

Holme Hall Primary School

Taddington Road, Chesterfield, Derbyshire S40 4RL

Inspection dates

24–25 May 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Require improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Boys, who did not achieve a good level of development in Reception, are still not making the progress they should in Year 1. The gap between boys' and girls' achievement is too wide.
- The quality of teaching at key stage 1 is inconsistent. While there are strengths in Year 2 teaching, there are too many weaknesses in Year 1. Expectations of what pupils can and should achieve in this year are too low. Also, assessments of pupils' work are inaccurate.
- Children's progress in early years is too slow. Teachers' planning to accelerate the progress of those in danger of not reaching a good level of development by the end of Reception is not as effective as it could be. The quality of provision outdoors, while improving, does not contribute to children's literacy skills well enough. The deployment of teaching assistants is not always effective.
- Leaders and managers have not ensured that pupils with low attainment in Year 1 have been supported well enough so that they can catch up.
- Leaders have not ensured that the provision in Reception is rigorously monitored and evaluated by specialists of early years.
- Leaders do not evaluate the use of government funding sharply enough.
- The school's wider curriculum, while it is broad and balanced, is not routinely evaluated and planned across the school by leaders. Consequently, leaders are not clear about the curriculum's impact on all pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher, supported by able senior leaders, has brought about demonstrable improvements to the school since the last inspection. In particular, pupils' achievement in mathematics has significantly improved.
- Pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching in key stage 2 in all subjects is improving rapidly.
- The vast majority of pupils behave impeccably. They enjoy school and attend regularly.
- Pupils with special educational needs or disability make good progress and are well supported.
- Parents, staff and pupils are highly supportive of the school.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in Year 1 by:
 - ensuring that those pupils who did not achieve a good level of development in Reception receive high-quality intervention swiftly and regularly
 - moderating teachers' assessments of pupils' work more carefully.

- Improve the quality of provision in the early years foundation stage by:
 - improving the planning for children's next steps to accelerate their progress more quickly
 - develop opportunities in the outdoor area to allow children to extend their imagination and literacy skills, especially writing
 - deploying teaching assistants more effectively for targeted pupils.

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - devising a strategic plan to implement a coherent approach to teaching the spiritual, moral, social and cultural dimensions of the curriculum
 - ensuring the plan, including extra-curricular provision, is effectively monitored and evaluated
 - evaluating the impact of government funding, especially for primary sports provision, more effectively by using sharp success criteria
 - providing more effective specialist support and challenge to improve the provision for pupils in early years and improve weak teaching more quickly in other parts of the school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders and managers have not kept sufficient specialist oversight of the early years provision. Consequently, this key stage requires improvement.
- While leaders have monitored the quality of teaching across the school and identified weaknesses correctly, the work to improve weaker teaching especially in Year 1 has not been successful. As a result, low-attaining boys have not made the progress they should.
- Leaders provide a wide range of opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding but they are not sure how evenly distributed these opportunities are across the school. Some pupils in lower years are not confident about their knowledge of religions and cultures other than their own. Pupils have access to a number of extra-curricular clubs, such as film club and street dance, but leaders do not monitor the attendance of these clubs in order to ensure that all groups of pupils enjoy the benefits of these opportunities.
- Government funding, such as school sports funding and the pupil premium, is used for a wide range of clubs, teaching and learning assistants' support, sports equipment and intervention strategies. However, leaders' understanding of whether they are getting good value for money is limited because the evaluations of the impact of the spending are not rigorous enough; the plans for the way money is spent do not always identify clear intended outcomes or success criteria.
- The headteacher has been pivotal in steering the school forward in many ways. His astute staffing arrangements, commitment to the school's vision and ethos of high aspirations, and his calm and assured leadership of the staff, have led to marked improvements in teaching and pupils' achievements since the last inspection. As a result, pupils' progress in mathematics has improved considerably by the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2. This was a key area for improvement at the last inspection.
- Training and development opportunities for staff are regular and focused. Teachers have opportunities to learn from each other and other practitioners in the cluster of schools in the local area. Consequently, teaching is improving, especially at key stage 2.
- The special educational needs coordinator is knowledgeable and skilled. She has a sound understanding of pupils' needs and ensures the teaching and learning assistants are highly trained. Pupils with special educational needs or disability make good progress as a result.
- The school has developed and implemented the new national curriculum requirements with associated assessment systems smoothly and successfully. Assessment systems are easy to understand and the headteacher has effectively enlisted the support of other schools to monitor and moderate pupils' assessments at key stage 2.
- The headteacher has successfully transformed the school's rewards system. The 'superstars' award scheme relies on pupils achieving certain criteria, such as working as a team, being respectful and working hard, in order for them to reach bronze, silver or gold status. Leaders report that this system has significantly improved behaviour. Pupils highly praise the scheme and wear their stars with pride. There are few incidents of poor behaviour recorded in logs. 'Positive play' approaches and the 'starzone' (special nurture area) have also contributed to better relationships and attitudes across the school.
- Responses to the Ofsted surveys for pupils, staff and parents and further discussions with these groups, indicate that school leaders, especially the headteacher, are highly regarded. One parent described the school as 'like a family'. Evidence shows that parents' concerns are addressed swiftly by leaders.
- The local authority has rightly placed the school in a priority category for support. The quality reviews carried out by the school improvement officer are mostly accurate and provide helpful advice and guidance to leaders and governors about the effectiveness of the school's work. Unfortunately weaknesses in the provision in early years have not been identified until now. This has meant that adequate support has not been put into place. In light of the inspection, the local authority has committed to providing support from an outstanding local practitioner in early years.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The chair and the vice-chair of the governing body are experienced and knowledgeable. They provide the right amount of challenge and support for the school but recognise that there are some areas for improvement in the way they hold leaders to account.
 - Governors have undertaken a governors' skills audit and undertake regular governor training sessions in order to sharpen their practice and improve their monitoring role. They rightly consider external

reviews so that they are not reliant upon what leaders are telling them.

- Governors keep a close eye on pupils' achievement and set challenging and aspirational targets for the school and the headteacher. Their strategic plan demonstrates a good understanding of the school's strengths and priorities.
- Despite the challenges of governing a small school, governors have managed to keep the school's finances in a balanced and healthy state. This is because governors have made astute staffing decisions and have built in contingency plans. The support provided by the pupil premium funding is clearly having a positive impact, as these pupils make good progress. Sports funding is also improving the opportunities pupils have for competing and being involved in fun activity. Government funding is monitored, although governors agree that improved evaluations of the way that these monies are spent would give them greater assurances about value for money.
- Governors keep sound oversight of the school's performance management systems. Pupils' outcomes relate closely to each teacher's targets. The performance of those teachers recommended for pay increases is thoroughly scrutinised.
- Governors are a visible presence in the school and they make themselves available to parents at all school events.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The governor responsible for safeguarding is highly trained and knowledgeable. Consequently, all policies are compliant and statutory duties are diligently adhered to. Leaders take extra care during the process of recruiting new staff. Checks are thoroughly carried out and follow-up questions are asked when necessary. Staff receive good training to recognise the risks facing young people. Referrals made to the designated safeguarding leader (DSL) are always followed up meticulously. Where multi-agency support is required in child protection cases, the DSL keeps meticulous notes and a chronology of the actions taken to support the child and the family. Parents, pupils and staff agree that pupils are safe in the school. The curriculum supports pupils' ability to keep themselves safe. For example, pupils receive cyber bullying, fire and road safety awareness lessons as well as anti-bullying awareness assemblies. Pupils make use of the school's 'worry box' when they want to tell an adult about concerns they have; these are followed up immediately by the headteacher. Older pupils have had the opportunity to discuss some current affairs in relation to extremism and radicalisation, such as the Paris bombings. Open discussions and debates are encouraged in the school. In this way the school is helping pupils to challenge, and raise their awareness of, extremist threats. Teachers and governors have undertaken 'Prevent' training to help them safeguard against the risks of radicalisation and extremism.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching in early years and Year 1 require improvement.
- The quality of teaching in Year 1 has not ensured that pupils who did not achieve a good level of development at the early years phase of their education, make accelerated progress to catch up; these pupils' needs have not been adequately addressed since September.
- Work from lower key stage 1 shows that many boys complete work at a much lower standard of presentation and effort than the rest of the group. Pupils' workbooks show that teachers' expectations of pupils' work is not consistently high for all ability groups.
- In some classes, teaching assistants are frequently assigned to work with the most vulnerable pupils, including those in need of the most support to catch up. This strategy has not always been successful, as some of these pupils, particularly in year 1, have developed poor learning habits over time. Some pupils display uncooperative behaviour towards adults, some off-task behaviour and poor concentration. Teachers' assessments of pupils' work in Year 1 is sometimes over-generous, although leaders have become aware of this through monitoring activities. In key stage 2, pupils' assessments are mostly accurate and moderated effectively.
- The quality of teaching in all subjects in key stage 2, however, is almost consistently good or better. Where support is required, the teachers have taken on board advice and guidance from senior leaders. Relationships in the classroom and pupils' attitudes to learning is positive. Teachers have high expectations of pupils. This ethos has contributed to improved progress at key stage 2.
- The quality of teaching of mathematics is now a strength of the school, especially at key stage 2. Teachers have developed an effective curriculum and teach with confidence and increased sophistication. Teachers use prior assessments to plan their lessons. The most able pupils are often targeted for more

sophisticated questioning during lessons and they complete 'challenge' tasks. In one mathematics lesson, the teacher successfully deepened the thinking of a group of more able pupils by asking them to apply their 'nth term' understanding to plan out an office. After discussions between the pupils they solved the problem confidently.

- Pupils with special educational needs are supported well, especially those with physical disability. The support is mostly undertaken in the main classroom, where pupils follow the same themes as their peers. This strategy has been successful, as these pupils are motivated to complete work just like their classmates. Small groups and intervention groups in the 'starzone' area receive high-quality support and this helps them to return to learning in their classes smoothly and as soon as possible.
- Phonics is mostly taught well across the school. Improved training for staff and effective use of interactive software have contributed to pupils' progress and engagement. The quality of teaching of reading and writing is improving. Pupils use their phonics understanding well to spell out unfamiliar words. Pupils are encouraged to read regularly during 'guided reading' sessions. The library is well stocked with books of different genres, which pupils enjoy. The school encourages pre-school reading to help prepare children for school through the establishment of a pre-school lending library in the community room of the school; this facility is increasingly well used by parents.
- Pupils and parents agree that interesting and meaningful homework is issued regularly. Pupils are able to complete some pieces of work using shared software applications both in school and at home.
- The school has invested heavily in updating digital technology equipment. For example there are now touch screens in every classroom. Pupils have regular computing lessons where they are developing good skills in coding. Pupils are being prepared well for the digital world in which they live and the next stage of their education.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good
- Pupils are kind and considerate towards one another. They are accepting of differences, especially towards those pupils with special education needs or disability.
- Pupils are increasingly confident and articulate. Teachers encourage debate and discussions; this has contributed towards their good oral skills.
- Pupils who responded to the Ofsted survey and those who spoke with inspectors confirm that they engage well with school life and they enjoy the opportunities that are provided to extend their skills and interests. For instance, one pupil spoke enthusiastically about her work in the eco club and another said he loved the after-school street dancing group.
- Pupils are encouraged to learn about others less fortunate than themselves. The school has strong links with a school in The Gambia. Pupils have raised a considerable amount of money for this school through their regular charity and fund-raising work.
- Pupils have a sound grasp of the risks associated with internet use such as cyber bullying and e-safety. Pupils understand fire, road and bicycle safety well. Drug and alcohol use is discussed with older pupils during personal, social and health education lessons. Older pupils also understand some of the issues surrounding extremism because teachers encourage discussions.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is mostly well developed through the curriculum, including extra-curricular activities. The school's enterprise curriculum promotes pupils' economic understanding well; pupils have devised innovative ways to raise funds for charity. Pupils' cultural understanding is encouraged through religious education lessons and assemblies. The local reverend visits the school regularly to talk about aspects of Christianity and pupils have celebrated Chinese New Year. Older pupils show more of an understanding of religions other than Christianity than younger ones. Leaders are not always clear about the effectiveness of religious education coverage throughout the curriculum.
- While the term 'British values' is not routinely used in the school, pupils have developed a good understanding of their responsibilities towards society, their community and each other, through the work the school does to promote these values. Pupils exercise their democratic skills during debates and when pupils hold hustings for school councillor elections. They show sound and tolerant views towards those who may be different to themselves.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good
- Incidents of poor behaviour are few. The school's positive behaviour strategy and the superstar reward system have contributed to improved behaviour since the last inspection. Pupils report that while some bullying does occur, teachers are quick to act. The headteacher reinforces the school's anti-bullying approach regularly in assemblies.
- Pupils' attitudes towards their learning are mostly positive. Very little off-task behaviour was observed. The school's presentation of work policy is mostly adhered to well.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and speak highly of the support they are given by all staff. As a result, attendance rates are high and few sanctions are issued by teachers. There have been no exclusions for several years. Punctuality to school is excellent.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- The outcomes for pupils in the early years require improvement. Too few children are currently making the progress they should to reach a good level of development.
- Low-attaining pupils and boys in particular do not make the progress they should in Year 1 in all subjects, especially literacy. Historically the progress of pupils in key stage 1 has been significantly below national averages for all subjects. While current assessment suggests that pupils' progress is set to improve by the end of key stage 1, pupils' poorer progress in Year 1 means that they will start Year 2 too far behind their age-related expectations; they may be in danger of not catching up by the end of key stage 1.
- The attainment gap in all subjects between boys and girls is wide in Year 1 but improving in all other years. Boys lag behind girls the most in writing across both key stage 1 and key stage 2, although they are currently making better progress so the attainment gaps between boys and girls are narrower than previous years.
- Pupils' reading skills are improving compared to 2015 because of improved phonics teaching. Leaders' introduction of 'non-negotiable' regular reading comprehension sessions have seen significant improvement in boys' reading skills in key stage 2.
- Pupils' achievement in mathematics in 2015 was at or above national levels at key stage 2, although too few pupils achieved more than expected progress. This year, the proportion of pupils on track to reach or exceed age-related expectations is high. There is now little difference between boys' and girls' achievement.
- The most able pupils from early years make good progress by the end of key stage 1. Those exceeding age-related expectations at the end of key stage 1 are also set to make good progress by the end of key stage 2. The proportion of high-ability pupils exceeding age-related expectations is high in mathematics at both key stage 1 and 2.
- Pupils' attainment in grammar, spelling and punctuation in national tests has been historically low compared to national averages at the end of key stage 2. Current attainment information suggests that a much greater proportion of pupils are set to reach age-related expectations from their different starting points in key stage 2.
- Disadvantaged pupils, including those in receipt of pupil premium funding, made accelerated progress in most subjects, apart from grammar, spelling and punctuation in 2015. The attainment gap between these pupils and others nationally has been narrowing in all subjects year on year. These pupils continue to do well this year, and are also improving their grammar, spelling and punctuation skills. In writing and mathematics, their rate of progress is faster than, or the same as, other pupils in the school.
- Pupils with special educational needs or disability make good progress across the school as a result of the effective support they receive.
- Pupils' achievement by the end of key stage 2 in mathematics and English, as well as their well-developed personal and social skills, mean that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education in secondary school.

Early years provision

requires improvement

- While the overall attainment of children in early years improved in 2015, it masked some marked underachievement of boys. For the last three years the proportion of pupils achieving a good level of development, while increasing, has lagged behind national averages. This year the proportion on track to achieve the expected standard at the end of Reception is still low.
- Pupils enter Reception with skills and abilities below those of typical children at the same age. The school's actions to accelerate these pupils' progress has not been effective enough. The progress for some boys has been hindered because sound, well-researched strategies to engage their interest in writing and reading have only recently been employed. Many boys still display poor concentration and underdeveloped language skills compared to those of the girls.
- Sometimes the adult interaction with children, especially with boys, is not as effective at engaging their interest as it could be. Consequently, boys lose interest too easily and flit from one activity to another with little focus.
- The outdoor area is large and is being developed, although currently there are few interesting and stimulating ideas to spark children's interest in reading and writing. Children do not move readily between outdoors and indoors because the door is pulled to or closed. During one observation of the early years provision, inspectors noted that no children were playing outside despite the weather being fine and sunny.
- Teachers' planning for children's next steps in their learning is not always effective. Sometimes the focus is too narrow and does not allow opportunities for other skills to be capitalised upon. Until recently learning activities have been too adult-led and this has hindered the progress of pupils' writing, especially that of the boys. However, staff have since realised that boys especially benefit from exploring their own interests. Notable progress in a few boys' writing skills has occurred but this has only been relatively recent.
- While the quality of teaching is monitored by the headteacher, little or no external evaluation takes place from specialists in early years.
- Girls interact well with the range of play resources on offer. Most sustain their concentration and develop their literacy skills well during role play activities. Both boys and girls enjoy opportunities to practise their number skills both indoors and outdoors because the resources are interesting and adults promote this development successfully.
- The early years leader is diligent and committed to improving the provision for children but has not received the specialist support and challenge needed to accelerate children's progress. She has improved the engagement with parents by developing a very successful system for reporting to parents. Parents value the weekly emails and photographic evidence of their child's progress and experiences.
- Tracking records of children's progress are meticulously kept by the early years leader, although the moderation of children's assessments is mostly carried out internally. Current assessments of children's strengths and weaknesses are broadly accurate.
- Children are safe, happy and well cared for in the Reception. Staff understand each child's emotional and additional needs very well. As a result, the children are trusting and friendly.

School details

Unique reference number	112772
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10009115

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	133
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tim Bradley
Headteacher	Paul Hüsken
Telephone number	01246 237 075
Website	www.holmehallprimaryschool.co.uk
Email address	info@holmehall.derbyshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12–13 February 2014

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average primary school.
- The majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability, including those with statements or education, health and care plans is higher than average.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There is a children's centre attached to the school premises. This is not run by the school's governing body and is inspected separately. There is a before- and after-school club in nearby premises. This provision is privately run and not overseen by the governing body.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classes. Most observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher or other senior leaders. Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work and talked with them about their learning.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, two senior leaders – one of whom was also the special educational needs coordinator, the early years leader, two governors, including the vice-chair of governors and the senior school improvement adviser for Derbyshire. The lead inspector also interviewed the chair of the governing body by telephone. A group of teaching assistants were interviewed.
- Pupils were formally interviewed from each year group across key stage 1 and 2.
- Inspectors took account of parents' views by speaking informally with them in the playground on arrival and from the 43 responses to Ofsted's survey, Parent View. Inspectors also evaluated seven staff and seven pupils' responses from the Ofsted survey.
- Inspectors evaluated the school's self-evaluation documentation. They checked other school documentation on attendance and behaviour and looked closely at records of assessment of pupils' progress and those relating to safeguarding. They looked at records of governing body meetings and how the school manages staff performance.

Inspection team

Zarina Connolly, lead inspector

Janet Satchwell

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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