

Holly Trees Primary School

Vaughan Williams Way, Warley, Brentwood, CM14 5RY

Inspection dates 9–10 October 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		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Achievement is good. Pupils benefit from the teaching and support they need to do well.
- Teaching is consistently good or better. Sometimes it is outstanding.
- A wide range of activities help pupils to learn quickly. Teachers use questions well in lessons to move learning on at a good pace.
- The school carefully, regularly and thoroughly checks that every pupil, and every different group of pupils, is continuing to make the progress they should.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well and feel very safe in school. They have extremely positive attitudes to learning and consequently concentrate very hard and are keen to do well.
- The very strong leadership and management of the headteacher has been the main reason for the improvements in achievement and teaching.
- The headteacher has ably and successfully promoted a strong belief throughout the school that everyone can succeed.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Despite the good progress made, attainment in writing, especially for boys, is a relative weakness.
- In a few lessons, teachers do not always demand enough work from pupils or give them enough opportunities to strengthen their learning by looking back over and developing the work they have done.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 22 lessons and saw all the teachers teaching. They also observed playtimes, lunchtimes and the before-school club.
- Meetings were held with four members of the governing body and with teachers, and a conversation was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors talked with parents before and after school, and took into account the views of the 59 parents who had completed the online Parent View questionnaire.
- They talked to pupils about their views and looked at samples of pupils' work.

Inspection team

Richard Blackmore, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Lynne Thorogood	Additional Inspector
Matthew Klimcke	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Holly Trees Primary is larger than the average primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is average.
- A below-average proportion of pupils are supported through school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There is a before-school club managed by the governing body.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop consistently outstanding features of teaching in all lessons by ensuring that:
 - teachers refine their planning to provide regular opportunities for pupils to reflect on and consolidate their learning, and respond to teachers' marking
 - all teachers regularly use carefully-planned tasks in order to raise the level of challenge for pupils, especially for more-able pupils.
- Raise achievement further by:
 - improving attainment in English, especially boys' writing
 - providing more opportunities for extended writing.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The achievement of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Effective ways of assessing children's progress such as learning records called 'Wow' books accurately track children's developing skills. The curriculum has been redesigned by the effective leader. Children quickly learn good routines and understand teachers' expectations.
- Despite attainment in reading and writing being lower than in mathematics, it is broadly average by the end of Year 6. This represents good progress from children's relatively low levels on entry to Reception. Pupils' achievement is therefore good. Some pupils do particularly well because support and guidance are focused sharply on pupils who are not making sufficient progress and those in danger of falling behind in their work.
- Work in pupils' books shows that boys do not always attain as highly as girls in writing. The opportunities pupils have to write longer pieces of work are limited and this slows the progress girls and boys, but particularly the boys.
- Disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those known to be eligible for the pupil premium also make good progress because they are given the specialist equipment and support they need to be fully included in all lessons. Teaching assistants are particularly effective in supporting pupils with acute needs. They are careful to only provide help when pupils really need it, to encourage their independence. They also work well with pupils supported by the pupil premium or who are absent more often than their peers and need to catch up with work missed.
- Throughout the school there is often a highly purposeful atmosphere in lessons as pupils work together on tasks. They sustain concentration and effort for considerable periods because they are keen to do well. In an outstanding Year 3 phonics (linking letters with the sounds that they make) lesson, the pupils made exceptionally quick progress because the teacher expertly focused pupils' attention on the position of the same sound in different words.
- The school is successfully encouraging pupils to read a broad range of texts, and to do so often. This is having a positive impact on pupils' attitudes and achievement in reading, especially at Key Stage 1.
- Pupils are well equipped with the basic skills necessary to do well at secondary school and in later life. They read widely and fluently, and apply their mathematical skills well to everyday situations such as budgeting. Parents and pupils are very positive about learning and progress.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching in all subjects, including English and mathematics, is good overall. In some classes it is outstanding. This is the main reason for the ongoing improvement in pupils' achievement.
- Teachers in the Early Years Foundation Stage take every opportunity to encourage children to read and use numbers, for example in the 'doctor's surgery'. Writing activities, such as forming letter shapes in the outside area, are helping to raise attainment in this area of learning.
- Teaching assistants are deployed exceptionally well to ensure equality of opportunity for all pupils. They record the results when teachers check how well pupils have understood a new

topic through their effective questioning.

- All staff ensure that any pupils who are not secure in their understanding are immediately taken to one side for extra support. Any who still have difficulties are taken out from the main class for more intensive teaching in small groups.
- Pupils who were interviewed by an inspector said that they greatly enjoyed coming to school. One commented, 'It is epic!' They feel that teaching motivates them and helps them to make good progress. Parents also express a high level of confidence in the quality of teaching.
- Lessons are planned carefully to include a good range of activities that interest and motivate pupils. The purpose of lessons is explained clearly. Tasks are usually modified for different levels of ability, and the written materials and equipment used are chosen well. Homework is set regularly, and used well during lessons to reinforce key skills and develop pupils' independence and organisational skills.
- Sometimes teachers do not take enough risks in their teaching. This means that the tasks set do not demand enough from pupils who are capable of more work. The most able pupils in particular are not always encouraged enough to extend their thinking and aim for the higher standards they are capable of.
- Marking is frequent and of good quality, identifying strengths and areas for improvement. However, pupils are not always given enough time to act on the teacher's suggestions for improvement and consider how to make their work better.
- In lessons, teachers promote clear spiritual, moral and social values that pupils respond to well, making the school a safe, happy and productive place for them to learn in. The pupils are taught about the variety of cultures and faiths in their own country and the wider world. Pupils learn words in Swahili because of the strong links with a school in Kenya.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils behave outstandingly well both in lessons and around school. They are consistently polite to adults and very caring towards each other. The pupils are proud of their school and are very aware of, and support, the school's ethos.
- The breakfast club provides a very safe and stimulating environment before school begins. There are many exciting activities planned and the pupils rise to the expectation of excellent manners while eating the popular and wide-ranging food on offer. Parents very much appreciate the club, particularly the flexible and helpful approach to the days pupils can attend.
- Pupils express excellent attitudes towards learning and their school. They typically apply themselves well for the full duration of each lesson. They respond immediately to their teacher's prompts and instructions to continue working, and this ensures they achieve well.
- Pupils feel very secure in school as a result of robust safety measures. They know very clearly how to keep themselves safe in different situations. The very few incidents of bullying have been quickly stopped by staff consistently applying the school's policies and procedures. Although pupils are aware of cyber bullying, they say there is very little because it is monitored and acted upon quickly.

- Attendance is very well monitored. It is currently average but continually improving because of the school's highly effective rewards and strategies to promote good attendance. Pupils are punctual at the start of the school day and to lessons.
- Pupils are sensitive to the possibility of discrimination against those in minority groups, and know that it is wrong. They are very considerate of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and feel that these pupils should be fully included in all activities.
- Comments and responses from pupils, parents and staff are overwhelmingly positive about behaviour and how effectively the school deals with any incidents that could disrupt learning.

The leadership and management are good

- The school's monitoring and self-evaluation policies and procedures are managed well and implemented consistently. Checks on teaching by the school's senior leaders provide an accurate picture of its good quality. Areas for improvement are identified clearly for all staff and effective training is provided to raise the quality of teaching. Staff have also benefited from observing high-quality teaching.
- The systems for managing teachers' performance are effective because they hold teachers to account for the achievement of their pupils. Clear targets link to their pupils' progress and suitable training is provided to ensure that any weaknesses are addressed. Additionally, strategic planning is well informed by this detailed analysis.
- The local authority provides 'light touch' support for this good school but has contributed to the success of a number of initiatives. For example, it has provided advice on assessing standards and has helped to review teaching practice. As a result, there have been continuous improvements in the quality of teaching.
- There are excellent links with parents, who have many well-planned opportunities to support their child's education. The school has a truly 'open-door' policy and makes good use of the website, parents' evenings and questionnaires. Teachers hold regular and popular workshops to explain how to support their children at home. For example, the 'Holly Hobbies' group helps parents to be involved in the life of the school by making resources.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the needs of most learners well. The 'thematic' approach is promoting mathematics by ensuring that pupils practise their mathematical skills in different subjects, but literacy is not linked so well to other subjects in a way that interests boys.
- The school promotes clear spiritual, moral and social values that pupils clearly respond to, making the school a safe, happy and productive place for them to learn and play in. The pupils are taught about the variety of cultures and faiths.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - challenges the headteacher, and supports developments well through a knowledgeable perspective based on a range of monitoring activities
 - has clear roles and functions for its subcommittees, including oversight of standards and the curriculum and the way funding such as the pupil premium is spent
 - ensures that all safeguarding requirements have been met.

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	132142
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	403641

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	387
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Neville Brown
Headteacher	Paula Masters
Date of previous school inspection	24 January 2008
Telephone number	01277 212296
Fax number	01277 223838
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