

Holbrook Primary School

Holbrook Lane, Trowbridge, Wiltshire, BA14 0PS

Inspection dates 8–9 January 2014

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		Good	2
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

- Not enough pupils make good progress in reading and mathematics across the school. This means that some pupils are not reaching the levels of attainment of which they are capable, especially those of higher ability.
- Standards of attainment in grammar, punctuation and spelling are not yet high enough.
- Comprehension skills in reading have not been taught systematically enough.
- Teachers do not always plan activities to extend pupils thinking and deepen their understanding, especially in mathematics.
- In some lessons, teachers do not use the information from their assessments to move the learning on quickly, especially for the most able.
- Leaders' checks on the impact of teaching on pupils' achievement are not focused sharply enough on how well different groups of pupils learn. They do not identify clearly the weaknesses and ensure they are fully resolved.
- Teachers' targets for improving their performance do not focus precisely enough on raising the achievement of different groups of pupils.
- Until recently, governors have not held school leaders to account rigorously enough about why the attainment and progress of some pupils is not better.

The school has the following strengths

- The provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is organised effectively and provides children with a good start to their education.
- Writing is taught well and most pupils are making good progress so that attainment is above average.
- All teachers manage behaviour well. Consequently, pupils have positive attitudes to their learning and behave considerately in and around the school.
- The curriculum provides pupils with interesting activities that invigorate lessons, and promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills well.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons, all of which were joint observations with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. In addition, inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons and the playground, and observed an assembly
- Meetings were held with pupils, governors including the Chair of Governors, and the school's leaders. Also, the Lead Inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 41 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as consulting informally with parents and carers before start of the school day.
- They observed the school's work, looked at a range of documents including the school's improvement plans, information on pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring files, minutes of the governing body meetings and records relating to special educational needs, behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- The inspectors heard pupils read, talked to them in lessons and evaluated samples of their work.

Inspection team

Sandra Woodman, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jennifer Cutler

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is an average size primary school.
- Most pupils come from a White British background.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children in local authority care and children with a parent or carer in the armed forces, is below the national average. Currently there are very few children with a parent or carer in the armed forces and very few children in local authority care.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs supported at school action is below the national average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school is part of a collaborative partnership with twenty-one local schools.
- The school has experienced considerable turbulence in its leadership and staffing since the previous inspection.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is typically at least good by ensuring:
 - that teachers use the information from assessments to adapt their teaching to suit individuals' differing needs and so move the learning on more quickly, especially for the most able
 - teachers plan activities that better extend pupils' thinking in order to deepen their understanding in all lessons
 - there is more time allowed for pupils to develop their understanding, especially in mathematics.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - making sure that teaching is evaluated more precisely in terms of the impact on the attainment and progress of different groups of pupils
 - ensuring that the monitoring of teaching is rigorous enough to identify weaknesses and resolve them systematically
 - linking teachers' targets for improving their performance more sharply to the attainment and progress of different groups of pupils in their classes

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because the progress that pupils make across the school is uneven and varies between subjects and groups of pupils. Progress across Key Stage 2 in reading and mathematics has been too slow and attainment has remained below average.
- In 2013, the attainment and rates of progress of Year 6 pupils in writing were above the national averages. In reading and mathematics, not enough pupils made good progress from their starting points. However, improvements to the quality of teaching are showing impact with better rates of progress in other year groups and rising attainment.
- Results in the Year 6 grammar, punctuation and spelling test were well below average and attainment in spelling has been identified as a weakness. Plans to address this have been put in place with a noticeable improvement in standards already.
- Closer tracking of attainment and progress is ensuring that any underachievement is identified and addressed promptly. However pupils, particularly the most able, are not stretched enough in some lessons and could achieve more, especially in mathematics.
- Comprehension skills in reading have not been developed systematically enough; the school has taken decisive steps to remedy this with more pupils reaching the higher levels in reading currently.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs typically make progress in line with their classmates and increasingly the work is being planned more carefully to meet their needs.
- Compared to other pupils with similar starting points, the attainment and progress of the Year 6 pupils in 2013 that benefited from the pupil premium was similar to their classmates and gaps were smaller than those found nationally.
- The school's strong performance in the Year 1 phonics (letters and the sounds they make) screening check is due to improvements in the teaching of phonics. Pupils read widely and take full advantage of the new and exciting range of reading materials the school has on offer.
- Achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children join the school with skills that are typical for their age. They make good progress across all aspects of their learning and most start Year 1 as confident learners.
- Supported by the new fund for physical education, more pupils are taking part in a wider range of activities and extending their skills in sports such as dodge ball and hockey.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement as pupils' progress has not been consistently good. Evidence shows that teaching is getting better and this was confirmed by observations during the inspection. Whilst the weakest teaching has been addressed, some inconsistencies remain.
- Sometimes teachers do not use the information from assessment to move the learning on quickly in lessons and tasks do not always extend pupils' thinking and deepen their understanding.
- Teachers do not provide pupils, especially the more able, with sufficient opportunities to develop their thinking and write about their findings, especially in mathematics. This limits pupils' learning so they do not reach the higher levels.
- Better assessment procedures mean that teachers have an accurate understanding of their pupils' achievement and their marking is precise and helpful.
- Pupils are generally aware of the purpose of their learning; teachers give clear explanations and good quality feedback. They use a variety of imaginative resources to engage the pupils' interest successfully. For example, the film clip of a Spartan warrior was used effectively to enable Year 4 pupils to develop some adventurous vocabulary to use in their writing.
- Good support from external consultants and the partnership of schools has helped to develop

teachers' skills in the teaching of phonics and mathematics, and in making and using assessments.

- The pupil premium has been used effectively to provide effective additional teaching in mathematics which is helping to close the gaps in attainment with other pupils. Recent improvements to the provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are starting to accelerate their progress.
- Good teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is enabling children to flourish through a careful balance of adult and child led activities. All the adults work together effectively to develop children's skills in all aspects of their learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good; typically they are courteous, friendly and very considerate of each other. They settle to their lessons quickly and are keen to learn. These positive attitudes are contributing well to the better progress now being made.
- Behaviour is not yet outstanding because sometimes pupils' thinking is not extended to the full in lessons and occasionally pupils lose focus when the tasks are not at the correct level for their ability.
- Pupils, their parents and the staff are positive about standards of behaviour. Teachers manage behaviour consistently well and pupils are clear about the systems to promote good behaviour, responding promptly to teachers' instructions. The school is a harmonious place as good relationships abound.
- Pupils are clear that bullying, in whatever form it takes such as racist or homophobic bullying, is unacceptable but it seldom happens here. Pupils show a great tolerance and respect for one another. 'Everyone is normal even though we're different' was one such comment from a pupil and others agreed.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils report that they feel very safe and their parents and staff agree that the school provides a secure and caring environment. Pupils judge that the school prepares them well to maintain their personal safety both in school and in the wider community, through events such as e-safety and road safety training.
- School records show that the school deals effectively with a few pupils with behavioural or emotional difficulties and the incidents of poor behaviour are reducing due to good support strategies.
- The school gives a high priority to encouraging pupils to attend regularly and current attendance is above average. Attendance and punctuality show improvement this year due to the stringent monitoring by the school and the work done by the pastoral manager to engage parents.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, the school has experienced significant turbulence in its leadership and staffing. Senior leaders and governors recognise that achievement should be better but staff changes have hampered progress. However the firm steps taken recently to strengthen the teaching and leadership are increasing the pace of improvement.
- All leaders check regularly on the quality of the teaching but they do not focus their evaluations sharply enough on the learning for the different groups of pupils. This means that weaknesses in practice are not always identified and resolved quickly enough.
- Teachers receive regular feedback on their lessons from senior and middle leaders. However the lack of carefully focused individual targets for their performance does not make it clear what they need to do next to improve their work or their precise role in driving forward new developments.

- Assessment procedures have been strengthened to ensure that teachers' assessments are more accurate and frequent. The improved system for tracking progress means that teachers are being held responsible for the progress of their pupils more rigorously.
- Effective support from the local authority and independent consultants has helped leaders to assess the school's performance accurately and establish focused action plans, enabling them to judge the impact of their work more easily.
- Middle leaders have been trained well in their roles and responsibilities and are leading new developments effectively. The recently appointed co-ordinator for special education needs has already ensured that provision is more clearly targeted and effective.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well through a broad and balanced curriculum that reflects pupils' interests with good links across subjects to literacy and mathematics.
- The school is committed to equality of opportunity and tackles any discrimination effectively with no serious incidents of harassment in recent years. The pupil premium fund is managed well so that eligible pupils are making better progress than previously and are supported well in their personal development.
- The school works hard to involve parents in the life of the school and many help out as volunteers. A small minority of parents expressed the view that pupils receive too much homework but inspection evidence shows that pupils enjoy the activities on offer and take full advantage of the school's homework club.
- Plans are in place to use the new primary physical education fund to develop more competitive opportunities for pupils and the uptake by pupils for new sports clubs has been high.
- All statutory requirements for safeguarding are met and managed effectively. Staff training is up to date and there are robust systems for managing health and safety.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Until recently governors did not challenge leaders strongly enough about why standards of attainment for some pupils were not better. However, through recruitment and restructuring they have emerged as an effective group and have been instrumental in driving forward improvements. They keep their skills up-to-date through good quality training from the local authority and other consultants. They are very knowledgeable about the school's performance data, responding swiftly to the underachievement in last year's national tests. They hold all leaders to account very rigorously and are clear about where teaching is good and where it requires improvement. Consequently, they have adjusted their pay policy in order to reward only effective performance. Financial management is extremely sound and resources such as the pupil premium fund and the physical education fund are being managed effectively.

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	126269
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	431106

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	228
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Margaret Hunt
Headteacher	Roger Whitewick
Date of previous school inspection	16–17 May 2012
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