitment guidelines. Information is correctly recorded and checked by governors to ensure that it meets required standards.
- Leaders make good use of external agencies to support children and families, when appropriate. They provide very good support to the more vulnerable pupils and are tenacious in following up actions due to be taken by external providers.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- There is too much inconsistency in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment overall. As a result, the progress of some pupils is too slow and they do not attain the security or depth of learning of which they are capable.
- Some teachers and learning support assistants do not have high enough expectations of pupils' level of work and their rates of progress. This is particularly the case for the most able pupils, across all groups, who sometimes have to repeat work they can already do or sit and wait to do a more challenging task.
- Too often, pupils are set the same tasks. For example, pupils who struggled with their spellings sat the same weekly spelling test as other pupils and they continued to get most of the words incorrect. School leaders have put support in place for these pupils, but this has not yet helped these pupils to catch up from previously weak teaching.

- Teachers do not consistently use information about what pupils already know and can do well when planning lessons. Inspectors' scrutiny of pupils' books showed that their learning tasks often jump about. As a result, pupils sometimes undertake activities that are too easy or too difficult. For example, in Year 1 pupils who were able to add and subtract three-digit numbers successfully were asked to complete a worksheet about number bonds to ten several months later. This much easier task did not further their learning or motivation.
- Sometimes, pupils' work is not looked at by an adult. As a result, these pupils continue to make the same mistakes in their work without knowing they are incorrect. Inspectors saw this situation occur in some mathematics and English books.
- Some teachers and learning support assistants lack the subject knowledge required to accelerate pupils' progress. For example, when teaching or using phonics some adults were inconsistent in using the correct sounds. Others lacked confidence when addressing the blending and segmenting of words. This limited pupils' progress with their reading and writing.
- Teachers' expectations for pupils are not always consistent across subjects. For example, some pupils who demonstrate a good standard of writing in English do not transfer this across to other subjects such as geography or science.
- School leaders have an accurate understanding of the improvements to teaching and learning that are required. They have provided effective support that has already improved teaching. Where teaching is more effective, teachers have secure subject knowledge and high expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- In more effective lessons, the teachers use assessment to carefully plan learning to build on pupils' understanding. For example, inspectors spoke to Year 4 pupils who explained that they had to use inverse operations to prove that their mathematical problem-solving was correct before moving on to the challenge tasks. This was directly linked to work from a previous lesson and it ensured that pupils secured their learning before moving on.
- Support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is effective, including in the resource base provision. Inspectors observed the effective development of phonics skills and saw a clear progression of skills in pupils' work. For example, effective adult modelling and prompts enabled pupils to express their thoughts successfully in a developed written sequence.
- Reading is promoted across the school and pupils read to an inspector with passion. They enjoy the rewards of reading and were clear that reading is very important for their learning.
- In all classrooms, clear support for learning is evident through learning walls and displays, including key words lists. Pupils like these and inspectors observed pupils making good use of these displays in many lessons.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils feel safe at school because of the range of adults available for them to talk to. Teachers and learning support assistants have built very positive relationships with pupils. Pupils and parents find the home-school link worker and emotional literacy support assistant very helpful. They told inspectors that the adults at the school help to sort things out, including bullying, if it happens.
- Most pupils are confident and self-assured. They talked about their learning with pride, especially their reading. Pupils elected as class ambassadors take their responsibilities very seriously and make sure they are a voice for their classmates.
- Pupils like the school's 'Transformers' approach to developing their 'Habits of Learning'. Inspectors saw pupils make good use of the different characters that represent 'resilience, stickability, working together and knowing yourself'. For example, when working in a group to solve a tricky reading problem, one pupil reminded her group that they had to 'really think'.
- The very small number of pupils attending alternative provision are supported well and successfully develop skills to ensure successful transition to their next steps.
- Pupils who join the school mid-year are well supported. They are given buddies and integrate quickly. Some of these pupils told inspectors that everyone at the school helped them to join in and, where it was needed, to catch up with their learning.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Older pupils told inspectors that it was much better than it used to be and everyone is happy now.
- Pupils like the school and enjoy their learning. This is evident in lessons, where the vast majority of pupils want to learn and concentrate well. Most pupils conduct themselves well throughout the school day. Occasionally, pupils lose concentration when they do not find lessons interesting or engaging or if they do not understand what they need to do.
- Pupils' behaviour at playtime and lunchtime is good. Adults are well trained to provide effective support for those pupils who struggle to sustain their good behaviour during these times.
- Attendance is low but improving. The proportion of pupils that miss school frequently is too high but leaders' work to change this is effective. Current school information indicates a marked improvement compared with previous years.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Despite improvements in outcomes for pupils in 2016, pupils in key stage 2 did not do well enough in national reading and mathematics tests. Expected attainment of pupils in key stage 1 was generally in line with national levels, but fewer pupils attained greater depth in these tests.
- The school's assessment information shows that the progress that current pupils make varies across subjects and across classes. Observation of lessons and scrutiny of pupils' books confirm the accuracy of this information. It has also been validated by the local authority's advisers. Where teaching is stronger, pupils make better progress and make up for poor progress in previous years. This inconsistent picture is not securing good progress over time.
- With the exception of Year 6, current pupils are doing better in reading and mathematics than they are in writing. Pupils are not developing their writing skills rapidly enough and not applying these skills to other subjects. However, progress in reading and mathematics is also poor for current Year 1 pupils. Under half of pupils in Years 3, 4, and 5 are predicted to meet their age-related expectations in the combined measure of reading, writing and mathematics by the end of this year.
- In 2016, disadvantaged pupils performed more strongly than did other pupils in key stage 2 and their progress and attainment were in line with other pupils nationally. In key stage 1, this group performed in line with other pupils nationally for expected attainment in reading and mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils currently at the school are making variable progress. For example, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, in Years 2, 5 and 6 performing at the expected levels in reading is in line with other pupils nationally. Similarly, disadvantaged pupils in Years 2 and 4 are performing at a high standard in mathematics. However, in other subjects and year groups this is not always the case and these pupils do not make enough progress to catch up from previously weak teaching.
- The performance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is similarly varied. Many pupils, including those in the resource base provision, make good progress from their starting points. However, as with the disadvantaged pupils, this progress varies, depending on subject and year group.
- Strategies to improve teaching and learning are starting to yield success. School information and scrutiny of pupils' books indicate that more pupils are performing at expected levels than in previous years.
- Outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening check have improved year on year since the poor outcomes in 2014, and in 2016 were in line with the national average.

Early years provision

Good

- Children in the early years get off to a good start because effective transition support helps them to settle very quickly. Children quickly develop positive attitudes to school and to learning.

- The early years leader is knowledgeable and makes accurate assessments of children's abilities and learning needs. She uses this information to direct her team effectively. She also provides good training and coaching for her team which have helped to develop their teaching skills, which are good overall.
- Parents are very happy with the support and communication from the early years team and say that staff are always available to answer any questions. Parents particularly like the use of technology to inform them about their child's progress. This is proving to be increasingly effective.
- The curriculum successfully hooks children and is suitably broad and interesting. For example, an inspector saw pupils display awe and wonder when learning about the life cycle of a frog. Extra-curricular activities, such as a visit to a farm, are used successfully to develop the prime areas of learning, including managing feelings and behaviour. For example, an inspector saw the adults taking all of the Reception Year children on the farm visit, quickly and quietly focusing the children so that they boarded the coach with keen anticipation, but without fuss.
- Over recent years, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development has increased steadily. In 2016, this proportion was just below the national average. School information indicates that the attainment of current children has risen again this year. Many pupils join school at a level below what is typical for their age and are supported well to catch up.
- Additional funding is used effectively. Disadvantaged children are making good progress and, in 2016, outperformed their peers, with 70% achieving a good level of development.
- Children behave well and readily share tools, for example, while playing with sand or in the mud kitchen. Adults engage well with children and most provide suitable challenge through questions and suggesting developments to activities, for example when children are throwing beanbags. However, the early years leader is aware that sometimes adults intervene with answers too quickly rather than waiting for children to work out an answer themselves, for example when children are sounding out words during reading activities.

School details

Unique reference number	131116
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10000561

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	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	253
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jan Heath
Executive Headteacher	Tracy Potter
Telephone number	01329 286011
Website	www.holbrookprimaryhants.co.uk
Email address	t.potter@holbrook.hants.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11–12 October 2011

Information about this school

- The executive headteacher joined the school in September 2014 and the head of school joined in January 2015.
- The school is an average-sized primary school. It is federated with Bedenham Primary School.
- Overall, the proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is much higher than average. This is because the school has a specialist resource base for up to 14 pupils with speech, language and communication needs. At the time of inspection, this provision was full.
- The proportion of pupils receiving support through the pupil premium is much higher than average.

- The school meets the current government floor standards, which are minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the curriculum on its website.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team visited all classes to gather evidence. Inspectors observed parts of lessons, looked at work in pupils' books and talked to pupils about their learning. Some observations were conducted jointly with the executive headteacher or head of school.
- Inspectors also scrutinised pupils' books and school documentation, including the school improvement plan, reports on attendance and behaviour and records related to pupils' safety and academic progress.
- Pupils' behaviour was observed in lessons, around the school and during play and lunchtime.
- Inspectors spoke with a wide range of people to find out their views and experiences of the school. These included pupils, parents, staff, external provision leaders, school leaders, governors and the local authority's leadership learning partner.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils formally and informally, listened to some pupils read and took account of the 28 responses to the online pupil questionnaire.
- The views of staff were gathered through meetings and the 28 responses to the online staff questionnaire.
- The views of parents were taken into account through conversations in the playground before school and the 32 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including 16 comments via free text.

Inspection team

Lucy English, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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Nik Cook	Ofsted Inspector
Neil Small	Ofsted 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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