

Holbeach Bank Primary School

Roman Bank, Holbeach Bank, Spalding, Lincolnshire PE12 8BX

Inspection dates

4–5 July 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders have not improved pupils' outcomes over recent years. From their various starting points, too many pupils leave key stages 1 and 2 without making the progress of which they are capable.
- Leaders have not successfully tackled all of the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. The governing body has not held leaders to account for this lack of improvement.
- Leaders have not done enough to eradicate variations in the quality of teaching over time.
- The governing body has not sufficiently challenged school leaders regarding pupils' underachievement and low attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders, including the governing body, have an overgenerous view of the school. Actions to raise pupils' achievement have been unsuccessful.
- School improvement planning at all levels is ineffective because the actions, indications of progress to be made along the way and monitoring opportunities are too vague.
- Teachers do not set sufficient work that is challenging enough, especially for the most able. This is particularly the case for writing and mathematics. As a result, the pupils' progress is too slow.
- Pupils are not able to deepen their mathematical understanding because they are not given enough opportunities for them to practise their problem-solving and reasoning skills.
- Teachers provide pupils with too few opportunities to develop spelling, punctuation and grammar skills in extended pieces of writing, especially in subjects other than English.
- Pupils do not regularly present their work as neatly as they could.

The school has the following strengths

- Children in the early years make very good progress from their various starting points. Teachers use the well-resourced areas indoors and outdoors effectively. Tasks are well matched to children's abilities.
- Pupils relish undertaking the wide variety of extra responsibilities available to them. Teachers encourage them to work hard and to be resilient.
- Pupils behave well. They know the school's values and are keen to uphold them.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - school improvement plans at all levels contain sufficiently detailed actions, precise timescales and monitoring opportunities in order for the governing body to hold leaders fully to account for the actions they take
 - the governing body challenges school leaders effectively regarding any slow progress and poor attainment made by pupils in reading, writing and mathematics in all year groups.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that pupils make better progress across the curriculum by:
 - providing work that consistently matches pupils' abilities, particularly for the most able and especially in writing
 - improving pupils' mathematical understanding by providing more opportunities to develop reasoning and problem-solving skills
 - moving pupils on to challenging work quicker in mathematics
 - developing pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar skills by providing them with more opportunities to write at length in subjects across the curriculum
 - insisting that pupils consistently present work to a high standard in all subjects.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- The executive headteacher, other school leaders, and the governing body have overseen the poor achievement of pupils for far too long. Information about the school's current performance shows that leaders have not demonstrated the capacity to improve pupils' low achievement.
- Too many pupils have not made the progress that they should have from their various starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils moving into key stage 2 and those who leave the school at the end of Year 6 are, therefore, not prepared well for the next stage of their education.
- Leaders have not improved the school sufficiently. For example, at the last inspection, inspectors judged the school to require improvement and asked teachers to plan work to meet the varied needs of pupils of different ages and abilities in their classes, in particular for the most able. Teachers were also asked to place enough emphasis on pupils' handwriting, spelling and grammar. None of these areas for improvement has been dealt with successfully.
- Leaders and the governing body do not have an accurate view of the school's effectiveness. Their views of the pupils' achievement and, therefore, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are too generous.
- Over recent years, leaders have not done enough to tackle poor teaching. Consequently, too many pupils have not achieved as well as they should in reading, writing and mathematics.
- School improvement planning at all levels is not sharp enough. Proposed actions are too vague and do not contain precise enough detail about what is to be done. Timescales and monitoring opportunities are not clear. As a result, the governing body cannot hold leaders fully to account for the actions that they take.
- Leaders carry out monitoring activities during the term. For example, lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work inform teachers of strengths and future areas for development; however, these activities are not improving the pupils' insufficient progress and historical low attainment.
- The way in which leaders manage the performance of teachers leaves the teachers unclear about what to do in order to improve their classroom practice.
- The governing body does not challenge leaders rigorously enough regarding pupils' underachievement. For example, during a meeting to discuss the poor examination results in 2016, the governing body did not ask any questions or raise concerns about the school's performance.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is being used effectively. Leaders understand the importance of monitoring the allocation of the funding carefully. Pupils in receipt of this funding are beginning to make better progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils have the opportunity to learn in a range of subjects and topics. Pupils are not given sufficient

opportunities to apply their skills and knowledge of writing in different subjects.

- The physical education and sport premium for primary schools is used effectively. A sports coach is employed to deliver specialist coaching to pupils in a wide range of activities, including football and swimming. A weekly after-school sports club is provided, which over half of the key stage 2 pupils have attended. Staff have received training to help them deliver high-quality physical education sessions.
- Pupils are adequately prepared for life in modern Britain. They have a sound understanding of faiths different to their own and show a tolerance towards others regardless of their race, ethnic background or culture. Pupils have a good understanding of British values, in particular democracy.
- There is a good system in place to monitor and to record any instances of poor pupil behaviour. The head of school carries out regular analysis of this information and reports findings to governors.
- Since the last inspection, the local authority has not offered effective support to the school. The local authority has not acted with sufficient urgency, despite the school's underperformance. This has hindered the school's capacity to improve.

Governance of the school

- Governance of the school is inadequate because the governing body has not done enough to ensure that leaders improve the school's performance. For too long, the governing body has not held leaders fully to account for the school's poor performance.
- Minutes of governing body meetings show that governors ask questions regarding pupil behaviour and about the statutory requirements of the school website. The governing body does not, however, sufficiently challenge leaders regarding whether or not the leaders' actions are raising standards.
- The governing body has not challenged school leaders regarding pupils who are underachieving. Members carry out monitoring activities in the school, but these activities are not improving the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes across the school.
- The governing body has received appropriate training in safeguarding and the safe recruitment of staff. It carries out its statutory duties.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- A strong safeguarding culture exists within the school. Comprehensive checks are made on adults before they are able to start volunteering or working alongside any pupils. The records kept by the school about staff meet all statutory requirements.
- The school has a clear system that allows staff to report any safeguarding concerns that they may have regarding a pupil. The designated safeguarding leads are well trained and ensure that pupils and their families are referred to outside agencies swiftly, when needed. Records relating to safeguarding are kept in a well-ordered fashion.
- Staff and members of the governing body have undergone appropriate training on

safeguarding, safer recruitment and the 'Prevent' duty. Consequently, they are alert to the dangers that pupils face from potential radicalisation and extremism.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- The quality of teaching has varied considerably over time, throughout the school and across subjects. Consequently, the teaching has not been good enough to ensure that the pupils progress enough so that they can reach the standards of which they are capable.
- Teachers do not provide pupils with tasks that challenge them sufficiently. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. As a result, not enough pupils make the progress that they should from their various starting points. This is particularly the case in writing and in mathematics.
- Teachers do not provide pupils with opportunities frequently enough to develop their mathematical understanding, through problem-solving and reasoning activities.
- Teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to practise spelling, punctuation and grammar skills in extended pieces of writing in subjects other than English. As a result, pupils' learning in spelling, punctuation and grammar is not as well developed or secure in other subjects as it should be.
- The presentation of pupils' work, in a range of subjects, is often not as good as it should be. Evidence seen in pupils' workbooks shows that, too often, the standard of pupils' handwriting has deteriorated over time, rather than improved.
- The termly opportunities used by the teachers to assess how well the pupils are doing and the meetings between the teachers and the leaders to discuss the pupils' progress are not effective. They do not result in identifying swiftly the pupils who are falling behind. Too many of these pupils are, therefore, not given the help that they need in order to catch up.
- Older pupils read confidently and fluently, using books that are at an appropriate level. They told inspectors that they enjoyed reading and their favourite authors are David Baddiel and Dav Pilkey.
- Younger pupils use phonics skills well to read unfamiliar words, although some children are given reading books that are too hard for them and consequently are not fluent.
- Teaching assistants are organised well through the school. They ask challenging questions that help to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding. Teaching assistants support pupils with their learning when required and also allow some tasks to be completed independently, thereby promoting pupils' independence.
- Phonics is taught well. The sessions are lively and pupils engage in them. For example, inspectors observed pupils in Year 1 particularly enjoying learning the 'igh' sound, and writing words and sentences using this and similar sounding groups of letters.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy the extra responsibility of being house captains, members of the school and 'eco' councils and JPCSOs (Junior Police Cadet School Officers). All of these positions are decided by a pupil vote, deepening pupils' understanding of democracy.
- Pupils spoke readily about the school's values and they understand them well. The school's values of enquiry, tolerance, happiness, achievement, respect, uniqueness and confidence are displayed around the school and are referred to in weekly whole-school assemblies.
- Pupils benefit greatly from a number of educational visits. For example, pupils' mathematical and musical skills were enhanced with a trip to the Royal Albert Hall and a visit to the Natural History Museum developed their scientific knowledge.
- Pupils take part in many fund-raising activities for several charities, including Save the Children and The British Heart Foundation. They are rightly proud of these achievements and spoke excitedly regarding the forthcoming 'race for life' cancer charity '5K' fund-raiser run.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of bullying and the different forms it can take. They are certain that instances of bullying are extremely rare and that adults rectify any disagreements swiftly and fairly.
- The majority of pupils and parents state that pupils are safe. Pupils spoke knowledgeably to inspectors about keeping themselves safe on bicycles, when crossing roads and when using the internet, and about the potential dangers of social media. Visits by the local police officer to school assemblies have helped to reinforce these messages.
- Pupils have access to a well-organised, healthy breakfast club. This ensures that they are prepared and ready to learn at the start of the day.
- Pupils look smart in the school uniform and arrive punctually to Holbeach Bank each morning.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are extremely positive. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They respond very quickly to instructions and low-level misbehaviour during lessons is rare.
- Pupils told the inspector that teachers encourage them to work hard and to be resilient. In particular, pupils value the weekly 'maths wiz' and 'writing wiz' awards. All pupils are eager to win the 'golden award' because, when they do, they know that their good behaviour, manners or care for another pupil has been recognised by an adult.
- Pupils display good levels of conduct in corridors, classrooms and when playing outside at breaktimes and lunchtimes. During the inspection, pupils were observed entering and leaving a whole-school assembly in a calm and orderly fashion.

- The pupils' behaviour has improved during the year. Pupils understand the 'peg chart' in each class that helps to inform them if their behaviour is becoming a cause for concern.
- The levels of pupil absence and persistent absence in 2015 and 2016 were higher than national averages. Reward systems promoting good attendance and 'attendance panels' for those families whose child's attendance is becoming a concern are starting to have a positive impact. Currently, attendance and the level of persistent absence are in line with national averages.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Over recent years, standards of attainment and rates of progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stages 1 and 2 have been far too low. This historical underachievement means that pupils have not been prepared well for the next stage of their education.
- In 2015, key stage 1 pupils attained less well than other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards of attainment in 2016 were equally poor. No pupils achieved the expected standard in writing, only two pupils did so in reading and only one pupil achieved the expected standard in mathematics. The most able pupils did not attain well enough, as no pupil achieved at a greater depth of understanding in any subject.
- In 2016, no key stage 2 pupils made good progress in writing and mathematics. Progress in writing and mathematics was in the bottom 1% nationally. The most able pupils did not attain well enough because no pupils achieved at the higher standard in reading, writing or mathematics.
- Provisional 2017 end of key stage 2 results indicate that, again, only a small proportion of pupils have achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics. Too few of the most able pupils achieved at a greater depth in reading, writing or mathematics.
- Large proportions of current pupils are not on track to achieve at the levels expected in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Currently, small numbers of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are beginning to make better progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Over recent years, the results of the Year 1 phonics screening check have been broadly in line with national averages.
- In Year 1, a number of pupils are making better progress, especially in writing.

Early years provision

Good

- School leaders have ensured that the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection report have been tackled successfully. The assessment system is now used

frequently by adults to record children's progress accurately. Consequently, next steps in learning are planned carefully and children, including disadvantaged children, make good progress from their various starting points. This is particularly the case for writing and mathematics. Children are, therefore, well prepared for Year 1.

- Over recent years, the proportions of children who have reached a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year have been higher than those seen nationally.
- Children are taught well. Teachers plan many interesting activities that provide good levels of challenge, including for the most able and for children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. For example, during the inspection, children were motivated and engaged to find evidence of the Roald Dahl character the 'BFG' on the school field and then to write sentences to describe him.
- Children have the opportunity to experience frequent educational visits and visitors to school. For example, in a recent topic on 'People who help us', they visited a Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) station and Long Sutton Fire Station and welcomed the local police community support officer to their classroom. This enabled children to ask questions and deepen their understanding of the world around them.
- The learning environment is bright, welcoming and stimulating. The classroom is well resourced and enables children to develop their knowledge and skills in all areas of learning. Outdoor provision is also good, with opportunities for children to practise writing, to improve their number skills and to develop physically.
- Relationships between adults and children are positive. Children behave well because the activities planned for them are well matched to their abilities. They become absorbed in activities that motivate them to want to learn. Adults question children skilfully, in order to deepen their thinking and to allow them to be independent, when the need arises.
- The arrangements to help the children to join the early years are good. The teacher visits children in their previous nursery setting and there are frequent visits to school for children and parents in the summer term. Consequently, children settle quickly in September and staff have a good knowledge of each child before they start at the school.
- Relationships with outside agencies, including the school nurse and the speech and language team, ensure that any children who require extra support receive it promptly.
- The learning environments are safe. Staff have received appropriate safeguarding training. There were no concerns regarding children's safety or welfare expressed by staff or parents.
- Parents are rightly enthusiastic regarding the provision in the early years and the progress children are making. For example, one parent commented, 'He loves it here and doesn't want to be off during the holidays!'

School details

Unique reference number	120413
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10031153

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	65
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Pamela Elton
Executive headteacher	Christine Wright
Telephone number	01406 423375
Website	www.holbeachbank.co.uk
Email address	enquiries@holbeachbank.lincs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	14–15 May 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is slightly above the national average.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those pupils who speak English as an additional language are much lower than average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.
- Pupil mobility is higher than average.
- Pupils are taught in three mixed-aged classes: class 1 has Reception and Year 1; class 2 has Years 2 to 4, and class 3 has Years 4 to 6.
- The school is in a federation of two schools which share an executive headteacher and

have one governing body.

- The school is exempt from the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6, because there were fewer than 11 pupils in the 2016 cohort.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed lessons in all three classes, a school assembly and examined a wide variety of pupils' books from a range of subjects. The executive headteacher accompanied him on three classroom visits, two phonics sessions and a scrutiny of pupils' workbooks.
- The inspector held a range of meetings with the executive headteacher, head of school, subject and other leaders, and a group of governors, and held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority. The inspector spoke with pupils in a group, in lessons and around the school and listened to them read. Pupils' behaviour was observed during breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documents, including minutes of the governing body meetings, current assessment information provided by the school, the school's development plan, plans written by the English and mathematics subject leaders and records relating to safeguarding.
- The inspector talked with parents before school and examined the results of 16 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. He also took into account 28 responses to the pupil questionnaire, 10 responses to the staff questionnaire and the results of recent pupil and parent surveys carried out by the school.

Inspection team

Peter Stonier, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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