

# Billingshurst Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	135183
<b>Local authority</b>	West Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	381926
<b>Inspection dates</b>	20–21 June 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Helena Evans

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	587
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Alison Sutton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Helen Williamson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	n/a
<b>School address</b>	Upper Station Road Billingshurst RH14 9RE
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<b>Age group</b>	3-11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	20–21 June 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	381926



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## Introduction

### Inspection team

Helena Evans	Additional inspector
Terence Payne	Additional inspector
Victoria Turner	Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 30 lessons taught by 21 teachers. Inspectors listened to pupils read, and spoke with staff, parents and carers, pupils and members of the governing body. They observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation. This included the school's analysis of pupils' progress, teachers' lesson plans, the school development plan, leaders' monitoring records and pupils' work. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online survey (Parent View) in planning the inspection. In addition, the views of staff, pupils and 120 parents and carers were considered, as expressed through the returned questionnaires.

## Information about the school

This is a larger-than-average-sized primary school that serves a largely White British community from the surrounding area. Only a small proportion of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and few are at an early stage of speaking English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than average. The school meets the current floor standards, which set the minimum standards expected by the government.

A new headteacher and deputy headteacher were appointed and the senior leadership team was newly formed as part of the amalgamation of Billingshurst Infant School and Billingshurst Junior School in September 2010. Since the amalgamation there have also been a significant number of staff changes. The school has National Healthy School Status and a number of other awards including the Eco-Schools Silver Award and Artsmark Gold.

**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>3</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. It is improving rapidly under the effective partnership of the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. The curriculum makes a strong contribution to pupils' achievement and offers good opportunities for them to develop spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. The school is not yet good because teaching has not been good enough over time to result in good achievement for all pupils. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Previous underachievement, which resulted in below-average levels of attainment at the end of Year 6, has been overcome and pupils now attain average levels in reading, writing and mathematics. The disparity between the achievement of boys and girls has been successfully addressed although there still remain weaknesses in writing and in the progress made by pupils in mathematics.
- Teaching is satisfactory and improving well. More challenging tasks for higher-ability pupils are not always set at the appropriate stage in lessons. Teachers are using assessment to plan activities but their written feedback does not always tell pupils what they need to do to improve.
- Pupils are kept safe and their good behaviour makes a positive contribution to their learning. Relationships are good throughout the school; pupils work well together and enjoy school.
- The amalgamation resulted in significant challenges. However, changes in staff have not slowed the pace of school improvement because the headteacher, supported by her deputy and the governing body, has introduced new systems and effective plans to address weaknesses. Consequently, the quality of teaching is improving at a good pace and the impact of leadership on the provision and pupils' progress is clearly evident.

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

- Accelerate pupils' progress in English and mathematics by:
  - improving teachers' marking so that pupils are clear about the steps that they need to take to improve their work
  - ensuring that teachers use assessment information to plan lessons that are well matched to pupils' abilities and offer greater challenge
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy skills across the curriculum and to undertake extended writing
  - raising teachers' expectations of the progress pupils can make in mathematics
  - extending opportunities in the curriculum for children to apply skills independently and make choices about their learning.
  
- By July 2013 improve teaching so that it is consistently good by ensuring that teachers:
  - check on pupils' understanding and progress in lessons by providing more opportunities for pupils to talk about and reflect on their own learning and that of their peers
  - keep introductions brief and use the structure of the three-part lesson more flexibly.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Children enter the Reception classes at levels that are broadly at the levels expected for their age, although levels are lower in writing. They make good progress at this key stage because teaching is focused on their individual needs and interests. Children are engaged in their learning and thrive in a secure learning environment. Their writing and reading develop at a good pace because of good teaching of phonics (letters and their sounds). This continues into Year 1 and by the time pupils leave Year 2 their attainment in reading and other subjects is above average. In a Year 2 literacy lesson, pupils were excited as they went on a dinosaur hunt which developed their understanding of 'wow' words. The lesson was imaginatively planned to build on previous learning and pupils made good progress in developing their descriptive writing.

Pupils' progress has been slower over time in Key Stage 2. Previous underachievement, particularly that of boys in writing, is being addressed rigorously and improvement was evident in the lessons observed and confirmed by the school's data and scrutiny of pupils' work. In the current Year 6, attainment is more closely aligned to national expectations and pupils are on course to meet the government's

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floor target for attainment for the second successive year. While pupils' attainment in reading is average by the end of Year 6, their progress in mathematics in Key Stage 2 is not as rapid as it should be because there is not enough consistent and systematically planned challenge for them. Activities do not encourage different ways of working or provide sufficient opportunity for pupils to apply their mathematical skills. The school has identified as a priority the need to develop pupils' mental agility.

Provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs has improved. The inclusion manager has effectively deployed her team of teaching assistants and pupils are provided with well-matched learning programmes which enable them to make satisfactory progress.

Almost all parents and carers who completed the questionnaire felt that their children make good progress and that the school helps them to develop learning skills well. Their views do not entirely reflect inspection findings but recognise that the legacy of underachievement is being tackled effectively. A minority of parents and carers showed concern with regards to the progress made by higher-attaining pupils and this was confirmed by inspectors.

### **Quality of teaching**

Teaching is satisfactory overall, but improving, and pupils are learning more quickly than in the past. Much good teaching was observed where lessons had a brisk pace coupled with high expectations of what pupils could achieve, and this maintained interest and secured good quality work. There are increasing opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively in pairs and small groups, and this supports their personal development. The creative curriculum is having a positive impact on the development of pupils' basic skills, and, increasingly, teachers are ensuring that work in literacy and numeracy is planned across the curriculum. This is now giving pupils opportunities to practise their skills in other subjects. In a Year 5 lesson, a teacher was developing pupils' understanding of scale and measurement by designing an Olympic venue. Pupils quickly engaged with the task and showed good levels of independence in solving a problem. These improvements are recognised by parents and carers almost all of whom said that teaching is good.

However, this good practice is not evident in all lessons. Where learning was no more than satisfactory there was too much reliance on whole-class instruction, and inflexibility in moving away from the teaching plan in order to respond to pupils' needs. Suitably challenging activities are often introduced too late in lessons for higher-ability pupils, and pupils do not have the chance to think for themselves or take responsibility for their own learning. Sometimes, long introductions result in too short a time for pupils to work independently. For example, in a literacy lesson pupils were sitting for over half an hour on the carpet before they had the chance to go off and work by themselves. This inhibits pupils from writing for extended periods of time.

The school recognises that there are inconsistencies in the quality of marking. Where

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marking is effective, pupils understand what they need to do to improve because they are given clear guidance regarding their next steps. Good feedback practice was observed where pupils reflected on their work and suggested ways to make improvements. For example, in a Year 1 class, pupils were constructively engaged in peer assessment through the review of a piece of writing. However, this good practice is not yet universally employed.

Throughout the school, teaching and assemblies promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development successfully. Teachers use opportunities in lessons to develop pupils' understanding of values such as trust and respect. The school offers a wide range of enrichment activities and clubs which present pupils with the chance to learn the importance of teamwork and cooperation. The school is beginning to establish a strong emphasis on the arts. Music is promoted well by the school with all children in Year 3 having the opportunity to learn to play the violin. The end-of-term musical celebration, which was very well attended by parents and carers, was a joy!

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

Inspectors found pupils to be polite and courteous and saw that they enjoy good relationships with each other and visitors. This confirms the views of parents and carers who felt that their children behave well and are kept safe. Pupils felt that behaviour is typically good.

A number of concerns were expressed by parents and carers about the way the school deals with bullying. Findings from the inspection do not reflect these concerns. Incidents of poor behaviour and bullying are rare. Pupils say that if they have a concern about bullying they can confidently turn to an adult knowing that it will quickly be dealt with. The school has effective systems for promoting good behaviour and these are understood well by staff and pupils. Pupils say that they learn how to keep safe in circle time. They talked confidently about different types of bullying, but the vast majority said that they had not encountered any.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children are responsive, well motivated and keen to take the initiative in their learning. The care taken by their teachers in developing children with a strong sense of responsibility and extremely good attitudes provides a strong foundation for their future development. In the rest of the school, pupils show confidence and good self-esteem, learning in a positive and purposeful atmosphere where there is an ethos of trust. Throughout the school, teachers have a positive relationship with pupils and behaviour is managed well; time is rarely wasted in lessons. There are occasions when pupils lose concentration and become restless, but this is when they have been sitting for too long and are not actively engaged in their learning. Pupils are supportive of each other and their enjoyment of school is reflected in their above-average attendance.

### **Leadership and management**

The headteacher is committed to driving the school forward and ensuring that its

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improvement priorities are addressed with the urgency required. Her deputy provides effective support in an exemplary partnership where inspirational leadership is underpinned by an ambitious vision which is understood and shared by everyone. They are well supported by senior leaders who believe that the amalgamation has a real sense of coherence. Accurate self-evaluation informs effective plans to arrest the past decline in standards and accelerate progress. Well-targeted professional development and performance management have improved teaching. The governing body provides effective support by maintaining a rigorous focus on monitoring improvement and evaluating the impact of initiatives. It is these factors, when considered together, that demonstrate strong capacity for further improvement.

An overhaul of the curriculum has strengthened the development of basic skills and made learning more relevant and enjoyable for pupils. It is beginning to provide pupils with memorable learning experiences and this is having a significant impact on their achievement. Pupils' learning is enriched by cross-curricular topics with interesting themes such as 'Into the Wilderness' and those organised around popular children's novels. Pupils are keen to develop their understanding of the wider world, and this enthusiasm is encouraged by the school's organisation into its own world map with classes being named after countries. Part of the Year 3 curriculum is to develop growing links with a school in Kenya, and this contributes well to pupils' cultural awareness. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well and is a harmonious environment. As one parent commented, 'Billingshurst Primary School is a fabulous community school and [my child] is so happy here.' Equality is promoted well and discrimination is not tolerated by school leaders, managers and staff. Governors and school leaders ensure that the statutory requirements for safeguarding and protecting pupils are securely in place.



## 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](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.
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.**



22 June 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Billingshurst Primary School, Billingshurst, RH14 9RE**

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school and for your help in telling us all about it. We found that Billingshurst is giving you a satisfactory education, and it is getting better. The headteacher and other leaders in school have made lots of improvements since the school opened and we can see that you are making better progress.

Here are some of the things we found out about your school.

- You are taught well in the Reception classes. It was good to see you so involved in your learning and making such a positive contribution.
- Your teachers try to make lessons interesting and you are making sound progress, although we feel that your teachers could encourage you to work more independently and explain what you have learnt.
- You have an exciting range of clubs.
- You say that you enjoy school and your behaviour is good.
- You say that you are safe and that teachers listen if you have concerns.
- The school's leaders are doing the right things to improve your school.

We have asked your teachers to:

- make sure that you always know what you have to do to improve
- not spend too long introducing lessons
- give you more opportunities to write for longer
- make sure that the work you are given challenges your thinking and helps you to make faster progress.

You can help by continuing to work hard at all times. We hope that you continue to enjoy school and learning.

Yours sincerely

Helena Evans  
Lead inspector

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