

Holly Spring Junior School

Lily Hill Road, Bullbrook, Bracknell RG12 2SW

Inspection dates

13–14 July 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	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have not ensured that teaching is good. Their monitoring of teaching and pupils' progress is not accurate enough to give them a full picture of what is working well and what needs to improve. As a result, staff training lacks the focus it needs. The impact of training is lessened by high staff turnover in some year teams.
- Middle leaders are not making as much impact as they should on teaching, or being held to account for their effectiveness in this aspect of their roles.
- In some subjects, leaders have not managed the transition well to the revised national curriculum and new key stage 2 assessments this year.
- Teachers do not have a good enough awareness of national curriculum requirements, particularly in mathematics and reading, to plan learning comprehensively and set high expectations. This means that there are gaps in pupils' mathematical knowledge and they do not read fluently.
- Staff do not consistently expect that pupils' work is well presented.
- Pupils' achievement in reading and mathematics is not consistently good and has fallen compared with previous years. Year 6 pupils underachieved in assessments this term compared with the school's expectations. Pupils in other years are also not achieving enough in reading and mathematics.
- Teachers do not adapt activities in lessons well enough when pupils are not fully challenged by their learning or are not making good progress over time.
- The needs of different groups of pupils are not consistently well met. Disadvantaged pupils and those of higher ability are not achieving their full potential, notably in reading and mathematics.
- Governors' oversight of the school has not been effective enough in monitoring the full range of pupils' academic progress. This includes ensuring that extra funding for disadvantaged pupils boosts their achievement.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders are effective in ensuring that some areas of pupils' learning, such as writing, are effective and that work to support pupils' personal development and behaviour is good.
- Pupils attend regularly and enjoy school. They like the curriculum, which includes a wide range of arts opportunities and interesting and relevant
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They have a good understanding of the values of the school and contribute well to their community.
- Staff are enthusiastic and there is some good teaching where pupils do well. The teaching of writing is better than reading or mathematics.

topics.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the impact of leadership and management on teaching by ensuring that:
 - leaders monitor pupils' progress and the quality of teaching more securely so they can better target staff training on what really matters
 - curriculum requirements, including in reading and mathematics, are thoroughly understood by staff and applied to their planning of pupils' learning
 - middle leaders' roles and accountability for making improvements to teaching is made clear to them
 - governors' monitoring of pupils' achievement is based on more rigorous challenge to leaders over their evaluations of progress, notably for the disadvantaged pupils.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that teachers:
 - have higher expectations of what pupils will achieve and a better knowledge of national curriculum content, especially in reading and mathematics, to inform their planning
 - enable pupils to develop better reading skills to underpin both their enjoyment of reading and their understanding and comprehension of written questions
 - plan learning which effectively meets pupils' varying learning needs so groups such as the disadvantaged and the most able make good progress over time
 - check pupils' progress more effectively during their learning activities and adapt them where the pace lessens
 - support pupils in improving the presentation of their work.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management **requires improvement**

- Over the last two years, the headteacher and other senior leaders have not placed enough emphasis on preparing for the significant changes in curriculum and assessment arrangements for schools nationally. This has led to curriculum planning and assessment which has not ensured that pupils learn all they need to, and have their progress securely monitored in all subjects. Leaders have high expectations for pupils' achievement and are determined to learn from weaker pupils' outcomes this year to move the school forward.
- Leaders' monitoring and evaluation of the school's work is accurate in some respects but not as accurate as it needs to be in relation to teaching. Work to improve teaching has not made enough difference overall, although there has been an impact in some classes and in developing the teaching of writing.
- Leaders' evaluations of teaching, coupled with assessment of pupils' progress over time, do not pinpoint which aspects of teaching need to improve. The impact of staff training is also dissipated by high staff turnover, with four new teachers starting this year. Performance management and training of staff ensures that there is no inadequate teaching, but not that there is enough which is good.
- There are examples of more effective monitoring by leaders. At the start of the year, the headteacher and staff identified that a significant number of Year 3 pupils, and some pupils joining into Year 6, required additional support to behave well. They accurately diagnosed the main issues, put effective measures in place and matters improved, bringing the school back onto an even keel.
- Middle leaders' impact on teaching is not effective enough. They are keen to improve it in their subjects. They carry out work scrutiny and observe teaching, providing feedback to staff. However, they do not evaluate their impact sharply enough by checking if pupils' achievement improves. It is not clear enough how they are held accountable by senior leaders for improving teaching.
- The curriculum has a mixed impact on pupils' learning. The pupils thoroughly enjoy the wider curriculum, including science and the arts – a key reason why most like coming to school and attend well. Parents noted this. Pupils reflected on how much they had enjoyed a recent arts week. A good range of extra-curricular activities, such as dance and a school garden, are offered.
- The curriculum does not ensure good coverage of the skills and knowledge required in all areas of English and mathematics. While there are good opportunities for pupils to develop writing, the same cannot be said for reading. Pupils are not systematically offered more challenging tasks as they are ready for them. In mathematics, pupils' experience of the different aspects of the subject is patchy with gaps in their knowledge which are not filled as fully as they need to be.
- Pupils enjoy studying different faiths and cultures, and respond well to opportunities to study subjects such as philosophy. Experiences like this contribute well to pupils' cultural and spiritual growth. They demonstrate good social and moral development, and are ready for life in diverse modern Britain.
- Leaders' analysis of pupil premium spending to support pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds lacks precision in finding what is most effective. The majority of funding is used for additional pastoral support, or to support teaching in lessons, but does not make enough impact on their learning.
- Additional physical education and sport premium funding is used well to broaden the range of activities on offer and increase the numbers of pupils taking them up.
- Ensuring that most-able pupils made better progress was an issue identified for improvement in the last inspection. Leaders have focused considerable attention on this and up to this year had some success in ensuring that these pupils' progress improved, for example in writing. However, alongside other pupils, leaders are not ensuring that this group is fully challenged by the curriculum and by teaching.
- The school works with varying degrees of effectiveness with a range of external partners. The local authority has provided a relatively low level of support. This has been well targeted at supporting the school in its work on behaviour, but has been less effective in enabling the school to develop robust teaching, assessment and curriculum planning. School leaders are aware that, although they have worked with other schools to check their assessment approaches, this work is not as effective as it needs to be.

■ The governance of the school

- Governors recognise that, while they are passionate and motivated to support the schools' leaders to do a good job, they are not challenging leaders enough over pupils' academic progress. They visit, attend meetings and receive a wide range of information from the schools' leaders about how well the school is doing. In areas such as pupils' behaviour and safeguarding, they are effective in making sure that the school takes the right steps to keep pupils safe and behaving well. Where they are less effective is in testing the evidence they are given about pupils' progress. They monitor the impact of additional sport funding effectively, but not the impact of pupil premium funding.
- Arrangements for safeguarding are strong. School policies are effective and are carried out in practice. Staff vetting checks at the point of employment are secure, as they are for volunteers and temporary staff. Entry arrangements for visitors are robust. Because they are well trained, staff know what to do in the event of safeguarding issues. Communications with parents and external agencies such as social services are managed well, and parents are positive about the culture of safety in the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment **requires improvement**

- Too little teaching makes a good impact on pupils' learning. The quality of teaching is inconsistent across the school. Practice is weaker in Year 3 and in Year 6, in part caused by staff changes, and in the teaching of reading and mathematics generally. There is no doubt about teachers' commitment and passion but this is not being harnessed well by leaders. Teachers do not consistently expect enough of pupils.
- Teachers' assessment of pupils' achievement is not precise enough to ensure that they plan tasks which are well matched to pupils' needs and fill gaps in their learning. Teachers' awareness of revised national curriculum requirements lacks the precision needed in reading and mathematics to help them plan learning well.
- The assessment and teaching of reading lacks precision. In some classes, pupils were well aware of how their reading was developing, of useful strategies to adopt and how to check books were at an appropriate level. However, this was not consistent, leading to pupils' patchy achievement in reading.
- Staff training has been more effective in helping teachers plan and assess progress in writing. As a result, achievement is better than in other areas. Nevertheless, teachers do not always insist on good presentation and spelling, and this hinders pupils from doing even better.
- Teachers' subject knowledge has areas of strength. Pupils say teachers are usually good at explaining things to them and give good feedback on their work, on which most follow up. However, in too many lessons, pupils are unclear what they are trying to achieve or how they will know they are making good progress.
- In lessons, teachers are not routinely sharp enough at identifying when the pace of learning slackens. As a result, they do not adjust activities to get learning back on track.
- The impact of additional booster classes and interventions for pupils who have fallen behind or have special educational needs and/or disabilities is not good enough to ensure that they catch up to where they need to be.
- Teachers have a good awareness of the different groups of pupils in their classes, such as the most able and the disadvantaged. While they want these pupils to do well, they do not typically ensure that activities are well targeted and make the necessary impact so these pupils achieve all they should.
- Teachers and support staff enjoy good relationships with pupils and manage their behaviour well. Teaching assistants are particularly good at enabling pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties to participate in lessons. Where they are less effective is in making sure that these pupils achieve well so as to make the most of their improved behaviour.

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 happy and feel safe at school. They explained to inspectors that they enjoy coming to school, and their parents noted this too. This is evident in lessons where most pupils want to learn and do well.

- Staff provide good levels of nurture and care for pupils who are vulnerable, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils spoke appreciatively of 'the den' where they go if they have any concerns or need support from staff. This provision reflects the school's determination to foster pupils' emotional well-being.
- The school environment is pleasant with large open external spaces, plenty for pupils to do at breaks and vigilant staff. Pupils know there is always someone watching over them. Notwithstanding this, older pupils spoke maturely about how they learn to stay safe for themselves and how the school supports this. They know what to do if worried about others' behaviour, including strangers', and how to be safe online.
- Pupils are alert to the different forms that bullying can take, including online, and are confident in the support they receive from staff if they encounter it. They do not accept derogatory language, and are supported well by staff in this.
- The school provides good opportunities for pupils to make a difference and contribute, such as through the school council. Inspectors were impressed by the pupils' pride in the 'Holly Spring Spirit' where, as one pupil said, 'We behave like the kind of people Ms Donkin hopes we will be.' Pupils show good levels of care and understanding for each other and others outside the school, for example writing letters to the Prime Minister expressing concern over the plight of people in Syria.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Attendance is above the national average. Staff are effective at supporting pupils and their families where concerns emerge.
- Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They follow the school rules and teachers' expectations, and seek to make good use of their learning time. Disruption in lessons is rare and pupils note that the school's rewards and sanctions system works well. Pupils were seen being awarded points for good learning, but also for holding doors open, and clearly valued these.
- Behaviour observed in an assembly was good, with the great majority of pupils listening well and participating. A small minority of pupils lost focus, as they do in lessons, when the content did not challenge them.
- Pupils learn to take care of the school environment and each other. Displays of work are of high quality and are respected by pupils, as is equipment used at breaktimes and practical resources such as in the music room. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are respected by other pupils.
- At the start of this academic year, the school had to work hard with new pupils who arrived with significant behavioural difficulties. Staff worked skilfully with these pupils, their families and other local services to improve matters so that a spike in behavioural incidents and exclusions has fallen back to the school's normal low pattern.
- Parents are very positive about the school's work in supporting good behaviour. One said, 'This school has done so much for my son,' and another, referring to her daughter, said, 'I don't know how they do it but she loves school now and she didn't before she came here.'

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- From their different starting points overall, pupils are not making good enough progress to fulfil their potential across the full range of subjects. Progress across year groups and subjects is not strong enough to ensure that pupils are well prepared for secondary education. Overall standards in English and mathematics are below average. In key areas like reading and mathematics, pupils are not building the secure knowledge and skills they need, with too many gaps in what they know.
- Pupils' progress in writing is good overall with the proportion reaching the expected level being in line with that nationally. However, some weaknesses in spelling, punctuation and presentation are holding pupils back from making even better progress.
- Pupils' below-average attainment in reading undermines their enjoyment of reading as an activity itself, but also hampers them when tackling tasks accessed through reading. For example, pupils make less progress when mathematics problems have to be reached by interpreting a written question. They are much stronger in arithmetical activities set out so the work is more readily accessible.
- Pupils make good progress in practical and arts-based activities where they engage directly with materials and do not have to read and interpret before starting work.

- The progress of the most able pupils is not consistently good enough. They make good progress when work is challenging and teachers' expectations are high. This is more commonly evident when writing, both in English lessons and in other subjects. Too often, not enough is expected of them and they underachieve.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils is not consistently good enough. The outcomes of key stage 2 tests for current Year 6 pupils were below those expected overall and for this group in reading and mathematics. They did well in writing. Generally, the gap between disadvantaged pupils' achievement and others in the school and nationally is not closing, most notably in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make inconsistent progress. This is because the emphasis of the school's work is often on their participation in class rather than ensuring that these pupils are fully challenged by the work they do.

School details

Unique reference number	109806
Local authority	Bracknell Forest
Inspection number	10000779

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	285
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Urban
Headteacher	Trisha Donkin
Telephone number	01344422367
Website	www.hollyspringjunior.co.uk
Email address	office@hollyspringjunior.net
Date of previous inspection	21–22 September 2011

Information about this school

- This is a slightly larger than average junior school where the majority of pupils are White British. It has grown steadily in size in recent years and now has three classes in all, apart from Year 6.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and for children looked after) is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with that found nationally.
- The school meets the current government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 23 lessons or part-lessons across all year groups. Some lessons were jointly observed with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, other staff and governors.
- Inspectors took account of the seven responses to the confidential questionnaire from staff and spoke to a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors evaluated documents including the school development plans, minutes of meetings, reports of attendance and behaviour, and records related to pupils' safety and academic progress.
- Inspectors scrutinised books in lessons and a sample of Year 4 and 6 pupils' books and listened to pupils read.
- Pupils' behaviour was observed at break and lunchtimes and around the school.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils both informally and in two meetings.
- Inspectors took into account the 92 responses from parents on Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.

Inspection team

Stephen Long, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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Mo Galway	Ofsted Inspector
Ann McCarthy	Ofsted Inspector

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