

Holmer Green Infant School

Watchet Lane, Holmer Green, High Wycombe, HP15 6UG

Inspection dates 17–18 April 2013

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 make good progress and achieve well, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- The school is led and managed well, and senior leaders have been effective in securing improvements in teaching and pupils' behaviour.
- The governing body is well informed about the school. Governors provide good support and ask challenging questions to make sure that improvements continue.
- Teaching is consistently good and teachers check pupils' progress regularly. Pupils enjoy their lessons. They think they are fun.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They feel safe, secure and behave well. Their attendance has improved and is now above average.
- In Reception, children participate in a wide range of interesting activities and make good progress in all areas of their learning.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always plan activities that are demanding enough for the more-able pupils.
- Pupils, particularly boys, do not achieve as well in their writing as they do in their other subjects. Pupils are not given enough opportunities to write at length in subjects other than English.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons or parts of lessons, including seven joint observations with senior leaders, and looked at pupils’ written work in their books and on display.
- Meetings were held with a representative of the local authority, the Chair of the Governing Body and vice chair, the headteacher and other school leaders.
- Inspectors spoke to a group of pupils and listened to other pupils reading.
- Inspectors took account of 33 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, together with the views expressed by parents and carers as they arrived at school.
- They took account of 23 questionnaires returned by staff.
- A number of the school’s documents were examined. These included the school’s data about pupils’ progress and how pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs are being supported, the school’s own checks on how well it is doing and its development plan, evidence about monitoring and evaluating teaching, minutes of meetings of the governing body and records relating to behaviour, safeguarding and attendance.

Inspection team

Jim McVeigh, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Gillian Bosschaert

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Holmer Green Infant School is smaller than an average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils come from a White British background.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (extra government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children in local authority care and children of service personnel) is very small and there are fewer pupils than average who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportions of pupils who receive extra support through school action and school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are below average.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club.
- There is a pre-school in operation on site. It did not form part of this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of teaching that is outstanding by:
 - ensuring that teachers always plan activities that stretch the more-able pupils and make them think hard for themselves
 - sharing the outstanding teaching practice that is present in school more widely.
- Accelerate the progress pupils make by providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length in a range of styles and for different purposes in subjects other than English.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start Reception with knowledge and skills at slightly above the levels expected for their age. Their personal and social skills are promoted well so that children become happy and confident quickly in a welcoming and supportive environment. They are well taught with a good mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. The activities are interesting and stimulate children's imagination well so that they persevere and make good progress.
- Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 1 and, by the end of Year 2, they achieve standards above national averages in English and mathematics, although in 2012 performance dipped slightly. Standards in writing fell and were broadly average. Boys did not do as well in their writing as girls; the school's own tracking data confirm that the gap between them in writing performance is now closing.
- Pupils become fluent readers because they are encouraged to read daily and adults regularly listen to them reading. Parents and carers are encouraged effectively to complete reading diaries and listen to their children reading at home. Year 2 pupils read confidently and have a good appreciation of punctuation. Pupils did poorly in last year's phonics (the sounds that letters make) screening check. The school responded by introducing a comprehensive programme of phonics tuition and training teachers and support staff to deliver it so that pupils are now making good progress.
- Pupils develop their writing skills well in English lessons but they do not have enough opportunities to practise and further develop their skills through extended writing in other subjects and for a range of purposes. Similarly, there are too few opportunities outside mathematics lessons for them to apply their developing skills to everyday situations and so accelerate their progress.
- In 2012, the very few pupils eligible for the pupil premium did better than their peers in school and nationally in reading and mathematics but slightly worse in writing. The gap between them and their peers had closed. In English, they were about half a term behind other pupils, and in mathematics were ahead by about a term.
- The progress made by disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good and improving. They do as well as their peers nationally. The progress they make and the effectiveness of the extra support they receive are monitored closely.

The quality of teaching is good

- Most teaching is good and some is outstanding. As a consequence, all groups of pupils in all years make good progress.
- Teachers manage their classes well. They have established all necessary behaviour routines, such as how pupils should collect and consume their morning snack and how they should sit on the carpet, so that behaviour is good and the atmosphere for lessons is calm and orderly.
- Relationships between teachers, pupils and support staff are good. Pupils like their teachers and enjoy their lessons because they find the activities interesting and persevere with them. They say teachers readily help them if they get stuck.
- Following an evaluation by the school of the subjects taught this year, teachers have improved the way they plan lessons and there is now a consistent approach: as well as planning suitable activities for pupils, teachers carefully consider the roles of support staff and the different learning needs of pupils in their classes. However, sometimes the activities for the more-able pupils are not demanding enough and this means they do not progress as rapidly as they could.
- Teachers always explain to pupils what they expect them to be able to do by the end of the lesson. They often use skilful questioning so that pupils have to think more deeply about their answers and their learning is accelerated. They regularly make good use of 'partner talk', where pairs of pupils share their ideas through short discussions, which helps pupils to develop their

understanding further.

- Teaching assistants in lessons generally support targeted pupils with special educational needs well. They use effective questioning to develop pupils' understanding and listen to pupils read and assess their progress accurately. Support staff have been trained in the use of phonics so that pupils benefit from more individual attention in smaller groups during daily phonics sessions.
- Teachers mark pupils' work in detail, regularly and frequently. They correct pupils' mistakes and celebrate what pupils have done well. However, comments on how to improve are less effective as they are often too general, for example, asking for faster work. Pupils do have specific targets, for example, for the use of capitals and full stops in sentences, readily at hand when doing their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school is a welcoming and calm place, where pupils feel safe, secure and well cared for. Teachers know their pupils well and have established very good relationships with them. As a result, pupils' confidence develops quickly, for example when talking in front of their peers.
- The school has a clear and well-understood approach to behaviour management, which all teachers follow closely. Pupils know the school rules and behave well. They are polite and courteous to each other and adults when moving around the school, and play sensibly at break times.
- Parents and carers, governors and staff agree that pupils' behaviour at school is good. The school's records on behaviour are detailed and show few incidents of misbehaviour. There have been no exclusions in the recent past.
- Pupils have a good range of responsibilities that they are keen to take on, such as being school council representatives and H-Team monitors (who help with games at playtime).
- The school has been successful at improving pupils' attendance and it is now above average. Pupils are happy to come to school and enjoy their lessons.
- Pupils have a good understanding of bullying for their age. They say there are few examples of bullying at school and any incidents that do occur are soon tackled effectively by their teachers.
- Pupils have learned how to keep themselves healthy and safe. They know about road safety and the dangers of sharing personal information when using the internet.

The leadership and management are good

- The recently appointed senior leaders have been the driving force in the recent improvements in most areas of the school's work. Senior leaders and governors know the school well, have produced a well-organised improvement plan and monitor planned improvements closely. The quality of teaching is checked regularly and rigorously. Teachers and classroom support staff receive good professional development to improve their practice. Pupils' progress is also closely monitored to identify any who are underperforming to provide appropriate support for them. Consequently, teaching and pupils' achievement are improving.
- Recently appointed subject managers and the reception manager have been well supported by senior leaders in developing their leadership skills. The Reception is well managed and assessments of children's development are moderated accurately following advice from the local authority on the new national assessment procedures and teachers' visits to other schools. Reception rooms are stimulating areas with a good range of resources that promote learning well. The provision for mathematics and English and how teachers should mark pupils' work improved this year.
- Senior leaders have ensured that behaviour management systems are consistently applied and effective. Pupils have been involved in drawing up school rules to promote good behaviour. They are very aware of the rewards and sanctions available through the 'card system' and incidents of

misbehaviour are few.

- School leaders have high expectations of teachers' planning and marking. They ensure that the environment for learning is well organised. The display in classrooms to support the development of numeracy and literacy is effective in promoting independent work well. The topics introduced this year capture pupils' interest. The school's well-planned, open woodland area with a pond supports learning well.
 - The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Year 2 pupils have linked up with pupils in another school with more diverse cultural backgrounds through the School Linking project. The calm atmosphere and well-organised environment help to ensure that pupils work and play well together. Pupils have equal access to all subjects and activities, including the well-managed breakfast and after-school clubs. They have good opportunities to take on extra responsibilities, such as representing their class on the school council or joining the H-Team. The school has developed good relationships with parents and carers.
 - The local authority has maintained regular contact with the school and recognises that its leadership and management are good. It provides light touch support and the school takes advantage of its training courses for teachers and governors.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has a wide range of relevant skills and experience, augmented by regular training from the local authority, and is able to act as a challenging friend to the school. School leaders regularly inform governors of school developments, but governors also find out for themselves how well the school is doing through regular focused visits. They have a clear and accurate view of the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' progress and ensure teachers' movement along the pay scales is warranted. Governors have a good understanding of the information about pupils' progress and the school's strengths and areas for development and ask challenging questions of the school's leaders about how changes will affect pupils' achievement. Governors set robust targets for the performance of the headteacher and help to ensure good financial decisions are made, for example, in the allocation of the pupil premium. All statutory arrangements for safeguarding are securely in place.
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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	110268
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	412563

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	177
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Warner
Headteacher	Sandy McClelland
Date of previous school inspection	3 February 2009
Telephone number	01494 712 050
Fax number	01494 716 503
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