

Great Hollands Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	134304
Local authority	Bracknell Forest
Inspection number	381667
Inspection dates	18–19 January 2012
Lead inspector	Carolyn Carnaghan

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	326
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mary Temperton
Headteacher	Michael Purdy
Date of previous school inspection	9–10 July 2009
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Age group	3–11
Inspection date(s)	18–19 January 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Carolyn Carnaghan

Additional Inspector

Denise Morris

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Bill James

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed 21 lessons taught by 12 teachers. They held meetings with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at its plans, documents and policies. They scrutinised 96 responses to parental and carer questionnaires.

Information about the school

This is larger than the average-sized primary school. There is a much-higher-than-average proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. There is a higher-than-average proportion of pupils who move to the school at times other than those associated with transition. Most pupils are of White British heritage. There is an average, but growing, proportion of pupils who do not speak English as their first language. The school meets current floor standards.

There is a resource unit onsite for pupils with social and communication difficulties, and the Oaks Centre, not overseen by the governing body, which provides pre-school support for the community. Neither of these centres were part of this inspection. The school has both before- and after-school clubs.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. Pupils make good progress over time to leave Year 6 having reached broadly average attainment. Disabled pupils, or those with special educational needs or who speak English as an additional language also make good progress.
- Progress in writing and reading is good because there is a clear focus on developing these skills, although pupils’ attainment in reading at the end of Year 2 is below average. Since the previous inspection, the school has driven improvements in English well, ensuring that pupils are enthused by the opportunities they have. However, the school is aware that these extended opportunities could be increased. Progress in mathematics is also good
- Good teaching ensures that most lessons deliver pace and challenge, although occasionally the more able are not challenged sufficiently to promote even more rapid progress. Teachers’ good subject knowledge helps them plan interesting and often inspiring lessons.
- Good behaviour and extremely positive attitudes to learning are the norm. Attendance is average for all groups of pupils, though a few pupils are absent too often. Pupils feel secure because their school is safe. Pupils’ good personal, social and moral development is a strength of the school.
- Senior leaders and managers share their responsibilities with heads of year and subject leaders well. Their response to the previous inspection outcomes has been to implement rigorous monitoring and produce sharper plans to bring about change. This has been successful in raising achievement and is evidence of a strong capacity to improve.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception make good progress in some areas, such as in their personal development. Assessments are used to ensure learning is well targeted to each child’s needs but teaching about letters and sounds (phonics) does not always ensure all children know the most effective ways of reading difficult words. This sometimes holds them back higher up the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in writing and mathematics further by:
 - ensuring all lessons always fully stretch pupils, particularly the most able

- building on the current good practice to increase and extend imaginative opportunities for writing
- accelerating children’s progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that it is good in all areas.
- Raise attainment in reading by the end of Key Stage 1 by ensuring the teaching of reading provides all pupils with the necessary tools to develop and enjoy their reading as they progress through the school, including developing their knowledge and use of letters and sounds.
- Improve attendance by reducing the number of unauthorised absences.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils arrive in the Early Years Foundation Stage with much-lower-than-expected skills for their age and achieve well in their time at the school. Those who are disabled or who have special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language, make good progress academically and in their personal development. This is because the support they receive is very well targeted. Though still good, progress is a little slower in Key Stage 1 than 2; pupils take time to develop their skills on entry into Years 1 and 2. Once they have begun to master the core skills of reading and writing, they move ahead faster.

Progress in writing is good and improving, as a result of curriculum development. Highly imaginative writing resulted from an excellent session with an invited author who inspired pupils to write creatively. Giving time to reflect on a recent sea disaster, a teacher ensured pupils were enthused and wrote most perceptively about what such an experience must be like. This area is one the school is building on.

Although the gap has narrowed from pupils’ low starting points, attainment in reading by the end of Year 2 remains below average, but by the time they leave in Year 6, pupils reach above-average levels. The teaching of reading does not always provide sufficient understanding of how to tackle difficult words, however, and in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1, pupils sometimes struggle because they cannot use the most effective tools for the job.

Progress in mathematics is good across the school and pupils are highly enthused by these lessons. Their enjoyment is very clear to see when mathematics problems are delivered in typically fast-paced lessons, placing work clearly in real-life or purposeful contexts. For example, estimating how far an object can be thrown and then executing that throw and measuring it proved great fun. Pupils work well independently and cooperatively in pairs and groups; they help each other willingly. Pupils are always very keen to discuss their work.

Parents and carers are generally very pleased with how their children are progressing and they take up the chance to come to school and find out how they can best help them at home. They express their confidence in the Early Years Foundation Stage because their children develop social and personal skills well. Skills in number and

reading are well below expected levels but the leadership team ensures children, particularly in Nursery, make a positive start to their education.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is generally good; staff plan lessons effectively and make them enjoyable. Most lessons start with a lively opening activity to help warm up skills and place work in context. However, in some lessons, this goes on too long, slowing the pace of learning for more able pupils for part of the lesson. When working independently or collaboratively, teachers mostly pitch tasks at the right level and involve pupils in making decisions in their own learning. For example, pupils were asked to choose their level of challenge in a mathematics lesson; with support from the teacher, most pupils aimed high. In a literacy lesson in Year 1, pupils successfully wrote poems, using alliteration and repetition for dramatic effect.

Teaching takes good account of the need to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Lessons include regular opportunities to think things through and often pupils' perception and empathy with one another help drive the learning. There is very good support from the large team of teaching assistants who are most proactive in keeping their charges on track. Parents and carers appreciate this support.

The planned curriculum provides regular opportunities for extended writing in most subjects which effectively promotes pupils' confidence and skill in this area. Lessons often also include music and creativity. The regular sport and physical education curriculum means everyone has the chance and confidence to join in with teams and activities after school. Children in Reception and Nursery are encouraged to develop physical skills, such as through model making or threading objects together, contributing well to their good development in these areas. Teaching of letters and sounds and how to use these to break down unfamiliar words in reading, both in Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, does not enable pupils to master these skills quickly enough to reach age-appropriate levels in reading by the end of Key Stage 1.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour is good and makes a very positive contribution to their good achievement. Lessons are rarely interrupted and learning can go on apace. Pupils say they feel safe and play harmoniously at breaks and lunchtimes. There are pupil leaders and monitors who help when anyone gets upset. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children's personal development is a focus, and here playing together is encouraged to support learning.

There is very little bullying of any type and if pupils are worried about anything, they are fully aware of what to do and confident that action taken in response will be swift and effective. Pupils, parents and carers express their strong satisfaction with the school; one pupil told the inspection, 'This school is fantastic, it's done so much for me.' The school council, which is run just like a local council, has brought about positive changes to the way their school is run, such as through encouraging personal responsibility. There are groups to support pupils' self-esteem, run by the

Chair of Governors, and these have also shown their peers how much individuals can do, when they work together.

Leadership and management

Leaders and managers have effected a good range of improvements since the last inspection. The school's capacity to improve further is strong. The broad curriculum now provides imaginative opportunities for pupils to progress well. The English curriculum is the core of many themes that run across subjects. However, not all subjects yet play such a full part in providing opportunities to promote writing.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs receive extra support. This meets pupils' individual needs well because teachers appreciate what needs to be done. Leaders and managers ensure everyone understands data about pupil progress and regular professional development for staff has helped build expertise. There has been rigorous evaluation of the school's results and good ongoing monitoring of every aspect of teaching and learning. Teachers promote equality of opportunity very well and ensure there is no discrimination. Those who speak English as an additional language and pupils who are new are very quickly made to feel part of the Great Hollands family. They receive excellent support, sometimes from outside agencies or volunteers from local industry.

Members of the governing body are often visible around school, are highly supportive and fully understand its strengths and areas for improvement. Their involvement with pupils is particularly noteworthy and their keen appreciation of the local area, and its families and neighbours, make them a genuine asset across all the school's activities. The school is safe and the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements. All staff have been carefully vetted through the very well-run systems of whole-school security.

Pupils have good opportunities to take their thoughts and ideas developed in lessons into assembly. They are generally involved with the proceedings, sometimes through performing a role-play, for example, to stimulate further reflection on friendship, bullying and the way we treat each other. The before- and after-school clubs further develop pupils', spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills. Here, there are plenty of opportunities to play with friends, get to know others from different classes and enjoy the challenges presented through this well-designed provision.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development, taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



20 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Great Hollands Primary School, Bracknell RG12 8YR

Thank you very much for making us feel so welcome when we recently inspected your school. We really enjoyed meeting you and talking to so many of you. We particularly liked hearing some of you read to us and chatting through what you like about reading.

We found on the inspection that your school is good and provides you with a good start to your education. You make good progress and develop very well as individuals. You are kind and cooperative with one another, you volunteer to help others, and many of you make a real difference to the school itself through your efforts as helpers and on the school council. It is clear why you say you enjoy school.

We have asked the school to do a few things to make your school an even better place to come to. These are:

- to raise your levels of attainment by making sure all lessons fully stretch you
- to make sure lessons give plenty of opportunity to keep on developing your writing skills, in all subjects
- to ensure you understand how to use the tools for reading, first learned lower down the school, all the way through your time at Great Hollands
- to work hard to improve your attendance.

You can help by always coming to school every day and by always working as hard as you can.

Yours sincerely

Carolyn Carnaghan
Lead inspector

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