

# Holne Chase Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	110290
<b>Local authority</b>	Milton Keynes
<b>Inspection number</b>	378077
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 March 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	David Wynford Jones

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	290
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ian Revell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jim Balmbra
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 September 2008
<b>School address</b>	Buckingham Road Bletchley Milton Keynes Buckinghamshire MK3 5HP
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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	1–2 March 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	378077



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## Introduction

Inspection team

David Wynford Jones

Additional inspector

Philip Littlejohn

Additional inspector

Gay Whent

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors visited an assembly and 18 lessons, observing 12 teachers. They held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including the data the school has collected on pupils' attainment and progress, procedures for keeping pupils safe and the school development plan. Inspectors analysed 116 questionnaires completed by parents and carers, together with those from staff and pupils.

## Information about the school

Holne Chase Primary is slightly larger than most schools of its type. Most pupils are of White British heritage. Other pupils come from a range of different backgrounds. Very few are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is broadly average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average for primary schools. The school holds National Healthy School status. The school did not meet the government's current floor standard for attainment and progress in 2011.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>4</b>

## Key findings

- In accordance with section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.
- This is not a satisfactory school because pupils’ attainment has declined and their achievement and progress are inadequate. Senior leaders have not ensured that all teaching is effective and meets pupils’ needs, and have failed to adequately address the key recommendations from the previous inspection.
- Attainment at the end of Year 6 is below average overall, although better in mathematics than in reading and writing. The widespread underachievement of boys has not been eradicated. Strategies to support disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are not sufficiently well established to ensure they make at least satisfactory progress.
- Teaching over time is inadequate. In too many lessons, teachers fail to ensure that all pupils make at least satisfactory progress. This is because teachers do not consistently make effective use of assessment information to plan work that challenges pupils of different abilities. In some lessons, teachers’ expectations are too low and pupils find the work too easy. Not all teachers are confident in the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make). There are examples of good marking, which include advice to improve pupils’ work, but this is not consistent in all classes.
- Pupils’ behaviour is satisfactory. They are polite and they have positive attitudes to learning.
- Leadership and management are inadequate because pupils do not make enough progress. The governing body, senior and middle leaders have not monitored attainment or challenged underperformance and inadequate

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teaching with sufficient rigour. There are recent signs of improvement following external intervention and more pupils are now making satisfactory progress. However, these improvements have still to be consolidated and lost ground regained. Without continued external support and robust monitoring, the school does not demonstrate the capacity to improve.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By December 2012 improve the quality of teaching and learning so that all pupils make at least satisfactory progress in reading, writing and mathematics by:
  - raising expectations of what all pupils can achieve, particularly boys and pupils with special educational needs
  - using assessment information to plan work that closely and consistently matches the needs and abilities of all groups of pupils
  - providing pupils with clear and regular verbal and written advice to help them improve their work rapidly
  - updating teachers' knowledge and skills in teaching phonics and in developing reading and writing skills across the curriculum
  - giving staff more opportunities to share and build on good practice.
- As a matter of urgency, generate greater capacity for sustaining school improvement by:
  - improving the skills of senior and middle leaders to rigorously monitor and drive improvement in the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' progress
  - developing the skills of the governing body to promote rapid school improvement and to hold the senior leadership team to account.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Pupils make inadequate progress in relation to their starting points. Children enter the school with skills in line with those found nationally and settle quickly into the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children now make broadly satisfactory progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage following recent guidance from the local authority. Children move confidently between the two classes and enjoy using the well-resourced outdoor area. However, most pupils do not make sufficient progress as they move up through the school. Assessment data at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 highlight a declining trend in attainment at the end of both key stages through to 2011, particularly in reading and writing. Pupils in the current Year 6 are attaining similar levels this year, with some improvement in reading and writing, although attainment in reading remains below average because pupils who find reading difficult do not have the necessary strategies to read and decode unfamiliar words. Their understanding and use of phonics is weak. Recent improvements in Key Stage 1 have resulted in attainment in reading being average by the end of Year 2.

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Most pupils have a positive attitude and want to learn. They respond well to effective teaching and readily engage in lessons. For example, pupils in a Year 6 mathematics lesson worked enthusiastically to solve numerical problems. However, gaps in their basic skills, for example in the rapid recall of simple number bonds and multiplication tables, meant that they found it difficult to complete the work quickly. Pupils' enthusiasm is not captured to this extent in other classes. Some pupils said, 'Sometimes the work is too easy and sometimes too hard', and 'Some of the work is boring.'

Pupils' progress is starting to accelerate because senior leaders are now holding regular meetings with each member of staff to discuss individual pupils' attainment and progress. These meetings are helping to close the gap in performance between groups. Scrutiny of the data suggests that variation in attainment between boys and girls is being tackled gradually but boys continue to lag behind in reading and writing, particularly in Key Stage 2. The progress of most White British pupils and those not eligible for free school meals is below that found nationally. The progress of the majority of disabled pupils or those with special educational needs is also inadequate.

The majority of parents and carers consider that their children are making good progress. A similar proportion consider that the school helps their children develop skills in communication, reading, writing and mathematics. Inspectors found that in some classes, pupils make better progress than in others but overall pupils' progress is inadequate.

### **Quality of teaching**

While the quality of teaching is now improving as a result of external support, and the majority of teaching seen during the inspection was satisfactory, scrutiny of pupils' work and assessment records shows that the quality of teaching over time is inconsistent and that too many lessons are not taught well enough. This has led to the inadequate progress by the end of Year 6.

In all lessons, the purpose of the learning is shared with the pupils and they are given 'steps to success'. However, pupils do not make enough progress in most lessons because the work is not well matched to their needs. Not all teachers use assessment information well enough to plan learning and to challenge pupils of differing abilities. Teachers' skills in adapting the curriculum to better develop reading and writing skills, and to capture boys' interest and accelerate their progress are too variable.

In some lessons, there is a lack of pace, teachers talk for too long and pupils are not fully engaged. Here, teachers do not follow up initial questions to confirm or extend pupils' learning. Adult support is usually deployed satisfactorily to assist individuals and small-group learning, but sometimes at the start and end of lessons, teachers do not use additional adults to best effect. In the Early Years Foundation Stage,

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teachers do not always make the best use of opportunities to reinforce and develop the children's phonic and mathematical skills and knowledge. In other year groups, not all teachers are confident in the teaching of phonics and in supporting pupils in developing their early reading skills.

However, in the more effective lessons, teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, capture their interest and set them challenging work. Effective questioning in these lessons is used well to check pupils' understanding and eliminate any misunderstandings before moving on. Pupils are increasingly being asked to evaluate their own learning. Some teachers offer pupils clear and regular verbal and written advice to improve their work but this good practice is not yet consistent throughout the school. Relationships between pupils and staff are good. Teachers act as positive role models to promote the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The majority of parents and carers think that their children are well taught. A significant minority disagreed. Inspectors found that there is some good teaching, but it is not evident in most classes or over time.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Recent improvements in the quality of teaching have contributed to pupils adopting a better attitude towards learning. Pupils are welcoming, respectful, polite and courteous to visitors. They are proud of their school and take good care of its resources and the environment. Pupils show respect and understanding for one another and bullying or racist incidents are few. Pupils are aware of different forms of bullying and confirm that instances are infrequent. However, their concerns are, on occasions, not fully addressed by some staff, particularly at lunch times. Nevertheless, pupils say they enjoy school and feel safe. Their attendance is consistently above average. The curriculum provides pupils with many opportunities to understand how they can keep themselves safe. They are able to explain clearly the issues relating to personal safety.

Nearly all parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire are convinced their children feel safe and most stated that behaviour is good. Inspectors endorse their views that pupils feel safe and would agree that behaviour has improved, but it is not yet good. There are instances of low-level disruption rather than serious misbehaviour. Pupils' positive interaction with each other contributes much to their social and moral development.

### **Leadership and management**

Following external intervention, there are signs of improvement in pupils' attitude to learning, the quality of teaching and in the leadership of middle managers. However, without ongoing external support, there is insufficient drive and capacity within the leadership team to bring about rapid improvement in the quality of teaching, in raising attainment and accelerating pupils' progress. Senior staff have not promoted

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or built on pockets of good practice, or taken sufficiently urgent action to address ineffective teaching. Systems for monitoring the quality of teaching are now in place, but the outcomes of this work do not link closely enough the quality of the teaching with the amount of progress pupils make in lessons.

The school has correctly identified key priorities in termly development plans. In addition senior staff analyse pupils' attainment and progress and this information is starting to be used successfully to challenge underperformance and to raise teachers' expectations. Staff have responded positively to senior leaders' initiatives to involve external support and to improve their performance through training. Some sessions, for example, have improved teachers' skills in using assessment to support pupils' learning, although practice is not yet consistent in all classes. Most middle leaders, including the Early Years Foundation Stage coordinator, have recently taken on their responsibilities. They are enthusiastic and know what needs to be done. Changes made are still at an early stage of development and have not been consolidated across the school.

The Chair of the Governing Body is keen to see the school move forward and acknowledges that it requires additional support. Until recently, although supportive of the school, the governing body had not monitored the performance of the school sufficiently rigorously or held senior leaders to account. In addition, actions to address the longstanding differences in performance between boys and girls, and pupils of different abilities, have not been effective. Consequently, the promotion of equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination is inadequate. There have been recent changes in the way the governing body operates but it is too early to judge the impact of these initiatives. Three new governors are scheduled to join the governing body shortly.

The governing body ensures that the school meets the statutory requirements for safeguarding children. Appropriate safeguarding procedures are in place and staff are suitably trained.

The curriculum is broad and balanced, but it is not tailored sufficiently well to meet the academic needs of all pupils and to ensure they make sufficient progress. The curriculum is enhanced by theme days and weeks, visits and visitors. Strengths in the provision of art, music and sporting activities support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development satisfactorily.



## 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](http://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.**

3 March 2012

Dear Pupils



### **Inspection of Holne Chase Primary School, Bletchley MK3 5HP.**

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school, for completing the questionnaire and talking to us so politely. A special thank you to the pupils who were very well mannered, held doors open for the inspectors and stood back for us to walk through. There are some things that your school does well; for example, the relationships between adults and pupils are good and everyone is made welcome in the school. The staff have helped you to take part in successful musical and sporting events. Well done on being awarded so many different certificates and cups.

However, the school has been less successful in making sure that you make enough progress in your reading, writing and mathematics. There has been a gradual decline in your achievements since the last inspection. Although your attainment in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 is broadly in line with that of most schools, it should be higher and many of you could be doing better.

The inspectors found that the governing body, the leadership team and the staff need extra help to improve your school. Consequently, we have judged that the school requires special measures. This means that inspectors will visit on a regular basis to check that you are making enough progress. We have asked the governing body, the senior leaders and the staff to do three things as follows:

- make certain you make quicker progress in reading, writing and mathematics. They can do this by providing you with clear guidance on how to improve your work, ensuring that those of you who are not doing as well as you should are given extra help and that teachers update their skills in the teaching of phonics
- make better use of the assessments of your work to plan activities that are just right for each of you. We have also asked your teachers to share good practice in teaching so that all lessons help you to do much better
- develop the skills of the governing body and leadership team in checking the work of the school to ensure that it improves rapidly.

Please remember that to make your school better, you must always try your best.

Yours sincerely

David Wynford-Jones  
Lead inspector

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