

Holmer Green Junior School

The Common, Holmer Green, High Wycombe, HP15 6TD

Inspection dates 11–12 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well and their attainment is consistently above average by the end of Year 6.
- Teaching ensures that pupils develop good literacy and numeracy skills which they use well across different subjects. Relationships between staff and pupils are very strong.
- Teachers have high expectations in lessons and they provide especially good challenge for more able pupils. Good use is made of support outside lessons to help pupils who are in danger of falling behind to catch up.
- Pupils develop good social skills and say they feel very safe at school. They are sociable and articulate. They behave well and have good manners.
- Senior leaders and the governing body are ensuring that both teaching and pupils' achievement are improving at a good pace. Development planning is sharply focused on ensuring that all pupils fulfil their potential. The school's good track record for improving teaching means that the school is well placed to iron out the few remaining inconsistencies.
- Recent developments in the curriculum are already having a positive effect on pupils' learning by strengthening links between subjects and making learning more purposeful.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although disabled pupils or those with special educational needs achieve as well as others over time, in a small number of lessons work is too hard for some less able pupils.
- Pupils do not always present their work neatly enough.
- Due to staff changes, many middle managers are very new to their roles and they have had limited opportunity to monitor provision so that they can play a full part in driving school improvement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 21 lessons, of which nine were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, the inspection team made a number of short visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, with members of the governing body, with senior and middle leaders and with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 48 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. Inspectors also talked to parents and carers as they brought their children to school.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a number of documents, including the school’s own assessment data, planning and monitoring documents, the school development plan, records relating to behaviour and attendance and safeguarding documents.
- Inspectors analysed 18 questionnaires from staff.

Inspection team

Mike Capper, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Melanie Clapton

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized junior school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or those with special educational needs who are supported at school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average. A below average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for pupil premium funding.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The new headteacher has been in post for just over a year. There have been several other staff changes over the last year, mainly due to promotions to other schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Iron out remaining minor inconsistencies in teaching so that all is good by ensuring that in all lessons less able pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, are given work that is challenging but achievable.
- Give middle managers more opportunities to monitor work in their subjects so that they can play a full part in driving improvement.
- Ensure that pupils take more care with their work in order to improve how well it is presented.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- When pupils start school in Year 3, the vast majority are working at or beyond the expected levels for their age. From these starting points, pupils achieve well and the percentage making expected or better than expected progress compares favourably with national figures. Consequently, attainment rises as pupils get older and it is consistently above average by the end of Year 6.
- A high number of pupils reach Level 5 in national tests at the end of Year 6 and the good progress of more able pupils is reflected in their everyday work where they are consistently challenged to perform well. They write skilfully, using complex vocabulary and adapting their work to different audiences. In mathematics lessons, they explain clearly the strategies they are using to solve problems.
- Across the school, reading skills improve quickly. Reading is taught systematically and pupils read widely and often, making good use of the well-resourced library to choose books. Pupils talk confidently about favourite authors, with one explaining in detail why Jacqueline Wilson 'is always fun to read'.
- Although their progress in lessons is not consistently good, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well over time, with most reaching or exceeding the expected Level 4 in national tests by the end of Year 6. They learn well most of the time, with effective support outside lessons that is sharply focused on improving key skills such as their knowledge of letters and sounds having a good effect on learning. Progress for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs slows in a few lessons because work is too hard and pupils then become over reliant on adult help to complete it.
- Pupils with a statement of special educational needs do well. They improve their social skills and their support focuses accurately and successfully on the most important areas of improvement in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' communication skills improve quickly. Pupils are articulate and speak with confidence to adults and each other. The new curriculum is encouraging pupils to think for themselves and to take greater responsibility for their own learning by, for example, asking them what they would like to find out about the Second World War. Pupils respond eagerly to these activities, listening keenly to each other's ideas.
- Leaders monitor the progress of different groups, including the small number known to be eligible for pupil premium funding, carefully. They ensure that there are no significant differences between the progress made by different groups. They quickly identify pupils who are struggling with their work. This ensures that they catch up with their peers and are performing well by the time they leave the school.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is typically good and supports rapid improvement in pupils' reading, writing, communication and mathematics in most lessons. Teachers get on well with pupils and set high expectations for their behaviour. There is a purposeful atmosphere in lessons and teachers ensure that there is a good pace to learning so that time is not wasted.
- Teachers provide the right level of challenge most of the time. Teachers make good use of resources to engage pupils. For example, pupils in Year 5 talked enthusiastically about an 'air raid' and this then led to them producing high quality writing about their feelings.
- In a small number of lessons, teaching requires improvement because:
 - work is pitched at too high a level for the less able and for some disabled pupils and those with special educational needs
 - staff do not always deploy teaching assistants well so that they feel confident about adapting work for their focus groups when needed

- teachers sometimes too readily accept untidy work from pupils.
- Teachers assess learning thoroughly, although there are inconsistencies in the quality of marking and target setting. Where this is good, pupils are able to talk confidently about how they will improve their work.
- Teachers use questioning well to encourage pupils to think for themselves and there is a strong focus on developing communication skills. In a literacy lesson in Year 6, the teacher made good use of role play and drama to deepen pupils' understanding of war poems.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils have good attitudes towards learning and most thoroughly enjoy school. They typically make comments such as, 'There are lots of exciting things to do in lessons,' and, 'We all get on well together.'
- Pupils are very confident that behaviour is typically good and inspection findings confirm this. They are polite and friendly and support each other well, happily sharing their ideas with their classmates. They try hard in lessons but do not always take enough care to produce neat work.
- Rates of attendance are above average. Senior leaders thoroughly check the attendance of different groups and they follow up absences quickly.
- Pupils especially enjoy literacy lessons and the way that teachers link different topics together. In a few numeracy lessons, pupils find work less enjoyable because teachers overuse workbooks and, as one pupil said, 'The work is a bit dull.'
- The school keeps pupils safe. They are confident that on the very rare occasions that there is bullying, it is tackled quickly. As one pupil said, 'There is always someone to talk to.' Pupils are knowledgeable about different types of bullying, for example talking confidently about the dangers of using the internet to talk to strangers and how this could lead to cyber bullying.
- The school successfully tackles discrimination and pupils show good respect for each other's views. They are knowledgeable about different religions and take responsibility well. Road safety officers play a good part in teaching pupils about danger and newly arrived pupils in Year 3 say that their Year 6 'buddies' have helped them to settle quickly.

The leadership and management are good

- New senior leaders are ensuring that the school is emerging from a period of transition with renewed vigour. There is a good drive for improvement. Teaching staff are very clear about leaders' aspirations for the school and they share this vision; as one member of staff commented, 'It feels like a fresh start.'
- Leaders have managed staffing changes well over the last year. Although some parents and carers are unhappy with the rapid change in staff, this has been beyond the school's control, and leaders have ensured that pupils' learning has progressed largely unhindered. A new parent forum gives parents and carers good opportunities to voice their concerns.
- The use of data to check that all pupils are doing equally well is very thorough. Leaders react quickly when they identify dips in performance. For example, there has been a successful focus on improving pupils' writing over the last year, as this was a comparative weakness in national tests in 2011.
- The positive effect of performance management and accurate monitoring is reflected in the school's good track record for improving teaching over the last year. There is a clear picture of where support is still needed and leaders set sharp targets so that teachers are clear about what is expected.
- Training opportunities for staff also have a positive effect on the quality of provision. For

example, leaders gave teachers opportunities to visit each other's literacy lessons last year and this helped them to improve their own practice. Funding for pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding has been used well to provide additional support or training where it is needed.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- the governing body is very knowledgeable about the school and has supported leaders well during the period of transition
 - the governing body is kept well informed by the new headteacher and governors provide good challenge to senior leaders
 - the governing body ensures that safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements.
- Many middle managers are new to their roles. Consequently, as yet, they have had little opportunity to monitor provision by, for example, visiting lessons, talking to pupils or sampling work. This means that they are unable to play a full part in driving improvement so that responsibility is shared more widely.
- The curriculum successfully promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, activities such as the Religious Education Enrichment Week encourage pupils to think about their own and others' beliefs and responsibilities.
- The local authority provides light touch support for this good school.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	110300
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	403111

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	235
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Kettle
Headteacher	Rebecca Campbell
Date of previous school inspection	5 November 2007
Telephone number	01494 713000
Fax number	01494 713000
Email address	office@holmergreen-jun.bucks.sch.uk

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