

# Holmgate Primary School and Nursery

Holmgate Road, Clay Cross, Chesterfield, S45 9QD

**Inspection dates** 4–5 March 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Require improvement	3
Leadership and management		Require improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- In the recent past, not enough boys made good progress in Key Stage 2 because there was too much weak teaching.
- Not enough pupils are making good progress in writing, particularly in Key Stage 2. The presentation of pupils' work is not always as good as it should be.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage do not learn enough, particularly in reading and writing.
- Leaders have not ensured that lower ability pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs have made good progress.
- Until recently, checks on the quality of teaching were not rigorous enough. As a result, teachers were not given clear guidance on how to improve their practice.
- Teachers' marking does not always provide pupils with clear guidance on how to do better. They do not have enough time to make corrections and improve their work.
- Pupils are not given enough chance to apply their skills in writing and mathematics in other subjects, or to solve problems in mathematics.
- With the exception of the leader of English, leaders who have responsibility for subjects do not check sufficiently on the quality of teaching in order to secure improvements.
- Leaders' action plans do not have sharp measures for success linked to pupils' achievement. This makes it difficult for governors and leaders to check the rate of improvement.
- Behaviour is not good because too many pupils, especially boys, are not able to sustain their concentration during lessons.

**The school has the following strengths**

- Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 because they are taught well.
- Pupils take part in a wide range of competitive and other sports, which helps them to lead a healthy lifestyle.
- The progress pupils make in reading in Key Stages 1 and 2 is improving because of the effective actions the school has taken.
- The acting and assistant headteachers have ensured that teaching in Year 6 is now good.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 17 lessons taught by 10 teachers. In addition, they listened to pupils in Year 1 and Year 6 read.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, senior leaders, leaders of English and mathematics, groups of pupils and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentary evidence including: the data held by the school about pupils' progress and attainment; the school's monitoring of the quality of teaching; the school's self-evaluation and plans for improvement; and documentation relating to the attendance and safeguarding of pupils.
- Inspectors took account of the 55 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as analysing the school's own information relating to the views of parents and carers. Inspectors met with five parents who wished to express their views about the school. Consideration was given to questionnaires completed by 28 members of staff, as well as the school's own analysis of the views of 100 pupils.

## Inspection team

David Carter, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Marian Driver

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Holmgate Primary School and Nursery is an average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as a first language.
- An average proportion of pupils are supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those looked after by the local authority and those with a parent in the armed forces.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school runs its own breakfast and after-school clubs.
- The school has had several changes of staff since the last section 5 inspection in October 2010, as well as periods of staff absence, including members of the senior leadership team. The deputy headteacher and the assistant headteacher were appointed in September 2013.
- The headteacher is currently absent from school. In her absence, the deputy headteacher has been appointed as acting headteacher.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and pupils' attitudes to learning so that they are consistently good or better, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2, by:
  - ensuring that all teachers hold high expectations of what pupils can achieve, especially boys in Key Stage 2, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and pupils of lower ability
  - providing children in the Early Years Foundation Stage with more opportunities to develop their skills in reading and writing when learning without the direct supervision of an adult
  - ensuring that the quality of marking is consistent across each class, so that all pupils are clear about how to improve their work and are given more opportunities to respond to teachers' comments.
- Improve pupils' achievement by:
  - ensuring that pupils have more opportunities to apply their skills in writing and mathematics in other subjects
  - ensuring that pupils have more opportunities to apply their mathematical skills to solving problems
  - ensuring that pupils' handwriting and presentation of their work are consistently of a high standard.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that the leaders of subjects other than English have more opportunities to check on the quality of teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility, in order to drive improvements
  - refining plans for improvement to include clear measures of success relating to pupils' achievement so that governors and senior leaders can check more readily the rate of improvement
  - building on recent improvements to the quality of teaching by providing teachers with more

precise recommendations about how to improve their practice

- making sure that the new special educational needs co-ordinator ensures that the support provided for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is monitored closely so that they make good or better progress
- ensuring that pupils have more opportunities to learn about people of different faiths and cultures.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because, since the previous inspection, not all pupils, particularly boys, those of lower ability and disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs have made enough progress across Key Stage 2. During a period of staffing instability, allied to absences at senior leadership level, weak teaching had a negative effect on pupils' achievement in Key Stage 2, particularly in reading and writing.
- Children enter the Nursery class with skills below those typical for their age. Their progress requires improvement during their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage and they enter Year 1 with levels of knowledge and skills which are below expectations. Although staff are taking every opportunity to develop children's skills in speaking and listening, children are not given the same range of opportunities to develop their skills in reading and writing.
- Boys have not made the same progress across Key Stage 2 as girls since the last inspection. The curriculum has been amended to try and present learning in ways which will appeal to boys' curiosity. Although this is having a positive impact on boys' progress, this is not always evident in their attitudes to learning in lessons. Senior leaders recognise that further amendments need to be made for September 2014 to try and engage all boys in their learning further. Current rates of progress of boys and girls across the school are similar and this is helping to raise boys' attainment.
- Pupils' progress in writing remains an on-going focus for senior leaders. Despite there being some examples of good quality writing, for example in Year 6, pupils are not given enough opportunities in which to write more widely in a range of subjects. Pupils' presentation of their work, including handwriting, is not consistent across Key Stage 2, with examples of work which is untidy.
- Pupils' achievement in mathematics has tended to be stronger than in reading and writing. However, it is not consistently good and varies between classes. The leader of mathematics has been absent for a period since the last inspection and acknowledges that she has not had enough opportunity in which to check on the quality of teaching and drive improvements to the extent to which she would have liked. She has, however, introduced a new approach to the teaching of calculations which is helping pupils to develop their skills in mental calculations as well as on paper. Pupils are making better progress in Key Stage 2. However, in Year 4 and Year 5, pupils' attainment remains below average.
- Over time, disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs have not made good progress from their starting points. The new special educational needs co-ordinator has made a positive start to her role and has ensured that pupils whose circumstances might make them vulnerable are provided with better quality support and interventions. As a result, these pupils are now making the progress they should, with a large minority making rapid progress in Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1. The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) is especially effective and pupils quickly develop the skills to read and spell accurately. The proportion of pupils aged six who achieve the national expectation in phonics is above average. Girls and boys make similar rates of progress in Key Stage 1 and, by the time they enter Key Stage 2, their attainment is broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics.

- With the arrival of the deputy (now acting headteacher) and assistant headteacher in September 2013, there have been recent improvements to the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2. As a result, pupils' achievement in reading is improving quickly because of changes made to the way this is taught. Pupils confirmed that they enjoy reading, especially using the new books which have been brought into classrooms and the library.
- The introduction of reading 'buddies' has motivated pupils to develop their skills in reading aloud as well as explaining the meaning of what they are reading. Although standards in reading fell sharply in 2013 at the end of Year 6, a more positive picture is emerging, with pupils making faster progress in reading, and the legacy of past underachievement is being addressed. For instance, pupils' attainment in the current Year 6 is above average in reading.
- Most-able pupils make the progress which is expected of them and an average proportion attains Level 5 by the time they leave the school. Attainment at the end of Year 6 has been broadly average since the last inspection.
- Senior leaders have used the pupil premium funding appropriately. In 2013, the gaps in attainment between these and other pupils almost closed. This was because eligible pupils made faster progress than their classmates. Currently, both groups are making similar progress and, in Key Stage 2, eligible pupils, on average, are about two terms behind their classmates in terms of attainment.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because, until recently, too much teaching was not good enough. Improvements since September 2013 are the reason why pupils' progress is improving. No inadequate teaching is evident within the school.
- Teachers do not always have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils of lower ability, for instance, are frequently provided with activities that are too difficult or too easy. This is because teachers have not used the assessments of the previous learning accurately enough to provide the right amount of challenge.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage requires improvement. Adults undertake a range of assessments when children enter the school which shows that they start with skills which are below what is typical for their age, but well below in terms of their speaking and listening skills. Adults provide activities which support children's early communication and language development well, and which also benefit their personal, social and emotional development. However, children do not make as much good progress as they should in developing their skills in reading and writing. Opportunities for them to develop their skills in reading and writing when learning without the direct supervision of an adult are limited.
- The quality of marking is inconsistent between classes. Not all pupils are provided with clear guidance on what their next steps in learning are or what they have to do to show how they have improved. This slows the progress which pupils make in Key Stage 2, other than in Year 6.
- Teachers are not providing pupils with enough opportunities to apply their knowledge of place value and skills in calculating to undertake investigations and solve problems in mathematics and in other subjects. This limits their ability to develop their skills in reasoning to solve real-life problems.

- Teaching assistants have benefited from the training which they have received since the last inspection. As a result, they work more closely with teachers and understand what they have to do to support learning. This is particularly helping the most-able pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs to make at least the expected rates of progress, with the majority making good progress.
- Teaching is good in Key Stage 1. This is because teachers provide interesting activities which are targeted appropriately for pupils of different abilities. Teachers check on pupils' progress during lessons closely and, where required, provided additional support and challenge to ensure that the momentum of learning is maintained.
- The acting headteacher and assistant headteacher teach the Year 6 class on a shared basis. Teaching in Year 6 is now consistently good and this has helped to raise pupils' attainment in Year 6 to above average.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils

### require improvement

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Inspectors observed pupils' attitudes to learning not being consistently good, which limits the progress they make. Lower-attaining boys, in particular, can lose concentration and do not persevere for the duration of the lesson. This is because teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour are not always high enough and the work which pupils are given is either too difficult or too easy. This means that the level of challenge, especially for those of lower ability, is not always appropriate.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe requires improvement. The school's own survey of pupils' views showed that not all pupils felt safe in school and a small proportion said that they were not confident that adults would sort things out if something went wrong.
- Although pupils say that bullying is rare, the perception of a few pupils, and a small proportion of parents and carers, is that bullying does occur. This is mostly name-calling. However, pupils told inspectors, and this was verified by incident logs, that there have been a few occasions where pupils have felt threatened and injured by other pupils. Parents who were interviewed felt that the acting headteacher is addressing issues relating to pupils' behaviour, and they are confident that behaviour in the school is improving. However, as instances of poor behaviour have not been completely eradicated, pupils' safety is not good.
- Pupils say that incidents of racial and homophobic bullying are rare, which is confirmed by the school's records relating to incidents.
- Attendance rates in 2012-2013 were below average. However, the attendance leadership group has harnessed the support of parents and carers through emphasising the importance of pupils attending regularly. As a result, attendance rates this academic year are improving and are now above average.
- Pupils who do attend regularly are punctual to school. Adults ensure that there is a smooth transition between different parts of the school day. Consequently, lessons can get off to a brisk start.

- Outside lessons, pupils generally behave well. For instance, pupils collaborate well with each other during breakfast club and break-times. Pupils' behaviour in assembly was good because of the high expectations of the acting headteacher. As a result, all pupils benefited from learning and reflecting about the importance and relevance of Shrove Tuesday. Staff, pupils, and parents and carers from the school's own survey tend to agree that the behaviour of the vast majority of pupils is good, despite the fact that the behaviour of a few has caused them concern since the last inspection.

## **The leadership and management** require improvement

- Due to staffing instability, the rate of improvement which was evident at the previous inspection has not been maintained. This has meant that pupils in Key Stage 2, in particular, have not always made the progress they should. The appointment of the deputy (now acting headteacher) and assistant headteacher has brought a determined resolve to improve the quality of teaching and ensure that the pupils in Key Stage 2, who have lost ground, can catch up and reach the standards that they are capable of by the time they leave the school.
- The acting headteacher has recently put in place a more rigorous system for checking on the quality of teaching. Since the last inspection, checks on the quality of teaching have not been frequent enough or provided teachers with clear guidance on how to improve. Teachers appreciate the advice which they have received from senior leaders' visits to lessons. However, senior leaders are aware that they need to draw together the evidence from the scrutiny of pupils' work and information relating to the pupils' achievements to provide teachers with even clearer guidance, individually and collectively, on how they can improve further.
- The acting headteacher has put in place a new system so that governors, senior leaders and those responsible for subjects can check the rates of pupils' progress and attainment across the school. This is helping to identify individual pupils and groups who are underachieving. This information is being used to amend provision. For instance, booster programmes are being used to support pupils who have been identified as having gaps in their knowledge and skills in reading and mathematics. This has helped boys, in particular, to make faster progress. The support provided for those at risk of underachieving is helping to narrow the gap between them and other groups of pupils and is indicative of the school's appropriate approach to promoting equality of opportunity.
- Senior leaders recognise the need to share leadership responsibilities by developing the roles of subject leaders. Although the leader of English has been fully involved in checking on the quality of teaching and securing improvements in the quality of teaching of reading, other leaders of subjects have had few opportunities in which to drive improvements in their areas of responsibility.
- The newly appointed special educational needs co-ordinator is in the process of developing her skills and knowledge in order to carry out her role effectively. Nonetheless, she has quickly put in place revised arrangements for supporting vulnerable pupils and checking on the progress which they make. This is helping these pupils make faster progress than has been typical since the last inspection.
- Governors and senior leaders have ensured that pupil premium funding is targeted appropriately and that they check closely the progress of these pupils as well as their classmates.



- The school has made appropriate use of the school's allocation of the primary school sport funding. A specialist teacher ensures that pupils receive good levels of provision in all aspects of physical education and sport. Staff are beginning to draw upon this expertise to improve their own teaching skills. Pupils are involved in a wide range of competitive and other sports, both during and after the school day. This is contributing to their health and personal well-being. For instance, the school has its own water-polo team, members of which are regularly successful in local competitions.
- Pupils say that they enjoy learning through the topic approach. However, senior leaders acknowledge that there is a need to review the curriculum in order to make sure that pupils can apply their basic skills across a range of subjects as well as make it more engaging for boys. Although pupils have many opportunities to develop their social skills during their time in school, they have a limited awareness and understanding of people who have different faiths and cultures. This limits the extent to which pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted.
- The local authority is providing the school with extensive support following a period of staffing and leadership instability. The local authority advisor has a good understanding of what the school needs to do to strengthen leadership and improve teaching and is brokering appropriate support to help the school to move forward. For instance, teaching and learning consultants are supporting the school to improve provision in literacy.
- The work of the new senior leadership team demonstrates that it has the capacity to secure further improvement. This is because of the recent improvements to teaching and pupils' achievement.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are highly committed and have supported the headteacher in overcoming significant challenges that the school has faced since the last inspection due to leadership and staffing instability and changes. During this time, they challenged the senior leaders regarding pupils' achievements and have been instrumental in putting in place a new structure for the senior leadership team to address the weaknesses. Consequently, a new senior leadership team, comprising the headteacher on her return, and the recently appointed deputy and assistant headteacher, is at the heart of the plan to address the issues for improvement. This is already securing improvements. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses because they regularly visit the school to gather for themselves information which enables them to evaluate the school accurately. Governors have used data to gain a good understanding of pupils' achievements and are able to challenge and hold senior leaders to account for pupils' progress. Governors are involved in setting the strategic direction of the school but are limited in the extent to which they can hold leaders to account for the rate of improvement. This is because of the lack of sharp measures of success in the school's actions plans.
  - Governors review the headteacher's performance and have put in place clear systems for managing the performance of staff, including linking any increases in pay to teachers' performance. Governors and senior leaders ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet current government 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	112530
<b>Local authority</b>	Derbyshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	432300

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	223
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jane Kinsell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ruth Swailes
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 October 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01246 862270
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