

Holtspur School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	110398
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	378095
Inspection dates	30–31 May 2012
Lead inspector	Barnard Payne

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	206
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Deirdre Smaje
Headteacher	Bronwen Zeun
Date of previous school inspection	30 September–1 October 2008
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Barnard Payne

Additional Inspector

Christine Pollitt

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors spent approximately eight hours observing 18 lessons taught by nine teachers. They also listened to pupils from the Reception Year, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 reading and analysed a random sample of pupils' work from across the school. Inspectors held meetings with groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and staff with leadership and management responsibilities. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection and looked at school documentation including pupil performance data and key policies. They also analysed questionnaires returned by 95 parents and carers, 101 pupils and 29 staff.

Information about the school

Holtspur is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is above average and the proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average. These needs include speech, language and communication difficulties. There is additionally resourced provision in the school for children with specific speech or language delay or disorder. There is a Reception class for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school has Healthy Schools status and has achieved Eco Schools Silver, Artsmark and Activemark awards. The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	1

Key findings

- Holtspur School is a good school. It is not yet outstanding because pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching are good rather than outstanding. Both achievement and teaching are improving rapidly. Attainment in English and mathematics is above the national average. The percentage of pupils achieving higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics is increasing. The school is rigorous in its teaching of reading, writing and mathematics, but opportunities for pupils to apply and develop skills in writing in a variety of subjects are inconsistent.
- All groups of pupils make good progress and the school successfully closes any gaps in the attainment of different groups. Disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs receive the support they require in order to make similar progress to all other pupils and this progress is meticulously tracked. The school makes very effective provision for the higher attaining pupils, enabling them to undertake suitably challenging work.
- Effective performance management and professional development have led to significant improvements in teaching and there is a culture of continuous improvement. Teaching is of consistently good quality. A strong assessment system ensures pupils are clear about expectations and have a secure knowledge of their targets. Pupils are fully engaged in lessons and make every effort to succeed.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are outstanding, both in classrooms and around the school. This helps to create an exceptionally happy school environment in which everyone feels safe.
- The school's leadership and management have inspired parents, carers, pupils and staff by setting high expectations. There is exceptionally strong support from parents and carers, who fully recognise the progress the school has made in recent years. A very well balanced curriculum gives creative subjects and sports a high profile, and also promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

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

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the provision for extended writing throughout the school by providing pupils with frequent opportunities to apply and develop their writing skills in other subject areas.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Virtually all parents and carers returning questionnaires agree that their children are making good progress and all agree that the school helps pupils to develop skills in communication, reading, writing and mathematics. Inspectors found that there is a high level of consistency in the good progress pupils make across the school. Pupils play an active role in lessons, working with teachers to decide the next steps in their learning. They are fully involved in agreeing success criteria, which enables them to plan their work to meet a clear set of expectations. Their literacy and mathematics books show that pupils in every year fully understand learning objectives and are engaged in a wide range of activities, including applying their skills in real-life situations. There are good examples of pupils writing in a variety of contexts, for example an account of 'going over the top' in the First World War trenches and writing a short story to complete a topic on relationships in personal, social, health and citizenship education in Year 3. However, these opportunities are not yet consistently applied across the school or in different subject areas.

Children often start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with the skills and abilities expected for their age, although this can vary from year to year. Children make good progress in their Reception Year and meet, and increasingly exceed, expectations by the time they enter Year 1. The school has consistently ensured that pupils achieve the national target level in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1, but increasing numbers are now exceeding it, showing good progress and achievement. Similarly, in Key Stage 2, pupils continue to make good progress with increasing numbers achieving higher levels by the end of Year 6. Attainment by the end of Year 6 is presently above average in reading, writing and mathematics because the rates of progress of all groups of pupils throughout the school have improved in recent years.

Reading activities are effectively matched to abilities. This helps pupils to acquire effective reading skills, based on their understanding of blending sounds. In a Reception Class lesson, while some pupils focused on sounding out simple words in sentences, others were able to read more complex words, such as 'lunchbox' and 'windmill'. All pupils made good progress in developing their reading skills because the levels of challenge were effectively matched to their individual needs. In Key Stage 1, weaker readers gain confidence by using their knowledge of blending sounds to attempt sounding words out. They develop the resilience to read increasingly demanding books as they progress through Key Stage 2, where pupils

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are able to use their developing reading skills to read words such as 'trudged', 'imaginable' and 'especially', and to also recount stories well.

Disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs make good progress because they receive effective support and also learn to work with increasing independence. This was evident during a well taught literacy lesson; a small group needing additional support in writing were provided with a clear framework to help them write their scary stories. The effective support enabled them to complete these tasks well and provided them with a real sense of achievement.

Quality of teaching

A very large majority of parents and carers correctly agree that their children are taught well. Inspectors found that the quality of teaching is good throughout the school and continuing to improve so that an increasing proportion is outstanding. Teachers plan lessons consistently well to engage pupils and to extend their knowledge and understanding. They go through activities step by step with pupils, inviting their questions and contributions and track their progress and assess and mark pupils' work regularly and accurately. Pupils know how well they have done and what they need to do to improve. The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is systematic, enabling pupils of all abilities to make good, or better, progress in writing, communication and mathematics. For example, in an outstanding Year 4 lesson, pupils used squares and counters to investigate ways to seat people for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations. Pupils of all abilities were totally engrossed, working systematically to carry out this open-ended investigation which was based on a practical, real life problem. They made outstanding progress developing their confidence and resilience to tackle practical mathematics problems successfully.

Teachers plan activities effectively to ensure that all pupils, regardless of their needs or abilities, make good progress. They deploy support staff well and provide clear frameworks to help pupils plan their work. The teaching of disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs is consistently effective in ensuring that this group makes good progress. The specialist team that works with pupils in the additionally resourced provision places a strong emphasis on pupils working in practical, real life contexts. For example, a group of these pupils achieved well in a range of mathematical investigation activities focused on accurate measurement, answering questions such as 'Am I symmetrical?' and finding a variety of ways to measure and compare. The activities were well tailored to individual needs, with individual staff leading a variety of activities for the different ranges of pupils' abilities.

Teaching makes an excellent contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, with many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility, consider other people's points of view and contribute to the school community. During the inspection, for example, Year 1 pupils helped one another to find words as they wrote letters to the Queen, Year 3 pupils discussed how to make amends after friends fall out and Year 5 pupils wrote descriptions of talismans and considered

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why some objects are special to us. Staff contribute well to the wide-ranging curriculum and organise a variety of lunch-time and after-school activities for pupils that include art, music and sport.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding. Pupils are extremely courteous and their excellent attitudes to learning make lessons highly enjoyable for everyone. Pupils in all year groups work well together and make an exceptional contribution to creating a happy learning environment. All staff manage behaviour very effectively and there are seldom even minor interruptions in lessons because pupils are all keen to learn. Instances of bullying are extremely rare and pupils are confident that it is dealt with quickly and efficiently. Pupils are aware of different forms of bullying, such as physical, emotional and cyber bullying, and all groups of pupils feel safe at school, a view strongly supported by parents and carers who also believe that pupils' behaviour is at least good. Pupils understand how to keep themselves and others safe. Attendance is above average and pupils are very punctual.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. While the school's overall effectiveness is not yet outstanding it is rapidly improving. Increasing numbers of pupils achieve higher levels and work to improve teaching has led to consistently good, and increasingly outstanding, quality. The school's leaders and managers have played a very significant role in improving pupils' behaviour and safety so that they are outstanding. Strategies for engaging with parents and carers are excellent. The school's leaders have received a very high level of support from parents and carers, many of whom wrote to inspectors about their high opinion of the school and the significant improvements made. The comments of one parent stating that the headteacher 'has done wonders for the school' and another who wrote that 'staff are absolutely exceptional' were typical of the views of the vast majority of parents and carers.

The school's track record of sustained improvement in recent years, its high expectations for pupils and the robust systems to monitor the quality of teaching reflect the school's capacity for further improvement. The use of data analysis to judge performance is embedded and plays a significant role in the school's effective self-evaluation. Staff feel very well supported in their professional development and fully share the leadership's vision for the school. Members of the governing body are fully committed to school improvement and play an active part in realising the school's aims. The curriculum is designed effectively around pupils' needs, equality of opportunity and the school's values, contributing very well to pupils' achievement and to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Discrimination in all forms is dealt with very effectively. All groups of pupils receive a stimulating and engaging range of learning opportunities. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements and give no cause for concern.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
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.



1 June 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Holtspur School, Beaconsfield HP9 1BH

We really enjoyed our visit to your school and can see why you enjoy being there so much as Holtspur School is a good school. Your achievement in English and mathematics is good and continues to improve, with more of you achieving higher levels. This is because teaching is of a consistently good quality and you are clear about expectations and your own targets. You make every effort to succeed and make an exceptional contribution through your attitudes and behaviour, both in classrooms and around the school. You help make Holtspur School an exceptionally happy school in which everyone feels safe.

The school provides you with a wide range of opportunities and gives creative subjects and sports a high profile, significantly broadening your opportunities. The school makes sure that all of you are confident in reading, writing and mathematics; but one thing we have asked the school to improve is to provide more opportunities for you to develop your writing skills in other subjects.

The school is continuing to improve and you play a major part in this because of your excellent attitudes to learning. You can now look for every opportunity to extend your writing skills. We wish you every success.

Yours sincerely

Barnard Payne
Lead inspector

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