

Holbeach Bank Primary School

Holbeach Bank, Spalding, Lincolnshire, PE12 8BX

Inspection dates 14–15 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Although leaders and governors have made significant changes which are improving the school, they have not yet secured consistently good achievement and teaching.
- Subject leaders have not yet had enough impact on improving pupils' use of accurate punctuation and grammar in writing or their mathematical abilities.
- The quality of teaching is not consistently good, so pupils' progress varies too much from one class to another.
- Not enough pupils make good progress in writing and mathematics to reach the higher levels.
- Although work in pupils' books shows that they work hard, their handwriting, grammar and punctuation are not consistently good, and teachers do not regularly correct mistakes.
- Pupils do not always have opportunities to correct or improve their work, following guidance from teachers.
- In the early years provision, teaching does not always ensure that children develop their learning to good levels. The outside area does not support children's learning effectively.
- More able pupils do not always make the progress of which they are capable.

The school has the following strengths

- The executive headteacher and the recently appointed head of school have set high expectations for all pupils and are improving the quality of teaching.
- The school's federation with a local school is enabling teachers to improve their skills quickly.
- Nearly all parents are supportive of the school. They value its recent improvements.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They are keen to learn and get on well with each other. They feel safe and have a good understanding of how to stay safe in different situations.
- The school helps pupils to be prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Governors now support leaders well and are becoming an effective force in making improvements to the school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching in five lessons. Three of these observations were made jointly with the executive headteacher or the head of school. The inspector also observed an assembly.
- The inspector looked carefully at pupils' work, at displays in classrooms and at the records of the progress made by children in Reception.
- The inspector spoke to pupils in lessons and at playtimes. He also interviewed a group of pupils. He listened to a number of pupils read and asked them about their reading habits.
- The inspector read a wide range of school documents, including the school's evaluation of its performance, information about pupils' current and recent progress, planning and monitoring documentation, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding arrangements. The inspector also reviewed the minutes of recent meetings of the governing body.
- The inspector held a meeting with members of the governing body, with senior and middle leaders, and with a representative of the local authority.
- The views of 13 parents were analysed through the Parent View website. The inspector also took account of additional comments made by parents he met informally at the start of the school day.
- The inspector considered the views expressed in questionnaires returned by 10 members of staff.

Inspection team

Stephen Palmer, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Children in the Reception Year attend on a full-time basis.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium, at about a fifth of all pupils, is lower than average. The pupil premium funding is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below average.
- Pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes: class one has Reception and Year 1; class two has Years 2 to 4, and class three has Years 4 to 6.
- The school is in a federation of two schools, who share an executive headteacher but have separate boards of governors. In addition, the school has a recently appointed head of school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing, and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' achievement further by making sure that:
 - teaching consistently makes use of information on pupils' progress to plan work to meet the varied needs of pupils of different ages and abilities in their classes, in particular for the more and most able
 - teachers place enough importance on pupils' handwriting, spelling and grammar
 - pupils can make amendments and improvements to their work following guidance from teachers.
- Improve provision in the early years by ensuring that:
 - teachers and other adults make use of the assessment information they have to plan learning which enables all children to make at least good progress
 - the curriculum continues to be developed to provide a richer and more exciting range of learning activities for the children.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The executive headteacher and the recently appointed head of school have high ambition for the school, and are keen to ensure that the school improves to good levels quickly. After their appointments, they quickly recognised shortcomings in the quality of teaching, and are rigorous in their expectations of teachers. They have also made pupils much more confident about what they can achieve. As a result, pupils' achievement is rising, although it is not yet good enough.
 - Subject leaders are making a good contribution to the improvements in mathematics and English, although this has yet to be translated into consistently good achievement across the school. They regularly check on pupils' progress through checks on pupils' work and termly assessments.
 - Additional funding to support the learning of disadvantaged pupils has been used wisely. It has developed support programmes for these pupils, to improve rates of progress. It has also used some of the funds to enable disadvantaged pupils to participate more in a range of visits and after-school clubs. This is an example of the school's determination to promote equality of opportunity for all pupils. Equality of opportunity is central to the school. The school takes effective action to eliminate any form of discrimination.
 - Self-evaluation is accurate and has led to improvement plans that correctly focus on raising pupils' standards more quickly. The self-evaluation acknowledges that there are still some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, and that, while pupils' achievement has improved, it is still not consistently good.
 - The topics studied by pupils ensure that they develop a love of learning. Opportunities to help pupils develop their understanding of other cultures and beliefs, as well as to understand the values of our society, are woven into the topics so that pupils' social, moral, spiritual, and cultural understanding is well developed. As a result, the pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
 - These topics are well supported by visits. For example, pupils gained a greater understanding of Islam through a visit to a mosque. When working on a topic about the First World War, pupils visited a local castle, where they took on the role of army recruits and learned a great deal about the discipline of army life. This also gave them an opportunity to reflect on themes such as loss and remembrance, as well as the social and moral issues around conflict. Pupils' learning is improving because tasks now often require pupils to combine their knowledge, skills and creativity to meet new challenges. For example, pupils in upper Key Stage 2 have the challenge of developing a small business, and have been given £5 each by an enterprise charity as a starter fund. They will need to provide good ideas, as well as business plans, to make a profit.
 - Leaders are checking on the quality of teaching more regularly because they recognise that it needs to improve to a good level. They use a range of evidence such as observing lessons and analysing pupils' work. Termly checks on the progress being made by pupils identify where improvements still need to be made.
 - The school maintains strong links with parents. It regularly consults with them not only to gauge their level of satisfaction, but also to assess their reaction to proposed improvements. Parents say that they receive good quality information about their child's progress.
 - The school has benefitted from its federation with a larger primary school because it has enabled teachers to spot where improvements still need to be made in their own teaching. The federation was arranged by the local authority, which recognised the need to give the school substantial support from a school which already had good leadership.
 - The extra sports funding has been spent effectively on improving teachers' capacity to deliver high-quality lessons in games and gymnastics. It has also been used to provide a wider range of sporting activities to satisfy pupils' different interests and to enable pupils to participate in competitions with other schools.
 - Statutory safeguarding arrangements are met fully by the school, and child protection systems are rigorous. The school's policies and procedures are well known and understood by all staff.
- **The governance of the school:**
- Governors recognised that they had not been effective enough in the past. They reviewed their membership, their way of working and their training so that they could independently monitor the school's effectiveness and hold leaders to account for the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils.
 - They have higher expectations for the pupils than had been the case, and effectively hold the executive headteacher to account for progress on actions. They also take an active role in planning for improvement. Governors visit the school regularly to check on pupils' progress, and rigorously analyse

the information on pupils' progress provided to them. They are aware of how additional funding is used, and they monitor its impact.

- Governors are aware of the ways that the school checks on the quality of teaching, and have a good understanding of how this is linked to the pay of teachers. They are aware of where weaknesses are, and know what leaders are doing to correct these. They acknowledge that the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement still need to be improved, but are proud that pupils' achievement is improving quickly.
- The governors ensure that the school meets its statutory requirements. They review procedures regularly to ensure that safeguarding procedures are effective and that pupils are kept safe at all times.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are polite and friendly, both to each other and to adults.
- Most pupils show good attitudes towards their learning, and many are proud to show what they know and can do. Many express enthusiasm for the learning opportunities given to them. However, although they take pride in their work and are confident learners, they do not always check their work thoroughly to ensure that it is as good as it can be.
- The systems for managing behaviour are regarded by pupils as fair, and are applied consistently by adults.
- Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities, such as working as Junior Road Safety Officers or as House Captains. Pupils carry out these roles conscientiously and understand their value to the school community.
- Attendance is improving because of the introduction of rewards for good attendance and weekly publication of the attendance record of each class. Attendance is broadly average.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and that they can confide in adults if they have any concerns.
- All those parents who responded to Parent View agree their children are happy and safe at school. This overwhelmingly positive response was mirrored in the school's own questionnaire to parents.
- Pupils who spoke to the inspector think that bullying is very rare and that any issues or concerns will be addressed quickly.
- Pupils are taught about different types of bullying and what they should do if they think they are being bullied. In particular, pupils have a very good awareness of cyber bullying and how to avoid potential risks when using the internet and mobile phones.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because not enough of it is good or better. Teaching has not improved quickly enough, particularly in Years R to 4, so pupils' achievement is not consistently good.
- In some classes, expectations are not high enough, particularly of the most able pupils. Pupils are not always challenged appropriately to enable them to achieve well.
- The teaching of writing requires improvement. Recent initiatives are helping to develop pupils' skills more rapidly, but these have not yet had an enough impact on standards, particularly at the higher levels. Pupils write regularly in English and in other subjects. They are given time to write at length to practise their skills. However, teachers do not always insist that pupils apply their basic grammar, punctuation and spelling skills accurately, so pupils' work does not improve quickly enough.
- Owing to weak mathematics teaching in the past, some older pupils in Key Stage 2 are still making up lost ground, despite the better teaching they now receive. Leaders have taken effective action to improve the teaching of calculation and problem-solving skills, and more pupils make better progress. The most able are being challenged well in Year 6.
- The most able pupils are not challenged well in all classes and so some do not make the rapid gains of which they are capable to achieve the higher levels, particularly in writing.
- Assessment procedures have improved significantly and are now more reliable. However, not all teachers use this information well enough when planning work that will best meet pupils' needs. As a result, in some cases pupils make no more than expected progress.
- The teaching of reading is effective in the Reception and Year 1 class, and this good start is helping more

pupils in later years to achieve well. Teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to read and talk about their learning. Lower-attaining pupils are able to use their knowledge of phonics to read unfamiliar vocabulary and make sense of their reading.

- Leaders have introduced rigorous approaches to marking and feedback to help pupils improve their work. In most cases, teachers remind pupils to respond to this feedback in subsequent work, but some pupils continue to make the same errors with handwriting, presentation and spelling.
- As the quality of teaching is improving, pupils are beginning to achieve more. Progress is best when teachers plan well, ask probing questions and give pupils time to discuss their ideas. However, this high-quality questioning does not happen as much as it should.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because the progress pupils make is not consistently good in all classes. It is better in upper Key Stage 2, but through Years R to 4 it varies too much.
- In 2014, Year 6 pupils' attainment was broadly average. While the proportion of pupils attaining Level 5 in reading was higher than average, no pupil attained this level in writing. There were too few pupils in Year 2 in 2014 to compare their attainment in English and mathematics with that of other pupils without identifying individuals.
- In the current Year 2 and Year 6, almost all pupils make at least expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics. However, a few pupils across all levels of ability make too many errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation. The proportions of pupils attaining the higher levels are rising in reading, writing and mathematics as a result of improvements made by school leaders. Some pupils are still making up for lost ground owing to weaknesses in teaching in previous years.
- The most able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently in their learning. In mathematics, although the most able are being challenged well in upper Key Stage 2, and a few are working towards Level 6, the level of challenge is not consistently high in other classes.
- Achievement in mathematics is improving strongly because the school's focus on teaching calculation and problem-solving skills is beginning to take effect. Pupils enjoy the activities that teachers plan, particularly practical investigations. Occasionally, when pupils of all ability levels start with the same tasks, the level of challenge is not high enough for the most able and too demanding for some. As a consequence, progress is not consistently good for all pupils.
- Phonics are taught well in the early years and in Key Stage 1, and this is helping more pupils to make better progress in their reading in later years; as a result, achievement is increasing. Less able pupils are frequently heard reading by adults, and are well supported. Consequently, these pupils have the confidence to apply their phonics skills to read unfamiliar words, even though they are not yet fluent readers.
- There were too few disadvantaged pupils at the end of Year 6 in 2014 to comment on their achievement in comparison with other pupils nationally without the risk of identifying them. The school's checks show that these pupils are making at least as much progress as their peers, because the support for them has improved.
- The progress made from their different starting points by disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good in some but not all classes. Progress varies because some lesson planning is not well enough adapted to meet their needs. Overall, their progress requires improvement.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- Children enter Reception with knowledge, skills and understanding broadly typical for their age. This year, the proportion expected to reach a good level of development is higher than last year. As a result, they are better prepared for Year 1, but overall only make expected rather than good progress given their starting points.
- Children behave well. They cooperate fully with staff and generally share and take turns. They listen attentively, for example in assembly, and are enthusiastic learners.
- Learning is not well enough planned to ensure that it meets as well as it could the differing needs and interests of the children. Their learning, particularly their work in mathematics and literacy, is planned around a theme, which is currently 'Fairy Tales', but there are often too few challenges for children to develop their skills and understanding as much as possible.
- The outdoor area has not yet been developed well enough for children to experience a sufficiently wide range of activities with which to extend their learning.

- Children’s attainment and progress are monitored and recorded accurately, and are shared effectively with parents. However, this information is not used well enough to plan learning which meets the differing needs of the children, or to ensure that all aspects of their development are well catered for.
- Children who are disabled or have special educational needs achieve in line with their peers.
- Leadership of the early years and the quality of provision for children are improving quickly under additional guidance from the other school in the federation.
- The arrangements for keeping children safe are good.

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	120413
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	464184

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	45
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pamela Elton
Headteacher	Christine Wright (Executive Headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	4 July 2013
Telephone number	01406 423375
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