

Holmbush Primary Academy

Hawkins Crescent, Shoreham-by-Sea, West Sussex BN43 6TN

Inspection dates

16–17 January 2018

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	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The principal provides effective leadership. Staff share her determination to make sure that pupils achieve as well as they can.
- The trust, through the director of school improvement, works closely with school leaders and the local governing board. Together, they have ensured that this good school is continuing to improve.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years. They are well prepared for Year 1.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They are polite and respectful to each other and to adults. Pupils are kept safe in this nurturing, welcoming school.
- Much good work has been done to ensure effective communication with parents and carers. However, too many parents do not have complete faith in the work of the school.
- Teachers plan interesting lessons which motivate pupils to enjoy learning. Consequently, all groups of pupils currently in school make good progress in reading, writing, mathematics and a range of other subjects.
- Teaching is effective. Teachers use assessment information effectively, and most work is well matched to pupils' needs. However, this is not consistent for the most able pupils. As a result, these pupils do not make the rapid progress they could.
- Improving the teaching of reading has been, and will remain, a focus for the school. As a result, pupils now read more frequently at home and at school.
- The new strategy for teaching writing is stimulating pupils' interest. However, too little emphasis is placed on pupils' accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar. This sometimes slows pupils' progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils receive effective support and make good progress. Leaders are committed to raising the standards that disadvantaged pupils reach to those of other pupils nationally.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement still further by ensuring that teaching:
 - appropriately challenges the most able pupils
 - enables pupils to quickly develop accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar
 - provides reading tasks which deepen and extend pupils' reading skills
 - enables disadvantaged pupils to reach the highest standards of which they are capable.
- Continue to work with parents to help them have full confidence in the work of the school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The principal provides committed, determined leadership. She is well supported by the skilled vice-principal. Together, they have effectively managed a period of change, including almost a full turnover of teachers since the school became an academy.
- The principal has built a cohesive team of staff who share her high ambitions for pupils. All staff who completed the online survey are proud to work at the school and agree that the school is well led and managed.
- Teachers receive good support, targeted on their individual needs. As a result, staff morale is high and teaching continues to improve.
- Leaders are resolute in their determination that all pupils should have an equal chance to succeed. Frequent checks are made on the achievement of pupils. Swift action is taken to provide additional support to those who may be falling behind. Effective leadership of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities ensures that funding is wisely used to meet a range of different needs.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is sharply targeted to help them succeed academically. An appropriate emphasis is also placed on promoting their emotional well-being. For example, working in small groups to discuss issues such as 'trust' is successful in improving pupils' attitudes. This additional support has been effective in improving pupils' rates of academic progress.
- Middle leaders provide helpful support and feedback to improve teachers' practice. In this way, middle leaders play an important role in the school's ongoing improvement.
- Senior leaders have worked hard to design a successful curriculum which effectively supports pupils' academic and personal development. A foundation of English and mathematics knowledge and skills is complemented effectively by interesting activities which promote enjoyment of a range of subjects. For example, pupils explore the coastal environment during 'Brilliant Beach' days on the local beach, they learn to build fires safely and build dens in the 'Forest School' and they carry out science experiments to explore the size of a crater made by different objects falling.
- Pupils talk enthusiastically about the trips and experiences that enhance their learning. They particularly appreciate the opportunity to sing at the O2 Arena and the three residential visits, which include stays in the Isle of Wight and France. Pupils enjoy taking part in the extra-curricular activities, particularly sports clubs.
- Although the curriculum is usually well adapted to meet the needs of different groups of pupils, it is not always tailored sufficiently for the most able pupils. Consequently, the most able pupils do not reach the higher standards of which they are capable.
- Leaders recognise the importance of promoting pupils' healthy lifestyles. The primary physical education and sport funding has been used well to increase pupils' participation in sports. The school has received the 'Gold Games Award' in recognition of its work to promote competitive sport. This was highlighted during the inspection, when the girls' football team was excited about a match that afternoon with a local school.

- Leaders place great emphasis on promoting British values and have created an environment that encourages a sense of trust and respect. Pupils learn about democracy when they register to take part in the secret vote for the school's head and deputy boy and girl, sports leaders or school council representatives.
- Many of the parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey or who inspectors spoke with during the inspection agree that the school is well led and managed. However, a minority of parents disagree. While inspection findings support the view that leadership and management are good, more could be done to encourage all parents to have full confidence in the work of the school.

Governance of the school

- Members of the local board take their responsibilities seriously. Of particular importance is the rigour with which the local board checks that safeguarding processes and procedures are secure.
- The local board has worked with parents to create a 'communication strategy' designed to improve communication with parents. As part of this, an electronic messaging service has been introduced. Members are also available to meet parents on the playground each day. As one member said of parents, 'We hear their voice.'
- The board of trustees holds the school fully to account. Trustees keep a close eye on the school's budget. The local board makes sure that additional funds, for example for disadvantaged pupils, are used effectively.
- The director of school improvement pays frequent visits to the school. In addition, reviews of the school are carried out in partnership with principals and vice-principals from other schools in the trust. In these ways, the trust has a good understanding of the strengths of the school and what needs to be done in order for it to improve.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders, in partnership with the local board, have established a strong culture of safety throughout the school, in which all staff are committed to keeping pupils safe. Relationships are positive across the school. These help to promote a real sense of care. All staff, and the very large majority of parents who responded to the online survey, agree that pupils are kept safe in school.
- Robust procedures are in place to make sure that staff and visitors are appropriately checked before they work with pupils. Comprehensive records are kept of any concerns or referrals to external agencies. Staff receive timely training that ensures that they have a good understanding of all aspects of safeguarding. Safeguarding is an item for discussion at every weekly staff meeting. As a result, staff know what to do if they have concerns about a pupil.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers plan effectively, and work is generally well matched to pupils' needs. Activities are appropriate and capture pupils' interest. Teachers and support staff foster positive relationships with their pupils, creating a constructive learning ethos.
- Classrooms are bright, with displays which include prompts and tips to support pupils' learning. Pupils are proud of the examples of their writing which are displayed and which show how their writing has improved since the start of the school year.
- The effective teaching of phonics in the early years and key stage 1 gives pupils a good start in learning to read. Pupils are encouraged to read at home at least five times each week. Pupils enjoy reading and recommending books to their friends. The teaching of reading is good, although sometimes teachers give pupils, especially the most able pupils, undemanding books to read and tasks that do not challenge them to extend their reading skills.
- The teaching of mathematics is good. There is an appropriate focus on securing pupils' basic number skills. Older pupils use their computing skills to create graphs and are able to interpret the findings. The work in pupils' books shows that teachers are giving pupils good opportunities to develop their problem-solving skills and to justify their answers through reasoning.
- The recently introduced strategy to improve the teaching of writing is helping pupils to enjoy writing for different purposes. Teachers link writing to the topic being taught and this encourages pupils to write increasingly lively pieces. For example, pupils in Year 6 wrote persuasive letters to Ernest Shackleton about why he should let them join his expedition. Year 3 pupils wrote their own disaster story after reading about Pompeii. At times, teachers do not give sufficient guidance to ensure that all pupils develop accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar. As a result, pupils' progress in writing sometimes slows.
- At times, teachers do not set tasks which enable the most able pupils to tackle ideas in sufficient depth. This sometimes slows their learning and prevents them reaching the highest standards of which they are capable.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are happy to take on responsibilities such as helping in assemblies, sports lessons or tournaments, or by showing visitors around the school. Pupils enjoy having their achievements celebrated in a weekly assembly. In these ways, pupils develop their self-confidence.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe in different situations. Pupils told inspectors how to keep safe when using the internet, including the importance of not sharing any personal details. Pupils are also taught how to stay safe when by the sea.
- Pupils know about some of the different forms of bullying. They say that bullying is

rare but are confident that staff would deal appropriately with it if it happened. School records support this view.

- Pupils talk confidently about how to stay healthy. They particularly value the good opportunities to take part in sport and the equipment at playtimes which helps them to be active.
- Pupils are adamant that, if they have a worry or concern, there is always an adult they can turn to. One pupil typified the view of many when she said, 'There are so many adults we can talk to, if we need to. They always listen.'
- The breakfast club provides a welcoming place to be before school starts.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well around the school. Supervision at lunchtimes is good and pupils chat sensibly while eating their meal. Pupils are polite.
- Pupils generally work hard. They have good attitudes to learning. However, occasionally, when the work is not appropriately pitched, they find it difficult to stay focused.
- Pupils enjoy school. As a result of rigorous actions to improve pupils' attendance, attendance rates have improved markedly, especially for disadvantaged pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In 2017, the proportions of pupils in Year 6 reaching the expected and higher standards in writing and mathematics rose to be broadly in line with the national averages. Pupils made slower progress in reading and their attainment was lower. Leaders have taken effective action to improve achievement in reading. Teachers' assessments show that current pupils in Year 6 are working at higher standards than their predecessors.
- In 2017, standards at the end of Year 2 rose markedly and the proportions of pupils reaching the higher standards in reading and mathematics were higher than the national averages. This meant that pupils were well prepared for key stage 2.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has risen over the last three years and is now in line with the national figure.
- Work in pupils' books shows that, typically, most pupils currently in school make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils enjoy learning and make good progress in a range of other subjects. For example, pupils learn to play the guitar or cornet in music lessons, develop their geographical understanding by learning about latitude and longitude and develop their scientific skills by designing experiments to limit air resistance.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making increasingly strong progress. However, leaders recognise that, although their progress is good, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils still lags behind that of other pupils nationally. This is why the school's development

plan prioritises the need to further improve the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.

- The achievement of the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, is mostly good. However, sometimes the most able pupils do not make the rapid progress they should because teaching does not consistently provide the appropriate level of challenge.
- Teachers and support staff adapt activities appropriately for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. As a result, these pupils make good, sometimes rapid, progress.

Early years provision

Good

- The proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of Reception has risen year on year and, in 2017, was broadly similar to the national average. This represented good progress from children's starting points.
- Teaching is effective. Classrooms and outside areas are bright, welcoming spaces in which children play and learn safely. Children quickly learn to behave well, sharing toys and ideas with their friends.
- Good links with parents ensure that adults begin to develop an understanding of children's needs at the start of the year. Once children start school, adults quickly get to know the children well. Parents are kept well informed about the progress of their children. They are encouraged to support their children's learning at home. Adults make frequent checks on children's learning and plan activities that build well on their needs. Information collected in the children's 'learning journeys', as well as examples of each child's writing on display, show that children currently in the early years are making good progress.
- In both the early years classes, there is a palpable sense of care. Children happily engage in the exciting activities on offer. In Nursery, they enjoy choosing activities, for example playing 'what's the time, Mr Wolf?', sharing a book with a friend or ordering numbered cars from one to 10. Children learn the importance of keeping their teeth clean and washing their hands after using the lavatory.
- In Reception, children continue to make good progress. Adults support learning well. For example, during the inspection, children wrote part of 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff' story, with the teacher giving timely, supportive prompts about using phonics, capital letters and full stops. However, at times, activities are not sufficiently challenging to make sure that the most able children make the rapid progress they should.
- An appropriate emphasis is given to developing children's language. Adults interact well with children, modelling good language and encouraging children to speak in full sentences. Children who need extra support, including those who are disadvantaged or who have SEN and/or disabilities, are well supported and so gaps between their achievement and that of other children diminish during their time in the early years.
- There is good leadership of the early years. The leader has ensured that the Nursery has quickly established effective provision. Appropriate adaptations have been made to cater for the two two-year old children who joined in the week of the inspection.
- The determination of the early years leader has ensured that children develop in self-confidence and enjoy learning in a well-organised, nurturing environment.

School details

Unique reference number	141906
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10040692

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	217
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Professor Christopher Pole
Principal	Rebecca Jackson
Telephone number	01273 592 471
Website	www.holmbushprimaryacademy.org.uk
Email address	head@holmbushprimaryacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Holmbush is smaller than the average school. The school became a member of the University of Brighton Academies Trust in April 2015. When the predecessor school was inspected in February 2013, it was judged as good.
- The board of trustees is primarily responsible for determining the trust's vision and the educational standards and financial performance of the school. Several governors in the predecessor school are now members of the local board. This board has several responsibilities, including maintaining links with the community and dealing with complaints. There is a management board which manages the trust's work and links with the school. The director of school improvement is a member of the management board and line-manages the principal of the school.
- There has been a high turnover of teaching staff since the school opened.
- Children in the early years are taught in one Nursery class and one full-time Reception class. The Nursery is now in its third year. Some children in the Nursery attend

morning sessions, some afternoon sessions and some children attend whole-day sessions. In the week of the inspection, two two-year olds had joined the Nursery part-time.

- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is slightly higher than the national average. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is lower than the national average.
- The school runs a breakfast club.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in lessons across all year groups. Most of these lessons were visited jointly with the principal or the vice-principal.
- Inspectors looked closely at pupils' work for the current year to inform their judgements about pupils' progress and attainment and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Inspectors talked to groups of pupils about their learning and their experiences of school. An inspector attended a school assembly, and observed pupils at lunch and during playtime.
- Discussions were held with senior and middle leaders, a group of teachers in their first and second years of teaching, several representatives from the local board, the chief executive of the trust and representatives from the management board, including the director of school improvement.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents gathered from the 82 responses to the online Ofsted questionnaire Parent View, as well as the free-text responses. An inspector also had conversations with parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors took account of the 18 responses to the online staff questionnaire and the 105 pupil responses.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and reviewed a range of the school's documentation, safeguarding records, the school's development plan and records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Joanna Toulson, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Alan Jenner

Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

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.

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2018