

Holywell Primary School

Forge Lane, Upchurch, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME9 7AE

Inspection dates 24–25 April 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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 attainment is rising rapidly. The very large majority of pupils in the current Year 6 are working at the expected level for their age and many pupils are already working towards the higher Level 5 in both English and mathematics.
- Teachers plan activities that help pupils do well. Teachers are skilled in providing written feedback that enables pupils to improve their work. They use new technology to engage pupils to make learning interesting.
- Pupils' attendance is high because the pupils enjoy coming to school.
- Other adults in the classroom provide tailored support resulting in good progress for pupils.
- The behaviour of pupils is good and they feel safe. Pupils talk confidently about their learning and fully involve themselves in assessing their own work and progress. Relationships between pupils and staff are very good.
- The headteacher has significantly improved pupils' progress because of the high expectations she has. Senior leaders and staff ably support her and all share her ambition to further raise standards.
- The governing body is well informed and fully engaged in driving forward improvements in achievement for all pupils. They are skilled in ensuring the school's improvements are sustained.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- More able pupils are not always moved on quickly enough into more challenging work.
- Planning does not always provide opportunities for pupils to move sooner into activities which develop their independent learning skills.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage do not always have effective opportunities to develop their literacy skills in the outdoor setting.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons, four of these jointly with senior leaders. In addition, inspectors listened to pupils read and looked at the work in their books.
- Inspectors met with pupils and talked about their work. Meetings were held with middle leaders and the Chair of the Governing Body and two other members.
- Documentation covering safeguarding, the management of performance of staff, records of behaviour and safety, attendance, checks of pupils' attainment and progress were reviewed.
- Inspectors took account of 60 responses from parents and carers to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and the school's own survey of parental views. Questionnaires from staff were also considered.

Inspection team

Howard Jones, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Teresa Davies,

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, there is one Reception class.
- The proportion of pupils receiving support from the pupil premium funding, which is the extra government support for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children and those from service families, is below average.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs supported at school action and those supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision for any of its pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching to further improve achievement by:
 - making sure extra challenge for more able pupils is introduced earlier, especially in English
 - ensuring pupils move quickly into activities which develop their independent learning skills
 - ensuring children in Reception have effective opportunities to develop their early literacy skills, especially within the outdoor setting.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter Reception with below expected levels of skills and understanding and make good progress. As a result, an increasing proportion leave Reception at levels expected for their age. However, children do not always have effective opportunities to develop their early literacy skills, especially within the outdoor setting. Leaders have made this a priority for development.
- Achievement has accelerated in Key Stage 1. Pupils' achievement in Year 2 has improved, especially in reading and writing. Some pupils do especially well at the higher levels in mathematics.
- Standards in English and mathematics in Key Stage 2 have risen. As a result of the school's successful focus on rigorously checking on how well pupils are doing, progress is now good. Achievement in mathematics continues to be strong and increasing numbers of pupils are now reaching the higher Level 5 in both reading and writing as well as in mathematics.
- The teaching of phonics (how to link letters and sounds) is a strength. Consequently, almost all pupils make good progress in reading across the school. Pupils enjoy reading and have the skills and confidence to access a range of texts. Pupils use a good range of vocabulary as they share their ideas and talk about their learning.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make progress equal to their peers. Additional approaches are well tailored to support their learning and they successfully participate in a range of activities. Parents and carers are fully involved and value the information they receive to enable them to support their child's learning.
- In tests in 2012, Year 6 pupils supported by the pupil premium did not do as well as other pupils. In both English and mathematics they were behind their peers by 12 months. However, current checks show these pupils are making accelerated progress and gaps are closing rapidly within each year group.
- The learning and progress of pupils within all year groups are now good. Weaknesses in pupils' knowledge and understanding in Key Stage 2 have been addressed. The school sets high expectations for pupils' progress and keeps a close check on this with regular and accurate assessments. However, additional challenge for more able pupils is not introduced soon enough in some lessons and opportunities to accelerate their learning further are missed.
- The very large majority of parents and carers who responded to the on-line questionnaire are happy with their child's progress.

The quality of teaching is good

- Work in pupils' books indicates that the quality of teaching is good overall. Some is exemplary and pupils make rapid progress. Teachers use information and communication technology (ICT) especially well to engage pupils in their learning regardless of their ability. They use role play and a range of activities to enhance pupils' motivation.
- In Reception adults use questioning well to develop children's learning. Consequently, they extend children's thinking within a variety of tasks. Language skills are developed effectively within well-planned phonics sessions (how to link letters and sounds). However, opportunities to enhance their literacy skills within the outdoor setting are not consistently planned for.
- Marking of pupils' work by teachers provides clear developmental guidance. Pupils are provided with next steps on how to improve their work so they can confidently link this to their personal targets. Teachers have high expectations and talk with pupils on how to become even more successful; consequently, pupils want to do even better in their work.
- Additional adults are especially good at ensuring pupils' individual needs are met. They participate fully within lessons to support pupils' learning. For example, in a Year 3 English lesson, the class teacher and two other adults were very effective in modelling the use of descriptive language, drawing on pupils' creative imagination. Other adults are also skilled in

challenging pupils to check their learning to see how they might improve their work.

- The pace of learning is good. For example, in one Year 5 class, well-planned activities and use of appropriate resources meant pupils of all abilities were able to access confidently tasks and apply their skills to interpret line graphs. Consequently, challenge and progress were strong. However, across the school, planning does not always ensure pupils move into activities which develop their independent learning skills.
- Teachers are skilled in supporting pupils to reflect on their learning. In one Year 6 English session for a group of more able pupils, questioning by the teacher was well focused and pupils were challenged to engage in extended dialogue using appropriate vocabulary to explore how they might move their learning forward. However, more able pupils are not always moved on quickly enough into more challenging work in some lessons.
- Teachers use their subject knowledge well to develop and secure good learning. They routinely check pupils' understanding and make clear links to a previous lesson's activities, as seen in a Year 4 lesson in which the teacher reviewed pupils' learning effectively to ensure deep understanding as pupils engaged with a sequence of activities.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils enjoy being in school and are enthusiastic in their learning. They are respectful towards one another. During break times, and around the school at lunchtimes, pupils get along with each other very well. Pupils enjoy taking on positions of responsibility, for example as play leaders and acting as ambassadors for the school within the local community.
- Behaviour is good in lessons and pupils work well together and are keen to support each other during shared activities. They are confident in talking about their learning and articulate in expressing their ideas and take pride in their work. However, more exemplary learning is restricted because opportunities for pupils to become independent are not as consistently planned for.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school. They are confident adults will listen and act on any concerns they might have. Pupils have a well developed understanding of how to keep themselves safe when using the internet. Because of the school's highly effective provision, they know about all forms of bullying, including cyber bullying. They treat one another as equals and do not accept wrong attitudes of any kind toward others.
- Parents and carers agree that their children are happy and well behaved. This is supported by the responses to the on-line questionnaire and by other evidence from parents and carers. The school is a caring community and its effective behaviour procedures ensure that all pupils are supported regardless of their need.
- Attendance is higher than average. Pupils are highly motivated to attend school because their teachers plan interesting activities to support their learning.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's exceptionally focused approach has led to marked improvements since the previous inspection. Her expertise and commitment have ensured previous gaps in pupils' skills and understanding have been addressed and all groups of pupils now make good progress throughout the school.
 - Leadership at all levels is now strong. The assistant headteacher and senior leaders are very effective in supporting the headteacher in a purposeful and strategic way. Consequently, all staff share in the school's ambition to build on improvements to become even more successful.
 - Middle leaders are rigorous in checking the progress of pupils. For example, subject leaders regularly check to ensure the quality of teaching and achievement is improving rapidly and that pupils' attainment is of a good standard.
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- Teacher career progression is linked to pupils' improvements in progress. Bespoke training is used to enhance teachers' expertise. Consequently, their planning is effective in deepening pupils' learning. Other adults have also benefited from such tailored training so that all staff have the expertise to ensure pupils have the confidence to do well.
 - The school ensures all pupils having equal opportunity to be successful. Pupils with special educational needs and those who require additional support do well because of the variety of approaches provided and the close involvement of parents and carers in their child's learning.
 - The pupil premium funding is used effectively. Gaps in pupils' attainment are closing rapidly across all year groups because of the additional support that has led to improved progress for these pupils.
 - The school has strong capacity to sustain its improved performance. Since the previous inspection the school's ability to move forward is acknowledged in the light touch support provided by the local authority.
 - The subjects taught are well planned and serve to develop pupils' understanding and skills as the pupils progress through the school. There are opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills, for example in planned enterprise themes. Music and drama have a high profile within the school and pupils enjoy participating in the range of activities provided.
 - Provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is well developed. Pupils participate in a range of sports and understand how different cultures celebrate key events. Pupils have a strong appreciation of other communities, for example through their extensive links with a school in France.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are very effective in managing their school. They have developed their expertise and are skilled in checking how well pupils are doing compared with those in other schools nationally. They have regular training and make visits to see the school at work. The detailed data they receive mean they are well informed and understand the school's strengths and where improvements are needed. For example, they have ensured weaknesses in English have been addressed. They hold the headteacher to account and accurately assess teachers' performance and reward teaching that leads to good progress for pupils. Governors make sure all staff are committed to tackling discrimination. They have a comprehensive understanding of how the allocation of the extra funding the school receives through the pupil premium is leading to improved achievement for these pupils. The budget is managed well. Governors have ensured safeguarding procedures are thorough and that pupils are kept safe.
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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	118549
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	405781

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	196
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ray Kemsley
Headteacher	Amanda Woolcombe
Date of previous school inspection	3–4 February 2011
Telephone number	01634 388416
Fax number	01634 363235
Email address	headteacher@holywell.kent.sch.uk

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