

Holme Slack Community Primary School

Manor House Lane, Preston, Lancashire, PR1 6HP

Inspection dates 8–9 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because:

- Pupils' achievement over the last three years has been uneven, and is not yet good.
- Pupils' performance in Key Stage 1 in 2013 was not as good as in 2012, and boys' performance in writing and mathematics is well below the national average.
- Few pupils reach the higher levels in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils are not always aware of their learning targets, or of what they need to do in order to further improve their learning.
- The match of tasks and questions to pupils of different abilities is not always challenging enough, particularly for the most able. Across the school too few opportunities are available for pupils to apply what they have learned in mathematics to problem solving, or real-life situations.
- Not enough opportunities are available for Key Stage 1 pupils to engage in extended writing.
- Marking does not always offer enough advice to ensure that pupils improve.
- Pupils are not given enough time to learn independently and work things out for themselves.
- Pupils' behaviour is not yet consistently good, either in lessons, or around the school.
- The leadership of the school, including that by the headteacher, other senior leaders, and governors, is not yet robust enough. The achievement of pupils over time has been inconsistent as has the quality of teaching.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils with hearing impairments enjoy school and make good progress, as do pupils with special educational needs and those entitled to support through the pupil premium fund.
- Gaps in the standards reached between boys and girls at Key Stage 2 are narrowing.
- The school's nurturing environment ensures that most pupils fully enjoy school.
- From well-below average starting points, all pupils make good progress in reading at Key Stage 2 and the vast majority also made good progress in writing and mathematics. Most pupils make good progress through their Reception Year.
- Attendance is rapidly improving and is the best that it has been for the last three years.

Information about this inspection

- Ten lessons, as well as small group activities, parts of lessons, and phonics sessions (the links between letters and the sounds they make), were observed.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read from Years 1, 2, 3 and 4 and held discussions with two groups of pupils from Years 1, 2, 3 and 4.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' books in lessons and with the school's headteacher and engaged in a full scrutiny of the books of Year 5 and 6 pupils, who were out of school on an annual residential trip at the time of the inspection.
- There were too few responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) to consider. Inspectors took account of the school's own surveys of parents' views, and met informally with parents at the beginning of the school day. Questionnaires completed by 17 members of staff were taken into account.
- A telephone conversation was held with a representative from the local authority school improvement service.
- A meeting was held with a total of three governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body.
- Various school documents were examined. These included, minutes of the governing body meetings, the school's development plan and the school's review of its own performance, data on pupils' progress, records of pupils' attendance, behaviour records and safeguarding documentation, monitoring records of the quality of teaching and external school evaluation reports.

Inspection team

Lenford White, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Pauline Pitman

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs is twice the national average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives additional funding through the pupil premium is twice the national average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after by the local authority.)
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school has a specialist resource base for children with hearing impairments.
- Since the last inspection the school has recruited a number of staff, including two teachers and a learning mentor.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that more is good or better by ensuring that:
 - pupils are always aware of their learning targets, and of what they need to do in order to further improve their learning
 - tasks and questions to pupils reflect their different abilities and are always challenging, particularly for the most able
 - marking always offers clear advice to pupils, ensuring that they continually improve
 - pupils are given enough time to learn independently and work things out for themselves.
- Raise the standards that pupils reach to at least good, especially in writing and mathematics, by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to engage in extended writing activities, particularly at Key Stage 1
 - ensuring that as many opportunities as possible are available for pupils to apply what they have learned in mathematics to problem solving, and real-life situations.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - the leadership of the school, including that by the headteacher, other senior leaders, and governors, is more robust, and that the quality of teaching and learning is at least consistently good
 - governors have at least a good understanding of how well the school is doing, and what it needs to do to improve further
 - pupils' behaviour is consistently good and consistently well-managed.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The performance of pupils over the last three years has been inconsistent, for example overall performance in Key Stage 1 was broadly average in 2012, but significantly below average in 2013.
- Children enter Reception with skills and abilities which are well below those expected for their age, particularly in language and communication. A good understanding of pupils' individual learning needs and good teaching ensures that most pupils make good progress, and achieve a good level of development in most areas of learning by the time they leave the Reception class.
- Although writing has improved at Key Stage 2, especially for boys, no pupil reached the higher levels in this subject at the end of Year 6 in 2013. A full scrutiny of pupils' books reveals that too few opportunities are provided for pupils to engage in extended writing activities, and that marking does not always give clear enough guidance to pupils on how to improve their punctuation and spelling.
- The gaps in pupils' attainment have narrowed in Key Stage 2, especially in writing. However, there are still differences in their performance in mathematics and reading, where boys' attainment is broadly average, and better than girls.
- Though still lower than the national average, the learning of phonics (the sounds that letters make) is improving. The school has been careful to ensure that small group teaching activities and one-to-one support has enabled those pupils in Year 2 who did not achieve well in the phonics check at the end of Year 1, to catch up with their peers and make good progress.
- Overall performance in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is not as good as in previous years. A scrutiny of books from across all year-groups revealed that mathematics is not always challenging enough, and too few opportunities are provided for pupils to apply what they have learned in mathematics to problem-solving activities and real-life situations.
- Well-chosen support for pupils entitled to extra help through the pupil premium funding has enabled them to make good progress and has ensured that the standards they reach are equal to those of their peers in school. This is also the case for pupils from minority ethnic groups, and those who speak English as an additional language. This reflects the school's work on ensuring every pupil now has an equal opportunity.
- The school provides considerable additional support in terms of small group teaching, delivered by well-trained specialist teachers and teaching assistants, to ensure that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics from very low starting points.
- Pupils with hearing impairments are very well supported through the school's specialist resource base. This, coupled with good care and support in class, ensures that they make good progress.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires further improvement to make it consistently good or better. It is not yet good because some teachers do not plan lessons which meet the needs of all pupils, especially the most able.
- Although the majority of lessons observed during the inspection were good, a full scrutiny of books revealed that over time this is not the case and more teaching requires improvement than is good.
- In most classes individual targets and goals are displayed on classroom walls; however, discussions with pupils about their work revealed that too few are aware of their learning targets, or of what they need to do in order to improve further.
- All teachers from Reception to Year 6 use a common marking system which usually identifies what pupils have done well, and what needs to be improved. However, advice on how they can

correct errors is less clear.

- Occasionally, teachers spend too much time introducing lessons and talking to the whole class, which slows the pace of learning and limits the amount of time that pupils can work independently and find things out for themselves.
- Aspects of effective teaching are evident in all year-groups. Teachers are enthusiastic and have good relationships with their pupils. Most lessons start with clear learning objectives and success criteria which are shared with, and often read by pupils.
- In the best lessons teachers set challenges for pupils. This was the case in a Year 2 mathematics lesson focusing on symmetry. After introducing the lesson and inviting pupils to think about and summarise what was learned in the previous lesson, the most-able pupils were given their own learning objectives and released to investigate the differences between symmetrical and non-symmetrical shapes while the teacher prepared the rest of the class for a different activity.
- Tasks and questions are not always accurately matched to pupils' different abilities. In particular, work is not always hard enough to challenge the most able. As a result, too few pupils reach the higher levels in English and mathematics.
- In a good Year 4 art lesson the teacher set her class the task of defining secondary, primary and basic colours, and adding shade to colours without using black. All pupils made good progress with their tasks, and the most able were challenged to extend their vocabulary to describe what they were seeing and doing.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Informal discussions with parents at the start of the school day revealed that most parents are of the opinion that their children are safe in school and that behaviour is good. The school's own survey, completed by one third of families, confirmed this view.
- Most pupils are of the opinion that there is very little bullying in school, and say that if it occurs, it is always dealt with swiftly. Some pupils reported that they had been bullied in the past, but said that this stopped when teachers were informed and parents were involved. The school's own records of behaviour confirm that bullying is rare.
- Pupils understand what discriminatory behaviour is and say that it is very rare for someone to be treated differently because of the way that they look, or because of the colour of their skin. All pupils who spoke to inspectors understood that discriminatory behaviour is wrong, and indicated that it is always dealt with, and taken seriously by adults.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school, as evidenced by their improved attendance, which is now close to the national average. They engage in cooperative play during break times and relate well to each other. However, behaviour, especially that of boys, can be boisterous and inconsiderate at break times and while moving around the school.
- During discussions with inspectors some pupils found it difficult to sit still, put their hands up to answer questions and listen to the contributions of their classmates. This behaviour is typical in some lessons.
- Pupils are well versed in how to keep themselves safe while using the internet. They know not to give out personal details to strangers or add people as friends to social networking sites because they may have 'fake accounts'. They can clearly define cyber-bullying and know that this can occur on the internet, and on mobile phones.
- Pupils demonstrated a good ability to manage their own behaviour at times. This was especially noticeable at lunchtime, where pupils got on with getting lunch and sitting down and talking to their classmates with very little adult supervision.
- Pupils understand what 'stranger danger' is and know never to approach people they do not know. Talks during assembly given by community police officers and firefighters help them to better understand potential dangers, and how to keep themselves safe.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The leadership of the school, including that by the headteacher, other senior leaders, and governors, is not yet robust enough. Although the school's review of its performance sets a clear course for school improvement, the achievement of pupils over time has been inconsistent, as has the quality of teaching.
- The school was able to provide evidence to suggest that some of these inconsistencies in 2013 were due to high levels of mobility, including pupils joining the school partway through the academic year, and high numbers of pupils with special educational needs in some year-groups, particularly in Year 2.
- All staff who completed the inspection questionnaire indicated that they were happy with the way in which the school was led and managed. Although they agreed that training and professional development was good, a number of staff indicated that they would appreciate more opportunities to visit other schools to find out about different teaching practices.
- The quality of teaching, while improving, is not improving quickly enough to ensure that all pupils in all year-groups achieve to the best of their ability.
- The school ensures that an effective system of performance management is in place and that progression through the pay scales is linked to individual teacher targets. However, these targets have not been sufficiently challenging to ensure that, for example, the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2, increased in 2013.
- The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to improve their knowledge and experience of the world around them, through, for example residential opportunities. Year 4 pupils who spoke to inspectors indicated that they were looking forward to their residential visit to the Lake District in Year 5.
- During lesson observations inspectors observed some good examples of literacy and communication skills being developed in art, and writing and mathematical skills being developed in geography.
- Pupils' social and moral development, particularly in Key Stage 1 is strong. Pupils cooperate well and consider each other's views. Pupils' cultural and spiritual development is less well defined. Pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 were out of school on a residential visit during the inspection which meant that there were fewer opportunities for inspectors to assess the quality of pupils' social and moral development in Key Stage 2.
- The local authority has provided support to the school in a number of areas including data analysis and helping to improve writing, and will continue to support the school in improving the quality of teaching.
- The school meets all statutory requirements in relation to safeguarding.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are very supportive of the school. They are aware of how performance management links to pay and are in the process of restructuring their roles in order for them to play a fuller part in the life of the school. Governors ensure that they are up to date with their training and are currently carrying out an audit to establish members' knowledge and skills gaps, identifying training where necessary.
 - Governors work well with the headteacher and senior leadership team and know that the overall priority for the school is in raising levels of achievement and improving the quality of teaching. However, they do not have specific knowledge of exactly what the school needs to do to further improve.
 - Governors know how pupil premium funding is spent, and the impact that small group teaching activities and the work of the school's learning mentor is having on raising levels of attendance and attainment for entitled pupils. Governors are yet to meet to endorse the school's plans for utilising its physical education and sports grant.

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	119234
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	426136

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	157
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Keith Manogue
Headteacher	Michelle Peck
Date of previous school inspection	26 January 2012
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