

Holly Spring Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109806
Local Authority	Bracknell Forest
Inspection number	377987
Inspection dates	21–22 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Keith Sadler

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	224
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Urban
Headteacher	Trisha Donkin
Date of previous school inspection	18–19 March 2009
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Age group	7–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors, who observed 14 lessons led by 10 different teachers. The inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, staff, parents and carers and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation. The documentation included the school's analysis of pupils' progress, teachers' lesson plans, the school improvement plan, leaders' monitoring records and pupils' work. Questionnaires from staff and from 56 parents and carers and others from pupils in Key Stage 2 were analysed and their responses taken into account.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The rates of pupils' progress, particularly in writing, and whether current Year 6 pupils are on track to attain their targets.
- What the strengths are in teaching and what features need to be improved in order to accelerate pupils' learning.
- How well the curriculum for literacy and numeracy meets pupils' needs.
- The impact of the role played by teachers with particular responsibilities in the school's monitoring and evaluation procedures.

Information about the school

Holly Spring is an average-sized junior school. Most of the pupils live in the immediate vicinity, though an increasing number comes from other parts of Bracknell. Most pupils are of White British heritage, though the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is increasing. These pupils are from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is much lower than the national average. There are a few pupils at an early stage of learning English. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is average, as is the proportion identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. Most of these pupils have learning difficulties. The school has gained a number of awards, including Healthy School status and the Artsmark Gold award.

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

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Holly Spring is a good school. The school is a friendly and happy community where pupils feel safe and they have total confidence in the adults who care for them. That is because the provision for the pupils' care, guidance and support is outstanding with the school having strong and effective strategies to support and care for all its pupils. Pupils behave well and show positive attitudes to learning and this is reflected in their above-average levels of attendance. Pupils make good progress in all year groups and levels of attainment are rising steadily. Even so, the boys' attainment in writing lags slightly behind that of the girls. Pupils' good achievement stems from the excellence of leadership and management, which provides a rigorous and constant drive for improvement that is shared by all and has led to many improvements since the previous inspection.

The quality of teaching is good and constantly improving due to the outstanding management of this key provision. Improved teaching is having a marked, positive effect on pupils' progress. Although much of the teaching seen was outstanding, senior staff are aware that some inconsistencies remain. For example, in a minority of lessons, more-able pupils are not challenged sufficiently and this slows their progress. In addition, on occasion, teachers talk for too long and this slows the pace of learning. The school is particularly successful in supporting pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, including those that have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The pupils that are at an early stage of learning to speak English also make good progress because their needs are catered for particularly well. Furthermore, the school's arrangements to integrate newcomers into the school are good. Newcomers say that they are made welcome and soon feel part of the whole school community.

The very clear vision of the headteacher has influenced the whole school community. She has been pivotal in improving progress and provision since the previous inspection. She is supported exceptionally well by senior staff and the governing body makes a positive contribution to the school's effectiveness. There is an across-the-board, deep commitment to the school's continuing improvement. Staff morale is high and teamwork strong. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive. Exceptionally robust monitoring and evaluation systems are in place and these help leaders to check regularly on how well pupils are doing and to hold staff to account for the pupils' progress. The excellent leadership of the school and the good record of pupils' progress and improvements in provision indicate that there is good capacity for the school to sustain improvement.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning from good to outstanding by:
 - removing inconsistencies by increasing the pace of learning in all lessons to that of the best
 - ensuring that work is always challenging for higher-ability pupils
 - accelerating the progress of boys' writing.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Attainment on entry into Year 3 is broadly average in mathematics, but, generally, below average in English, particularly for the boys in writing. Pupils make good progress in all year groups and, by the time that they reach Year 6 attainment, though average, is strengthening quickly in English, mathematics and science. In most lessons seen during the inspection, pupils' progress was good and it was rapid in almost half. Those findings support the school's comprehensive data and pupils' current work which show that all groups of pupils make good progress and achieve well. Year 6 pupils are on track to attain their challenging targets. There is a small minority of both boys and girls in Year 6 who are already attaining the higher level expected at the end of the year. Similarly, the work of a minority of pupils in Year 5 is at the level expected at the end of Year 6 in both English and mathematics. A wide range of effective strategies has been implemented to remedy previous slower progress in English and mathematics. Careful attention has been given, for example, to ensuring that boys' progress in writing has been improved by a revision of the curriculum. The aim to ensure that work captures the boys' interest and imagination was evident in an outstanding Year 3 literacy lesson. Staff had cleverly set a writing task that was based around a lost boy's den in a tree and both boys and girls were very enthusiastic in finding powerful vocabulary to describe this setting and produced high-quality work. This whole school target to strengthen pupils' achievement in writing is bearing fruit. Even so, the attainment of boys remains slightly behind that of the girls in their writing skills.

Pupils' personal development is good. They enjoy physical activity and have a good understanding of its importance, as well as of the need for healthy eating as the basis of a healthy lifestyle. That is shown in the school's gaining of the Healthy Schools award. In lessons, pupils' inter-personal skills are developed exceptionally well because teachers provide clear objectives for developing skills such as listening, planning or collaborating, as well as those that relate to the subject being taught. As one Year 6 pupil said, 'We really like working in pairs and groups so we all learn together.' Pupils enjoy taking on responsibility and they make a good contribution to the school community. The school council is active in supporting improvements in the school such as its recent redesigning of the school logo for the uniform. Pupils' good interpersonal skills, when linked to their much improved basic skills, mean that they are prepared well for their move to secondary school and life beyond.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

There are many strengths in the quality of teaching. Lessons are planned thoroughly and they are based on good assessments of what pupils know and what they need to learn next. Almost all lessons are of good or outstanding quality as most have high levels of engagement and enjoyment, with paired talk and collaborative group work being a key feature. Even so, there is some satisfactory teaching. In those lessons, work is not sufficiently challenging for the higher-ability pupils and this slows the pace of learning. However, in almost all lessons, teachers manage pupils well and relationships are good, with all classrooms presenting with a calm and purposeful atmosphere. In the best lessons, teachers question pupils well and frequently develop the pupils' spoken language skills and vocabulary by demanding extended answers that probe for pupils' comprehension. For example, in an outstanding Year 6 literacy lesson, pupils' understanding of powerful imagery in song and poetry lyrics was evident because after listening to the song, 'Everybody's Changing', the teacher's questioning helped them to think and reflect carefully on the theme. In consequence, when working in groups, pupils analysed and annotated the poem to identify feelings and expressed their thoughts exceptionally well. Although the work set is usually matched well to pupils' needs, occasionally, the pace of learning slows when activities are not sufficiently challenging for the most able.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and there is a good emphasis paid to linking subjects together to give meaning and purpose to the well-chosen series of themes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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and topics. There has been an improvement in the quality of the curriculum for literacy and numeracy. Those subjects are planned particularly well and the school has successfully ensured that work is planned to be progressively harder as pupils progress through the school. There is particularly strong provision for the many pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The needs of the pupils that have learning difficulties are met well because their needs are analysed well and effective programmes of support are put into place. Their learning is supported well by the skilled teaching assistants. The school is justifiably proud of its provision for the arts, particularly in art and drama, with many parents and carers making positive comments about the good performances and the annual 'Take one Picture' exhibition and how it has boosted their children's confidence and enjoyment of school. Those strengths are recognised by the school gaining the Artsmark Gold award. Additional activities are good and there is a good range of before- and after-school clubs. For example, pupils enjoy working with a songwriter in an after-school club and recently they talked with local senior citizens when writing songs about life during the Second World War.

Excellent care, guidance and support underpin the pupils' good personal development. There is particularly strong provision for potentially vulnerable pupils. It includes one-to-one support by teaching assistants and also by the two pupil support workers. More specialist provision, such as play therapy provision, is also provided on a regular basis as necessary, as the school draws well on the expertise of external agencies to devise programmes for those with more complex needs. In addition, some parents and carers commented favourably on the support that they have received from the family support worker.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership and management have improved from their previously good levels because senior leaders work together closely and have worked very skilfully to secure improvements. Staff have a clear idea of pupils' strengths and what needs to be improved because there are excellent processes in place to check pupils' progress and to monitor teaching. Staff with responsibilities make a good contribution to that process and their action plans are based on a thorough analysis and direct observation of teaching and learning. The governing body is effective and governors' regular visits to monitor provision in the school enable them to provide suitable challenge as well as support for the school. The governing body ensures that pupils'

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well-being and health and safety receive prominent attention. As a result, safeguarding procedures are robust and all vetting and child protection arrangements are of good quality.

The school provides a cohesive community. The school has very close links with the local community, with many visitors being welcomed into the school for special events. For example, each year, the town’s mayor opens the school art exhibition. The school is committed to promoting equal opportunities for all its pupils. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated and the school works in partnership with parents, carers and outside agencies well to remove any barriers to learning. The school has a very good understanding of the needs of its local community. Pupils respect differences and are inclusive in their attitudes. The school seeks to extend pupils’ experiences about life within this country and also globally by the study of specific countries and different faiths. There are also planned links with a contrasting school in Sunderland and another in Korea.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

Although a below-average proportion of parents and carers completed the questionnaire, those that responded are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. They are unanimous in stating that their children enjoy school, that the school keeps their children safe, that teaching is good and that the school is led and managed effectively. Parents and carers made many positive comments, particularly about the quality of teaching. Those views are summarised by the parent or carer that wrote, ‘This school has a fantastic team of young vibrant teachers who are full of enthusiasm and fantastic ideas.’

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Holly Spring Junior School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 56 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 224 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	40	71	16	29	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	35	63	21	38	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	28	50	25	45	3	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	25	45	27	48	2	4	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	29	52	26	46	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	29	52	23	41	1	2	2	4
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	28	50	26	46	1	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	24	43	27	48	2	4	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	30	54	24	43	2	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	24	43	28	50	2	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	41	29	52	2	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	34	61	22	39	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	34	61	21	38	1	2	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and 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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.

23 September 2011

Dear Pupils



Inspection of Holly Spring Junior School, Bracknell RG12 2SW

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to inspect your school. Yours is a good school and we can see why you told us that you enjoy lessons and learning because the teaching is good and some of your lessons are outstanding. Your teachers make lessons interesting and they plan many exciting activities for you to do. That helps you to make good progress in your learning. It is clear that the 'Take one Picture' exhibition is a really important and positive part of your school year because you enjoyed telling us all about it!

You told us that your school is a happy place and that the adults look after you well. We agree with you and so do your parents and carers because you are looked after and cared for exceptionally well by all the adults. Your behaviour is good, you have a good understanding about being healthy and also you feel safe in school. We think that your headteacher is doing an excellent job and she is helped very well by all the staff. They are always checking on how well you are doing because they want you always to do as well as you can.

Even in a good school like yours, there are things to improve. We have asked your headteacher to make sure that even more of your lessons are as good as the best by making sure that you learn quickly in all lessons. We have also asked your teachers to make sure that work is always challenging for those of you that find learning easy. Finally, we have asked your teachers to make sure that the progress that boys make in writing is as good as that of the girls. You can help, whether you are a boy or a girl, by continuing to try your hardest in lessons.

We enjoyed our time in your school. Thank you for taking time to talk to us and letting us watch your lessons. We hope that you continue to find your time in school enjoyable.

Yours sincerely

Keith Sadler
Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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