

Holly Spring Infant and Nursery School

Lily Hill Road, Bullbrook, Bracknell RG12 2SW

Inspection dates 23–24 October 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 achieve well. Whatever their starting points, they make good progress because staff quickly identify pupils' needs and plan accordingly.
- Additional funding for pupils whose circumstances might mean they are disadvantaged is used very effectively to help them make the same good progress as their classmates.
- Teachers are skilled in engaging pupils, managing their behaviour and channelling their enthusiasm. As a result, pupils behave well and are keen to learn. They are extremely friendly, welcoming and inquisitive.
- The school provides a haven of tranquillity for pupils and sensitive practical support for parents.
- Pupils feel entirely safe and well looked after, and parents are secure in the knowledge that staff have their children's interests at heart.
- The painstaking collection of information about pupils' learning is used well by leaders to assess and improve the quality of teaching and to enable pupils to achieve well.
- School leaders, governors and staff share a determination to do the best they can for all pupils. They know precisely what to do to improve the school further.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' progress in reading does not match that in writing.
- The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is inconsistent, which means pupils' do not always build up their skills systematically as they move through the school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors saw teaching in every class. They observed 29 lessons, of which eight were observed jointly with the headteacher or other senior leaders. One assembly and pupils' behaviour in the playground and at lunchtime were also evaluated.
- Discussions were held with pupils, two members of the governing body, the headteacher, staff, and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors observed many aspects of the school's work, including the supervision and support for pupils who need extra help. They examined pupils' work in their exercise books and on classroom and corridor wall displays, and heard groups of pupils read.
- The inspectors looked at a number of documents, including plans for the school's future development, lesson plans, the school's arrangements for keeping pupils safe, pupils' attendance records, minutes of governing body meetings, records of how pupils' learning is monitored and records of how the quality of teaching is checked.
- The views of parents and carers were taken into account, including those expressed in the 26 responses to the online Parent View survey and in discussions with the inspectors at the beginning of the school day.
- Staff views were taken into consideration by looking at 18 returned questionnaires and discussions with several members of staff.

Inspection team

Rob Crompton, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Bimla Thakur

Additional Inspector

Heidi Boreham

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is broadly average in size compared to a typical primary school. Around 25% of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and about a fifth of all pupils speak English as an additional language. Both these proportions are broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, for whom the school receives additional funding through the pupil premium, is broadly average. (The pupil premium provides additional funding for children who are looked after, children of parents serving in the armed forces and for those known to be eligible for free school meals.)
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational need is average. These needs relate mainly to behavioural, emotional and social difficulties or speech, language and communication problems.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises two nursery classes, where children attend either mornings or afternoons, and four Reception classes.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress in reading, particularly in developing their phonics skills, by:
 - ensuring pupils build up their skills systematically as they move through the school
 - supporting staff in using strategies during phonics sessions that fully engage pupils and promote their enjoyment
 - providing early reading books that more closely match pupils' phonic skills
 - placing further emphasis on phonics in the Reception classes and providing more opportunities for children to practise reading with the support of an adult.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- When children start school in the Nursery or Reception classes, their social, language and numeracy skills are generally well below those expected at their respective ages. Many have difficulty in communicating and have a limited vocabulary.
- Due to effective teaching, children make good headway. They speak with increasing confidence and learn to listen carefully. They make steady progress in learning how to sound out letters and combine them to read whole words, and quickly learn to count and identify shapes. However, children's attainment by the end of Reception is generally below average.
- Pupils make good gains in their learning through Years 1 and 2, and the school's performance compared with the national picture is typically broadly average. Recently, pupils have made better progress in writing than reading. This is partly due to a successful drive to improve pupils' writing skills but also because their progress in acquiring phonic skills is variable.
- Most pupils use their phonic knowledge well, making a good stab at reading unfamiliar words, but others are less secure and lack the confidence to blend sounds together when they come across a new word. The results of the Year 1 phonics check improved significantly in 2013 but were below the national average.
- The most able pupils in Year 2 are very confident and read widely. One boy said, 'I love reading', as he began a new book, reading fluently and expressively. Some pupils' writing is clearly influenced by what they read. Successfully using speech marks, for example, one boy wrote, 'Get out of my house or I will put the roof over your head and you will never get it off!' as he retold the story of Hansel and Gretel.
- A strong emphasis on practical work enables pupils to make good progress in mathematics. Year 2 pupils, for example, enjoyed surveying their classmates and quickly learned how to represent the findings as a bar chart. Others extended their addition skills by making three jumps along a number line and calculating the total distance covered.
- The school's clear commitment to promoting equality of opportunity, fostering good relations and tackling discrimination is evident in its success in supporting pupils with different needs and starting points:
 - Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress due to effective support, both within lessons and during small-group sessions.
 - The previous attainment gap between pupils entitled to free school meals and all pupils closed completely in 2013. Indeed, this group reached slightly higher levels than those of the whole cohort in reading, writing and mathematics, reflecting the effective use of the additional funding.
 - The most able pupils build well on their starting points, particularly in writing and mathematics.
 - Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, including those who have English as an additional language are often among those who achieve particularly well.

The quality of teaching is good

- In the Nursery and Reception classes, staff take every opportunity to engage children in conversation and develop their language and understanding. As Nursery children searched for shapes outside, for example, staff encouraged them to talk about what they found and to use the correct mathematical vocabulary.
- From the beginning of the day, Reception children are taught in eight groups led by teachers and support staff. This works well in providing opportunities for staff to get to know the individual children, find out what they know and can do, and plan subsequent learning accordingly.

- Adults provide ample opportunities for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to choose from a wealth of stimulating resources both indoors and in the well-equipped outdoor area. During one 'free-flow' lesson, children demonstrated a good degree of independence and cooperated well. The activities on offer successfully promoted each area of learning as, for example, children used the role-play areas, looked at autumn leaves through large magnifying glasses, made shopping lists and played number games on netbooks and interactive whiteboards
- Alongside activities which children choose for themselves, adults teach specific things at timely intervals, using their comprehensive knowledge of where children are in developing their skills and understanding.
- At times, opportunities are missed in Reception to reinforce children's phonic skills and link these to their reading. For example, children have limited chances to read with an adult more than once each week.
- Teaching across the school is underpinned by warm relationships and teachers' skilful management of behaviour. Classrooms are welcoming and well resourced. Attractive displays provide prompts for learning and celebrate pupils' achievements.
- Most lessons move at a lively pace and achieve a good balance between introductions by the teacher and time for pupils to get on with their work by themselves.
- Although teachers and support staff are generally adept at engaging pupils and making learning fun, this is less evident during phonics sessions, which are sometimes rather dry and uninspiring. Pupils at a very early stage of linking letters and sounds sometimes find the books they are given to read are beyond them and this constrains their progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well and are keen to learn and there is an atmosphere of mutual respect in classrooms. At playtimes and around the school, pupils get along with one another and enjoy warm relationships with adults. Even on the odd occasions when some are distracted because teaching does not fully engage them, they do not disrupt the learning of others.
- Behaviour management is a real strength. Pupils who find it difficult to conform are very well supported. This means that they usually take a full part in lessons without disturbing other pupils. The family support assistant plays a strong part in helping pupils with social and emotional difficulties to become confident in working with other pupils.
- Pupils very willingly take on jobs and responsibilities. For example, they are proud to serve on the school council. Pupils respond well to opportunities to help people less fortunate than themselves through charity fundraising events.
- Pupils understand about bullying, and are very quick to say how well teachers look after them. They also look after one another, and inspectors saw many examples of this and of sharing in the school. During playtime, for instance, one child was quick to help a younger playmate who had fallen over.
- Clear guidance is given to pupils on a range of issues about keeping themselves safe. The school has strong working partnerships with external professionals, such as speech and language specialists.
- Attendance has risen considerably in the past year, and is now broadly average as a result of the school's concerted drive to improve it.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide strong leadership. They are ambitious for the school and successfully drive improvement. They are very effectively supported by other leaders and all staff. Reflecting the general view, one member of staff commented, 'I am proud to be part of a school team that works extremely hard to help, encourage and nurture all the children.'
- Arrangements for managing teachers' performance are very good. Teachers have targets linked to the progress of the pupils they teach and to the school's priorities. They value the support and training they are given and this has raised the quality of teaching in school.
- There are well-established routines to check how well different groups of pupils are doing. The deputy headteacher has all the information at her fingertips. Meticulous analysis of assessment data helps school leaders and governors identify where extra effort is needed and forms the basis of improvement planning. The curriculum is well planned to stimulate pupils' interest and enjoyment and to ensure pupils build on their previous learning. This systematic progression, however, is not as clearly evident in the phonics programme as in other aspects of the key subjects.
- Curriculum topics, the 'rights respecting' programme and the 'golden rules' provide many opportunities for adults to promote moral values and social responsibility and widen pupils' understanding of the world outside their immediate environment.
- Additional funding for sports is being used to employ specialist coaches, and the impact of this is seen in pupils' enthusiasm for physical activities. Some funds are earmarked for additional movement and dance sessions and pupils said they were really looking forward to taking part. The local authority provides light-touch support for this good school as the school leadership team is held in high regard.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They keep a close eye on how well pupils are doing, and know how well the school is performing in comparison with other schools. They do not 'rubber stamp' decisions and they routinely ask searching questions in order to secure the best for pupils. Governors keep themselves informed about the overall quality of teaching. They are fully aware of the need to align teachers' performance in the classroom with their pay and promotion. They support the way the teachers' performance is managed and know about how the school rewards good teachers and tackles any underperformance. The governing body seeks assurance that the pupil premium is used to boost the achievement of eligible pupils. Governors review their own performance systematically and take full advantage of the training provided by the local authority. They ensure that the school's safeguarding arrangements fully meet requirements.

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	109807
Local authority	Bracknell Forest
Inspection number	426672

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	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	329
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Graham Mullier
Headteacher	Julia Paradine
Date of previous school inspection	3–4 November 2010
Telephone number	01344 483920
Fax number	01344 305454
Email address	head@office.hollyspring-inf.bracknell-forest.sch.uk

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