

Holloway School

Hilldrop Road, London, N7 0JG

Inspection dates

10, 12 and 13 January 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
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

- Outcomes have declined since the last inspection, particularly in English and humanities. Pupils, from their different starting points, are not making typically good or better progress over time in enough subjects.
- The most able, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are not making the progress of which they are capable.
- Teaching is not routinely challenging enough. It does not encourage pupils to think deeply about their learning. Work is not sufficiently well-matched to the different abilities of pupils.
- Pupils' spelling, grammar and punctuation skills, particularly those of boys, are not good. Teachers do not typically develop these skills in pupils through their teaching. This is preventing pupils from writing accurately and confidently.
- The reading scheme in key stage 3 is not effectively developing pupils' reading skills, including for the most able pupils.
- Leaders have an over generous view on the quality of teaching. This is because they do not focus enough on evaluating pupils' progress when observing learning.
- Senior leaders and governors do not sufficiently use pupils' outcomes over time to inform their judgements on the quality of teaching. This includes reflecting pupils' starting points.
- Leaders and governors do not evaluate the impact of pupil premium expenditure rigorously. This is particularly so for the most able disadvantaged pupils and those that need to catch up in Year 7.
- Boys do not show the same enthusiasm and willingness to learn as girls. This results in some low-level disruption, particularly when teachers ask pupils to work individually or in groups. Not all teachers consistently apply the school's behaviour for learning policy.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has had a clear impact on improving aspects of the school's work, such as behaviour. The headteacher holds staff to account for the quality of their teaching.
- Pupils are well cared for. They know how to stay safe, both inside and outside of school.
- Outcomes in languages and science have been typically above national averages over time.
- Attendance is above the national average for all groups of pupils. Pupils enjoy coming to school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - leaders at all levels evaluate effectively the impact of teaching on how well pupils are learning and making progress in developing their subject knowledge, skills and understanding
 - leaders at all levels track and monitor the progress being made by different groups of pupils from their starting points
 - school policies are consistently applied, particularly with regard to behaviour for learning, literacy and teaching, learning and assessment
 - leaders and governors routinely evaluate the impact of pupil premium funding, particularly on the progress of the most able disadvantaged pupils and those that need to catch up in Year 7
 - leaders rigorously monitor and evaluate the impact of the reading scheme at key stage 3, particularly for the most able readers.
- Improve outcomes for pupils including the most able, particularly in English and humanities, through ensuring that teachers:
 - have the highest expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving
 - provide pupils with challenging learning activities that make them think at a deeper level and suit their different starting points
 - actively teach and promote pupils' spelling, grammar and punctuation skills across the school.

An external review of the school's use of 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

- The headteacher has been in post since June 2015. Since his appointment, he has effectively steered the school through a period of turbulence, including a number of teachers leaving the school. The headteacher is appointing new staff, but there are still vacancies in certain subjects as well as in middle leadership. Therefore, the quality and capacity of middle leadership is developing.
- The headteacher has been swift to prioritise the areas of the school that needed to improve, particularly behaviour, literacy and outcomes in subjects including English and humanities. The headteacher has rightly sought external support through his work with a local outstanding school and the local authority to put in place a strategic improvement plan for English. This is helping to raise standards. The headteacher has the confidence of parents, pupils and staff.
- Leaders have a generous view on the quality of teaching. This is because leaders are not accurately evaluating learning in lessons and there is too much emphasis on monitoring routines. Consequently, leaders are not evaluating the extent to which pupils make gains in their subject knowledge, skills and understanding. Leaders are not effectively judging the quality of teaching over time through monitoring progress from pupils' different starting points, including for the most able disadvantaged pupils.
- There is too much inconsistency in the quality of teaching and teachers do not routinely follow school policies. This is particularly the case for literacy, behaviour and teaching and learning. For example, teachers are too slow or inconsistent in their use of the 'four-point behaviour plan' to deal quickly with any low-level disruption. Similarly, with the literacy policy, for example, teachers do not typically identify and correct pupils' spelling, grammar and punctuation mistakes. This limits their progress in these key literacy skills.
- Leaders are working hard to drive improvement; however, they do not always accurately evaluate new initiatives or the impact these initiatives are having on the quality of teaching. For example, staff do not systematically monitor the impact of the reading scheme at key stage 3 and whether the books that are being read by pupils best meets their needs.
- The lack of accurate self-evaluation about teaching is preventing leaders from fully understanding which strategies are working and which are not. As a result, actions to refine plans and make changes are not swiftly prioritised.
- The curriculum is developing well. Leaders have prioritised ensuring that the key stage 4 curriculum is meeting the needs of pupils through changes to the 'options' process and an improved range of appropriate courses from which pupils can choose. Leaders are aware that the current time allocated for pupils to study the creative arts and design and technology subjects at key stage 3 is limiting opportunities to develop their creative and technical skills. To help address this, pupils benefit from a range of extra-curricular activities including in the arts.
- Leaders are not monitoring the impact of pupil premium expenditure with enough rigour. This is particularly the case for the most able disadvantaged pupils, who make

up the vast majority of the most able group and those pupils in Year 7 who need to catch up quickly. This is preventing leaders from knowing which strategies are working well and which are working less well.

- Leadership of special educational needs is effective. Case studies show that leaders know pupils well and use funding to make sure that the needs of these pupils, including those with education, health and care plans, are met. However, leaders are rightly aware that teachers are not routinely ensuring that classroom activities are well-matched to the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Leaders use funding for alternative provision well. A range of providers is used and leaders monitor their impact carefully. This has helped to reduce significantly the number of pupils who are at risk of not being in education, training or employment.
- The headteacher has ensured that the management of teachers' performance is robust. There is no shying away from making difficult decisions. Teachers, including those new to the profession, are clear that they feel well supported and that the support on offer and training provided is helping to improve their teaching and leadership.
- Leaders have had a direct impact on improving the personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils. This is evidenced in a range of ways: from pupil feedback, through the reduction in the number of exclusions and behaviour incidents, as well as the fact that all groups of pupils have above national average rates of attendance.
- The school delivers opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development in a variety of ways. This includes assemblies, learning guidance and personal, social and health education. Recent topics include: 'the job of a Member of Parliament', 'healthy relationships', 'our community' and 'peer pressure'. Pupils, particularly at key stage 3, value the range of trips they have had to promote their cultural development. Leaders rightly acknowledge that SMSC is not embedded enough across the curriculum. The reduction in behavioural incidents and the improvements in positive behaviour reflect pupils' improving moral development. Pupils are typically well-prepared for life in modern Britain.

Governance of the school

- Governors provide challenge to the school. This is evidenced, for example, in relation to the school's work to improve reading and governors' discussions on the previous rates of high exclusions. They have a broadly accurate view of the school's work and are aware of the key subjects and groups of pupils where outcomes are not good enough.
- Governors hold school leaders to account and the school's systems for managing performance are robust.
- In some aspects of governance, it is not always clear how governors follow up on their discussions and revisit the impact of school leaders' work in subsequent meetings/visits. This includes reviewing the impact of pupil premium expenditure.
- Governors have welcomed external support for the school, including working with a local outstanding school in a formal 'strategic partnership agreement'. This is helping to improve strategic leadership, including in English. The local authority helped organise this partnership and also helps the school to support its newly qualified teachers.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have established an open culture where the impact of staff training is ensuring that staff know what they have to do if they have any concerns about a pupil's welfare. The 'well-being centre' is providing strong support to pupils who need help to develop their self-esteem and/or improve their behaviour. Pupils report that they know how to stay safe, including when online. Pupils say that adults in the school are supportive and follow through when any concerns are reported, such as in relation to bullying.
- School leaders carefully follow local authority protocols in dealing with any pupils who attend or leave the school during the academic year or who undertake any education in alternative provision. The school's care and support for vulnerable pupils is secure. All pre-employment checks meet statutory requirements.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching does not routinely challenge pupils in their learning. It is not ensuring that pupils have to think at a deep enough level. Pupils told inspectors that work is often too easy, including at key stage 3 where they felt there is repetition of work that they did at primary school.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving. Consequently, activities are not typically challenging enough, particularly when taking into account the different abilities of pupils. This holds back the progress of the most able pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Pupils' literacy skills, specifically in reading and in relation to their spelling, grammar and punctuation skills, are not good enough. Boys, in particular, are not writing accurately and confidently enough for their age. Teachers do not systematically develop these skills in lessons. The school's reading programme at key stage 3 is not sufficiently meeting the needs of pupils, including the most able. This group of pupils are reading books that are not challenging enough. As a result, their progress in reading is limited.
- Teachers generally have a strong understanding of their subject. This strong subject knowledge is not always used to ensure that pupils learn as much as they could.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are strong. This helps maintain a positive ethos to lessons and most pupils respond well to the positive attitude of their teachers.
- Homework provision is well-organised. Parents report, through school surveys, that they are happy with the amount of homework set.
- Where teaching is most effective, teachers use their subject knowledge to target questions that probe pupils' understanding and teachers also adapt their materials to extend the challenge for the most able. This was seen in a mathematics lesson where pupils had to use their understanding of proportions and think carefully about how to apply this in order to solve more complicated problems. In a science lesson, the teacher's probing questions and rigorous content were used to ensure that pupils were

well-challenged in their learning about atomic structures.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Some pupils have not reached a level of personal development where they take responsibility for their own learning and reflect on the impact of their attitude towards learning on others, as well as themselves. This is more prevalent with boys.
- Pupils benefit from effective careers information, advice and guidance. Pupils, for example those currently in Year 9, feel well-supported during the options process at the end of Year 8. There are numerous opportunities for pupils to learn about careers, including Year 10 'presenting yourself day'.
- The school's work, including its use of alternative provision, has significantly reduced the number of pupils at risk of not being in education, training or employment. Pupils who attend alternative provision are well-supported to make progress on the courses they are studying.
- The school's work on educating pupils on how to say safe is effective. Pupils report that they are aware of the different types of bullying and that the school's systems are supportive. School leaders track and monitor incidents carefully. School records show that incidents of bullying, including homophobic bullying, are declining.
- Pupils feel safe at school and know how to keep themselves safe, both inside and outside of school. The culture of the school is one where staff report any issues quickly and these issues are taken seriously. The school has a strong sense of community.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils, particularly boys, have not developed sufficiently positive attitudes to learning. Boys need more cajoling from their teachers. When the teacher's choice of learning activities requires pupils to work on their own or in groups, boys, in particular, become chatty and lose focus. It is at this point that teachers do not consistently follow the school's behaviour for learning policy.
- When pupils have an adult supervising their lesson who is not their normal subject teacher, behaviour worsens.
- When teaching lacks challenge and is not demanding enough, pupils come off task. When teaching meets the needs of pupils and makes them think, pupils remain focused and on task.
- Rates of exclusion are high, but falling quickly. The headteacher raised expectations last year about what behaviour is acceptable and what is not. Pupils report that behaviour is improving. Behaviour around the school is typically calm and orderly.

- Uniform standards are high. Pupils look smart and are polite and friendly.
- Attendance overall and for all groups is above the national average. The school's pastoral systems are effective and pupils enjoy coming to school.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Provisional outcomes for 2016, particularly in English and humanities, show that pupils, overall and from different starting points, underachieved. In 2015, overall progress was significantly below the national average. The proportion of pupils gaining a grade C or above in both English and mathematics was significantly below the national average for pupils with middle- and higher-ability starting points.
- Progress in mathematics in 2016 for pupils who have lower- and middle-ability starting points was in line with the national average. This is similar to 2015, when overall progress for pupils from differing starting points was in line with the national average.
- At the school, the vast majority of the most able pupils are, in fact, most-able disadvantaged pupils. These pupils underachieved in most subjects in 2016. Leaders are not evaluating the impact of pupil premium expenditure on the progress of this group of students effectively enough across the school and, as a result, these pupils are not being helped to make more rapid progress.
- Differences in the achievement of disadvantaged pupils from lower- and middle-ability starting points, both overall and in mathematics, were small when compared to similar groups of pupils nationally. In some subjects, these groups of pupils made better progress than others nationally. The most able disadvantaged pupils significantly underachieved in comparison to their peers nationally.
- The reading programme at key stage 3 is not yet securing good outcomes for pupils, including the most able. Pupils are not routinely reading books that are challenging enough.
- Outcomes in modern foreign languages and science have typically been above the national average over time, including for most groups of pupils. Pupils from a Black or Black British ethnic origin also achieved well in 2016.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (from the support category) made strong progress compared to other pupils nationally. The number of pupils with education, health and care plans is too small to make national comparisons. Leaders were able to demonstrate through several case studies that pupils are well-prepared for the next steps in their education, including in promoting their independence and self-esteem.
- Current assessment information provided by the school, including for key stage 3, shows that progress, including for the most able pupils, is accelerating, including in English. School leaders have checked teacher assessments to ensure that they are accurate. While there are some variations in the quality of teaching and its impact on progress, current pupils are making gains in their subject knowledge, skills and understanding. The progress being made by pupils is not yet good overall.

School details

Unique reference number	100453
Local authority	Islington
Inspection number	10023724

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	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	793
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rob Hull
Headteacher	John Dixon
Telephone number	020 76075885
Website	www.holloway.islington.sch.uk
Email address	postbox@holloway.islington.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	16–17 May 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is a smaller-than-average sized secondary school. There are more boys than girls in each year group.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average, overall. The school has a higher proportion of pupils who have education, health and care plans compared to the national average.
- Pupils attending the school have significantly below average prior attainment from their primary school education.
- The school has entered into a 'strategic partnership' with a local outstanding school.

This is focused on improving leadership capacity in subjects such as English and other strategic areas of the school's work.

- A number of pupils attend registered alternative provision at New River College; Camden Centre for Learning; Queensgate College; 'Enter CIC'; Westminster Kingsway College; 'The Complete Works'; The Boxing Academy; Academy 21; and The College of Haringey, Enfield and North London.
- The school currently meets the government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team visited a range of lessons in different subject areas and in different year groups. Several of these visits were undertaken jointly with school leaders. Inspectors also looked at the work in books of pupils from different groups in different subject areas.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders to evaluate the impact of their work. Meetings were also held with members of the governing body, newly qualified teachers, staff and different groups of pupils. An inspector had a meeting with two local authority representatives.
- There were no replies to the staff or pupil surveys. There were not enough replies to Parent View, Ofsted’s questionnaire, to provide a meaningful analysis. Inspectors took account of a variety of school surveys from parents and pupils, including surveys that related to the impact of initiatives implemented by the school.
- Inspectors scrutinised a variety of documentation provided by the school, including: information for 2016 provisional outcomes and pupils currently at the school, self-evaluation, improvement plans, minutes of meetings, attendance and behaviour information, case studies, the single central record of recruitment checks and other information relating to the safeguarding of pupils.

Inspection team

Sam Hainey, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Vanessa Ward	Ofsted Inspector
Robin Hammerton	Ofsted Inspector
Dame Joan McVittie	Ofsted Inspector
Sunday Ellis	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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