

Holmbush Primary School

Hawkins Crescent, Shoreham-by-Sea, BN43 6TN

Inspection dates

12–13 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
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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.

- Attainment has risen at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6, higher level attainment is increasing and pupils supported by pupil premium do exceptionally well.
- Pupils achieve well because teaching is regularly good or outstanding. A good pace of learning is sustained throughout the day. Literacy is taught well; reading, writing and talk support pupils' learning effectively.
- Information about pupils' progress is used well to check how well they are doing and when any delay is noticed effective extra support is given.
- Behaviour is consistently good and pupils maintain concentration when they are trusted to work independently.
- Pupils' safety is secure. They treat each other with consideration and respect school values of equality and tolerance.
- Interesting lessons are supplemented with a very good range of additional experiences so pupils enjoy school and have positive attitudes.
- Leadership is outward looking and creative in finding ways to improve teaching and learning. Staff are receptive and highly involved in evaluating and improving how well the school is doing.
- The governing body is ambitious for further improvement. Its exemplary understanding of how well pupils are doing enables it to challenge the school to drive forward.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Although the number of pupils reaching the higher levels has increased, a gap with the proportion of pupils achieving high levels nationally remains to be closed.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 19 lessons, three being observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors on an accompanied learning walk, focusing on the provision for special educational needs, visited lessons and individual tuition sessions.
- Work and marking in pupils' books were scrutinised in lessons; a sample was reviewed jointly with the headteacher.
- Some pupils were heard reading.
- Meetings were held with pupils, staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and vice chair, and a telephone call made with a representative of the local authority.
- The views of parents and carers posted on Parent View were considered, as were the views of some parents and carers spoken to in the playground at start of school, and account was taken of a recent questionnaire survey of parents' views.
- Returned questionnaires completed by staff were considered.
- School documentation and policies and self-evaluation and action plans were reviewed.

Inspection team

Anthony Byrne, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Joyce Lydford	Additional inspector
Helen Blanchard	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average size primary school.
- More than four-fifths of pupils are White British. Others are from a range of ethnic backgrounds with no particular group significantly larger than another.
- The school has an above average proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium, which is extra money given to schools by the government to support, among others, pupils known to be eligible to receive free school meals. The school offers a breakfast club to support these pupils.
- An above average proportion of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs receive support at school action, school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs. No specialist facilities or alternative provision are used (none are taught elsewhere).
- The school meets the government's floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of pupils attaining high levels in English by the end of Year 6 by:
 - making sure high ability pupils know what it takes to reach the highest level of success in a writing task and that they challenge themselves to include all the features required
 - explaining when marking pupils' work how high levels have been reached, so that they can apply the skills whenever appropriate, not just in a specific lesson.
- Increase the proportion of pupils attaining high levels in mathematics by the end of Year 6 by:
 - making sure the high level of engagement seen when pupils talk about solutions to problems is followed by some time for individual reflection and recording to allow ideas to sink in.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- The school's own evidence supported by the local authority shows that children begin school with below age-related skill levels. They make good progress because learning and play are linked together through themes that gain their interest and help them develop a good range of skills.
- By the end of Year 2, pupils achieve higher than pupils nationally. This is because they have been taught phonics (the sounds letters make) well from Reception onwards and use the sounds accurately in reading and writing. In mathematics practical resources gain interest and support understanding. Expert one-to-one tuition for some pupils by two specialist teachers ensures no-one falls behind in literacy and numeracy. Several parents and carers commented that progress is made 'in leaps and bounds' following these 'injections' to boost progress.
- By the end of Year 6 achievement improved significantly in 2012. Attainment caught up with all pupils nationally, but fewer pupils reached the higher levels than is the case nationally. Teachers are now seeking to further challenge pupils capable of high achievement. Older pupils are beginning to understand what the school means by a 'thinking mountain' and want to get to the top level.
- In mathematics lessons, this is beginning to be successful because pupils discuss and thoroughly explain mathematical ideas and solutions. The most able pupils get into real depth, but they need more time to reflect afterwards to secure their understanding. In English, pupils try to use ambitious words and styles of writing. However, they need more help in understanding how the techniques they are using work in the mind of the reader, so that they can use them whenever appropriate, not just in a specific task.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported when learning in class and make good progress with additional support. In lessons tasks are adapted to challenge them appropriately, with support from teaching assistants who ask good questions to make them think, as well as motivating them with praise.
- Pupils collaborate well in class in small-group situations and pupils from all backgrounds and groups achieve equally as well as others. For example, the school has secured better than average attainment for boys by planning a curriculum and working methods that suit them. Girls have been consulted and say they find the topics engaging too. No difference in involvement was noticed in lessons. Extra effort to improve the achievement of high ability girls occurs during the regular, Friday 'Holmbush University' session.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium achieve well. In 2012 tests the average points score of this group was higher than their classmates and above all pupils nationally. This is attributable to the way the school helps them to get their day off to a good settled start at breakfast club and because teachers closely watch over their progress in lessons. Additional support is arranged when there is any sign of their progress faltering.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is consistently good. During the inspection examples of outstanding teaching were seen frequently enough to confirm that improvement since the previous inspection is firmly established.
- In Reception, children complete 'star tasks' which help them in working towards individual learning targets. A mixture of free choice and guided activity ensures they experience a full range of learning. The teacher has the knack of creating fascinating stories linked to the theme of the moment. Children were still talking in the afternoon about how they measured the dragon's footprint they had found in the sand when they came in first thing in the morning.
- Planning for a range of work suitable for several levels of ability is a consistent strength in lessons in both key stages. For instance in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, groups of pupils worked

in at least four different ways to understand calculating probability. Each group was entirely absorbed by their task. The teacher was able to be entirely confident that everyone would remain on task. Similar total absorption was seen in a Year 3 lesson where pupils worked on phonics, spelling or handwriting. A notable feature of learning is that it does not slow down as the day goes on; learning is non-stop, as when pupils pleaded with the teacher to leave a science experiment set up so they could have another go next day.

- Two teachers, originally working with the school as part of government schemes but now recruited to the staff, specialise in promoting the strategies Every Child a Reader and Every Child Counts. The expertise they bring to supporting pupils is increasingly being shared with all teachers so that they can incorporate the methods into class teaching. This is one of the factors in pupils' rising attainment.
- A very good feature of teaching arises from improvements in collecting and checking the information about pupils' progress. School leadership, including governors, keep a sharp watch on progress across the board and class teachers are highly aware of pupils' attainment.
- Pupils are increasingly being encouraged to think and talk about their learning, particularly using the idea of the 'thinking mountain'. However, high ability pupils do not yet fully understand enough about the highest levels of learning or always challenge themselves to reach them.
- Teachers mark work regularly to check how well pupils are doing. This supports most pupils' progress well, including those with special educational needs, because it tells teachers which individuals need more support or further practice. However written comments do not consistently explain to pupils why it is that what they have written achieves a desired effect. This hinders the progress pupils can make as it is particularly important in developing high ability pupils' skill in varying their style of writing for particular purposes.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well around the school. In age-appropriate ways they understand values of equality and tolerance: they respect each other and are considerate. In lessons they concentrate very well and remain on task when working independently.
- Besides lessons pupils enjoy a rich range of additional experiences such as clubs and the Friday afternoon 'university' where they can choose to learn new skills. For example, the whole school built a real Iron Age roundhouse to understand how people lived then. They take pride in applying for duties and responsibilities. Such memorable experiences develop their spiritual and moral views.
- Attendance has improved and is now above average. This is as a result of the school's firm stance on the importance of attendance. This approach has led to significant improvements over a sustained period.
- Parents and carers agree that children are safe and happy at school and making good progress. Those who said they did not know if bullying was a problem can be reassured; pupils know about the different forms bullying can take and told inspectors that they thought it was unlikely to happen, but said they would know how to get help if it did. They have a good understanding of how to keep safe.

The leadership and management are good

- Very thorough checks on pupils' progress have led to improved achievement for all groups. However, while levels of higher attainment have increased, the gap with pupils nationally has not completely closed.
- Senior leaders are ambitious for improvement. They make contact with outstanding schools because they are determined to learn from them. They gain a full picture of how well their own school is working, for instance by arranging, 'A day in the life of Class...' Staff with management responsibilities visit one class over the day and at the end compare notes in discussion with the class teacher, so that strengths can be celebrated and development points identified.

- Issues from the previous inspection have all been tackled effectively and capacity to improve is good. Self-evaluation is crisp and clear. Realistic action plans are produced for areas where progress information indicates action is necessary. Leaders are business-like and effective, setting out strategies and time limits by when success will be measured and further action considered.
- Teachers and support staff are highly committed and thoroughly pursue improvements to the quality of their teaching identified by senior leaders. Feedback on observations is eagerly sought and professional development readily undertaken. There is shared determination that Holmbush will be the best it can be.
- The local authority expressed the view that the school is going from strength to strength. It considers that the school needs 'light touch' contact because it has demonstrated its capacity to maintain improvement and keeps close links for training and advice on good practice.
- Policies are communicated to parents and carers. To improve this process further, leaders have set up a consultation group to check policies for clarity and make sure that the wording can be readily understood.
- Safeguarding is very thoroughly managed. All necessary checks on adults are carried out and staff awareness-raising about child protection has a high profile.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The business-like approach of school leaders is mirrored by the governing body. It has its own action plan and policies are reviewed on a regular cycle. Parents and carers are regularly consulted to shape policy with email technology which widens the numbers involved. Governors have undertaken extensive training and have a close relationship with experts in the local authority. As a result meetings are focused on a clear agenda and produce resolutions for practical action. Their understanding of information about pupils' progress is exemplary and helps inform them how the budget supports groups of pupils' achievement, such as those receiving the pupil premium. They are very clear about where improvement is needed, how targets are being met and are well informed to challenge school leadership about areas for improvement. They understand the school has improved greatly since the last inspection, but are not complacent and are ambitious to be even better. They ensure that management of teachers' performance is carried out rigorously and supportively and is reflected in any changes in the salary structure.

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	125908
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	402361

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	240
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robert Gamon
Headteacher	Rebecca Jackson
Date of previous school inspection	5–6 May 2010
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