

Hillborough Infant School

Hillborough Road, Luton, Bedfordshire LU1 5EZ

Inspection dates

20–21 April 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher is a strong and effective leader. She has a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The headteacher has ensured that the school is now improving.
- The headteacher is supported well by the school's other leaders. They share a common vision for the school and are increasingly effective in their individual roles.
- Pupils make good progress in reading, writing, mathematics and a wide range of other subjects during their time at the school. Attainment has been above the national average for several years.
- Pupils behave very well. They know the school's rules and they follow them consistently. Teachers and teaching assistants manage pupils' behaviour very effectively.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and feel safe. There is very little bullying at the school and, when bullying does happen, it is dealt with effectively.
- The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. Relationships between pupils and teachers are highly effective and classrooms are positive and productive places as a result.
- Governors are knowledgeable about the school and supportive of its staff and leaders.
- Governors do not offer sufficient challenge to the school's leaders and are not fully effective in holding leaders to account.
- Phonics teaching is not fully effective. Although improving, outcomes in the phonics screening check remain below the national average. Too many pupils do not apply their phonics skills in their writing.
- Attendance is below the national average.
- Leaders do not track the progress that pupils make closely enough.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of phonics teaching, so that more pupils make rapid progress, by:
 - developing and extending teachers' and teaching assistants' subject knowledge
 - ensuring that phonics sessions have clear objectives and are well structured
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their phonics skills in their writing.
- Reduce absence and persistent absence to at least the national average, including for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Improve the effectiveness of governance by ensuring that governors routinely challenge the school's leaders in order to better hold them to account.
- Ensure that leaders track the progress that pupils make in order to check more systematically that:
 - measures put in place to support pupils are fully effective
 - groups of pupils are making the good progress that they should.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher has developed a very thorough and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. She has taken prompt and effective action to address the most important areas requiring development and, as a result, the school is now improving.
- The headteacher is supported well by the deputy headteacher and the school's other leaders. Subject leaders are competent and confident in their roles. They work well together and have a good understanding of the school's priorities for development.
- Parents are very positive about the school. They feel that their children are safe and happy. Parents say that staff are approachable and that they feel they can talk to teachers whenever they have concerns or questions. Parents commented on how well pupils are prepared for the move to junior school.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is led effectively. The special educational needs coordinator knows individual pupils well and ensures that their needs are met. Additional funding is used appropriately to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress.
- The pupil premium grant is spent effectively. The additional funding is used in a wide range of ways to address the barriers to learning that the school has identified. For example, some of the funding has been used to ensure that disadvantaged pupils achieve well in phonics.
- The primary physical education and sport premium is spent effectively. The funding has been used to provide specialist coaching, provided through a local sports partnership. This has resulted in improved planning and delivery of physical education lessons. The school has found that pupils are now more interested in, and enthusiastic about, physical education. The school has also had more success in sports competitions. For example, pupils recently won a local street-dancing competition.
- The school's curriculum is suitably broad and balanced, covering all the subjects in the national curriculum. Some areas of the curriculum, including English, mathematics, science and computing, are taught as separate subjects. The rest of the curriculum is taught using a topic-based approach. The school has found that this approach is successful in encouraging good attitudes to learning and in capturing pupils' interest.
- The school focuses well on ensuring that it provides a wide range of experiences for pupils. Leaders ensure that pupils are given the opportunity to visit places of interest, such as to Whipsnade Zoo and Woburn Safari Park, in order to broaden their first-hand knowledge of the topics that they learn about.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is provided for well. Pupils from a wide range of ethnicities and social backgrounds attend the school. The school is a harmonious place. Pupils get on well together because this is what is expected and what is modelled for them by adults. Pupils are taught about all the major religions and the school follows the locally agreed syllabus for religious education.

- Pupils are prepared well, at a level appropriate to their age, for life in modern British society. For example, the school's rules are known well by everyone and are followed fully. Pupils are taught not only to be tolerant of each other's differences but to celebrate the diversity among the school's population.
- The school was slow to respond to the recommendation to 'strengthen pupils' achievement in phonics' following the previous inspection. Although the inspection took place almost four years ago, it is only in the last year and a half that action has been taken to address this issue. The headteacher has now introduced daily phonics sessions throughout the school and this area of the curriculum is now improving.
- Leaders do not analyse the progress that pupils make well enough. Although pupils' attainment is assessed and tracked regularly, leaders do not track whether groups of pupils are making enough progress from term to term and from year to year. Leaders do not check systematically that measures they put in place to improve outcomes for pupils are having the desired effect.

Governance of the school

- Governors are highly committed to the school's continual improvement. They ensure that the school's policies are reviewed regularly and are updated in a timely fashion.
- Governors meet regularly and discuss a wide range of appropriate issues. They are provided with useful information by the headteacher. This helps them to develop an understanding of the school's priorities for development. For example, governors are aware of the weaknesses in attendance and that this is an area that needs to improve.
- Governors do not hold the school's leaders to account well enough. They do not challenge the information that they are given by the school's leaders but accept what they are told at face value.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding is given a high priority. Banners stating that 'safeguarding is everyone's responsibility' are displayed prominently throughout the school.
- The headteacher has strengthened the school's safeguarding procedures. For example, the system for allowing visitors to enter the building is now robust and appropriate.
- The headteacher arranged for a safeguarding audit to be carried out to ensure that processes were appropriate and sufficiently rigorous. She has taken prompt action in response to the recommendations from this review. For example, the way that child protection concerns are recorded, and records kept, has been radically overhauled so that records are now suitably detailed and fit for purpose.
- The school's safeguarding procedures are well known and staff know whom they should talk to if they are concerned about a child. The designated safeguarding leads have a good understanding of their role and know what action to take in response to concerns about children.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and positive. Staff know the children very well and they anticipate their needs effectively. As a result, classrooms are happy and productive places where pupils learn well.
- Staff use a range of techniques effectively to ensure that pupils behave well. Approaches are consistent throughout the school so that pupils know what to expect. This means that pupils are confident to work with different teachers and in different classrooms, according to the subject being taught.
- Leaders and staff have focused well on developing the school's approach to assessment, particularly in English and mathematics. A new system is now in place that fits well with the requirements of the current national curriculum. Pupils' attainment is tracked frequently and monitored by senior leaders.
- Teachers use questioning effectively. They choose questions well both to extend pupils' thinking and to check that they have understood. Teachers use their good knowledge of pupils' prior learning to ensure that questions targeted at particular pupils are pitched at the right level.
- Teachers plan learning that captures pupils' interests. This encourages pupils to develop good attitudes to learning. They provide pupils with good opportunities to develop their English and mathematical skills in a wide range of subjects. Pupils are given good opportunities to write across the curriculum.
- Teaching assistants support pupils well, both individually and in small groups. The good range of professional development provided means that teaching assistants are knowledgeable and well informed. This helps them to carry out their roles effectively.
- Phonics is not taught well enough. Teachers and teaching assistants do not have sufficiently strong subject knowledge to be fully effective in teaching phonics. Phonics sessions do not have sufficiently clear objectives and this has a clear impact on how much and how quickly pupils learn. Pupils are not given enough opportunities to practise and apply their phonics knowledge. As a result, pupils do not make the progress that they should.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are well mannered, polite and friendly. They were keen to talk to inspectors about their school. Pupils were confident in expressing their opinions and talking about their work.
- Pupils show good attitudes to learning. They love their school and are keen to learn. Pupils listen carefully to what they are told and participate well in a wide range of activities.

- Hillborough is a multicultural school with pupils from a wide range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Pupils' attitudes towards the differences between themselves and others are excellent. They value each other as individuals and treat everybody equally.
- Pupils feel very safe at school and they say that bullying hardly ever happens. They know that the staff look after them well. Pupils are confident that staff will help them to sort out any difficulties that might arise.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, at a level appropriate to their age. For example, pupils in Year 2 know that they should not give out personal information to others when using the internet. Pupils learn about road safety and the school takes part in regular 'walk to school' events.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils know and follow the school's rules well. They need a minimum of supervision to act appropriately and can be trusted to follow the directions they are given. For example, at phonics time, pupils throughout the school walk quietly and sensibly from their own classroom to their phonics group without direct adult supervision.
- Pupils who have specific behavioural needs are supported well. Teaching assistants are highly effective in providing the right support to ensure that pupils are able to take a full part in the life of the school.
- The school takes a very firm line on encouraging good attendance and tackling absence. Leaders and the school's family workers work closely with parents to find ways to improve individual pupils' attendance. The school works with the local authority's education welfare officer to monitor attendance and to take appropriate action when attendance is not good enough. These measures have resulted in good rates of improvement for many pupils.
- Overall attendance remains below the national average. The attendance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below that of other pupils attending the school.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils attain well and make good progress at Hillborough Infant School. Under the previous national assessment system, pupils' attainment was significantly above the national average for the last five years in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In 2016, the national approach to assessment changed. The proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1, under the new system, remained above the national average. The work in pupils' exercise books shows clearly that current pupils are making similarly good progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, make very good progress. There were too few disadvantaged pupils in the 2016 cohorts for results to be reported without the risk of identifying individual pupils.

- The most able pupils make good progress. The proportion of children who were exceeding expectations at the end of the Reception Year, and went on to reach the higher levels at the end of key stage 1, was above the national average in 2016.
- Pupils make good progress in a wide range of subjects. They are given good opportunities to write in subjects other than literacy. As a result, some pupils make rapid progress in writing.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is very effective. Pupils have individualised programmes of support that meet their individual needs well. As a result, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their individual starting points.
- Outcomes in phonics are improving. In 2014 and 2015, the proportion of Year 1 pupils who reached the expected standard in the phonics screening check was approximately two thirds of the national average. Following the changes introduced by the headteacher, this figure rose sharply in 2016 and was just below the national average.
- Pupils do not achieve as well in phonics as they should because the quality of teaching in phonics is not consistently good. As well as the results of the phonics screening check, this is evident in many pupils' writing. By the time they reach Year 2, too many pupils frequently misspell simple words and do not apply spelling rules consistently, such as adding 'ed' to form the simple past tense.

Early years provision

Good

- Most children enter the early years with skills and abilities below those typical of their age. They make good progress during their time in the early years. The proportion of children who reach a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year has risen for the last three years and was in line with the national average in 2016. As a result, children are prepared well for Year 1.
- The early years are led well. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. The early years development plan accurately identifies the areas to be improved. Leaders ensure that children are kept safe in the early years and that they learn to keep themselves safe at a level appropriate to their age.
- The quality of teaching in the early years is good. Staff work well together and the quality of the provision is improving. Staff use questions well to encourage children to think more deeply and to check their understanding of what they are learning about.
- Children learn the school's rules quickly when they enter the early years. Members of staff have high expectations and ensure that children follow the rules consistently. Children enjoy their learning and persevere with activities for extended periods of time. Children become increasingly independent during their time in the early years and follow instructions well.
- The early years outdoor areas are underdeveloped. The opportunities for children to develop their physical and other skills are therefore limited. Leaders are aware of the need to extend the early years curriculum by developing the outdoor areas. Firm plans are in place to do so in the near future.

School details

Unique reference number	109581
Local authority	Luton
Inspection number	10012440

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	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	299
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Antoinette Watson
Headteacher	Carly Smith
Telephone number	01582 725764
Website	www.hillboroughinfants.co.uk
Email address	hillborough.infants.admin@lbc.luton.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	9–10 May 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The current headteacher took up her post in September 2015, following the retirement of the previous headteacher. The deputy headteacher was promoted to her current role at the same time.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors gathered a range of information to judge the quality of teaching and learning over time. Inspectors observed parts of 21 lessons, some jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other leaders, a representative of the local authority, a group of pupils and a representative of the school's governing body.
- Inspectors looked closely at the work in pupils' exercise books, listened to them read and talked to them about their work.
- Inspectors spoke to parents on the playground as they brought their children to school. There were no responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's assessment information, records of leaders' monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning in the school, and a range of other documents.

Inspection team

Wendy Varney, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Andrew Maher	Ofsted Inspector
Henry Weir	Ofsted Inspector
Simon Harbrow	Ofsted Inspector

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