

# Holdbrook Primary School

Longcroft Drive, Waltham Cross, Hertfordshire EN8 7QG

## Inspection dates

27–28 February 2018

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Attainment remains below national averages at the end of key stages 1 and 2 in all subjects and results are only slowly starting to improve.
- Progress, while at least broadly in line with other schools, has been insufficient for pupils to catch up with their peers nationally.
- Pupils' starting points and assessments are not used well to maximise their achievement. This is particularly the case for most-able pupils and children in the early years.
- Expectations of presentation and handwriting in pupils' work books are too low.
- Governors have too readily accepted information from school leaders without sufficient challenge or probing.
- Basic English and mathematics skills are not used and applied effectively enough in other subjects.
- School leaders, including governors, are not yet holding staff to account for pupils' outcomes with sufficient rigour.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are not consistently good. Pupils, therefore, do not achieve as well as they could.
- School systems and records, particularly those which support the work of school leaders in improving teaching and learning, are not systematic or organised well enough.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils receive very effective personal support and guidance. The school is a nurturing and caring environment where the personal development, safety and well-being of all are paramount. Behaviour is good.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are monitored closely and their needs met carefully. As a result, their progress is improving.
- Results in the phonics screening test in Year 1 have improved and the proportion of children who reach a good level of development at the end of early years has increased.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, learning, assessment and outcomes by:
  - accelerating progress in all year groups, including early years, to be at least good
  - using assessment information systematically to identify individual pupil's' next steps to ensure that work set is neither too easy nor too hard
  - holding higher expectations for the standard of work produced, including the quality of presentation and handwriting, and ensuring that pupils apply their basic skills well in all subjects
  - setting work that is more challenging for most-able pupils
  - using children's individual starting points in early years to plan for progress and to meet their needs.
- Improve the leadership and management of the school by:
  - evaluating evidence from the monitoring of teaching and learning more effectively with a clear focus on improving outcomes for all
  - ensuring that the governing body provides more incisive challenge to school leaders, based on clear evidence and with a focus on the achievement of pupils
  - improving management systems so that required documentation is better organised, accessible and supports leaders in holding staff to account
  - providing training for staff on the use of the school's tracking system so that it has more impact on outcomes and the tracking of groups.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Leaders' monitoring of the work of the school is not sharply focused on improving pupils' progress and raising their attainment. While checks on the quality of teaching and learning are regular, the impact of these checks is not as strong, sharp or rapid as it should be.
- The headteacher and his team are well aware of the strengths of the school. They also have an accurate picture of what needs to be improved, but have not moved swiftly or decisively enough to improve important areas such as outcomes. They are sometimes too gentle in their approach.
- Management systems, including data and the tracking of pupils' progress, are not used well to support the leadership of the school. Required records are often too general, not easily accessible or lacking a sharp enough focus.
- Further training is required in the school's chosen tracking system so that groups of pupils falling behind can be quickly identified and appropriate learning planned. Senior and middle leaders do not currently use or understand this system well enough, which impacts on their ability to focus on areas of need and drive improvement.
- The headteacher has led the school well through a period of staff turbulence and significant change. He has made some strong improvements in the safety and well-being of pupils and staff at the school. He has also built up a leadership team with the necessary drive to effect positive change. This is now an improving school.
- Positive relationships exist between leaders and staff, as well as between staff and pupils. Parents and carers, who are sometimes difficult to engage, are supportive of the school and the changes made by the headteacher and his staff. Comments such as, 'This community needs this school', and, 'The school has improved a lot in the last three to four years' reflect the views of many.
- A wide-ranging programme of training and support has been provided for staff and school leaders. This has included support from the local authority and a national leader for education. Support provided for the early years to develop the learning environment has been particularly useful.
- A broad and interesting curriculum has been developed, including the teaching of Latin. Leaders promote equality and diversity well and teach pupils about British values such as respect and democracy. Displays around the school reflect this and include information on anti-bullying, healthy eating, a display from a community creative arts day and celebrations of pupils' work. The breadth of curriculum subjects taught is also represented in displays around the school.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is given a strong focus at Holdbrook Primary School. Pupils cooperate well and support each other both in lessons and when at play. They are aware of and accept differences and treat each other and adults with respect.
- A range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities are available for pupils in addition to the core curriculum. These include a breakfast club which offers support with

homework and reading as well as a range of interesting activities and healthy food choices. It provides a calm and positive start to the school day for many.

## **Governance**

- The school has undertaken a review of governance since the previous inspection. This has resulted in some changes to the make-up of the governing body, as well as the appointment of a new chair of governors. The review has been effective in providing training and opportunity for reflection for governors so that they are now prepared to hold school leaders more rigorously to account.
- In the past, governors have not been challenging enough when looking at pupils' progress and attainment. They have been too accepting of headline data and have only recently started to ask more in-depth and probing questions. They have been over-generous in their interpretation of pupils' progress.
- The monitoring of the use of additional funding provided for disadvantaged pupils, physical education and sport funding, as well as extra funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, is undertaken by the governing body. While the necessary information is collected and published, the evaluation of the impact of the funding, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, is a little generous.
- There is a wide range of expertise on the governing body, which supports the work they have to do. The chair of governors is very aware of the strengths of each member and these are used well in support of the school. Governors are rigorous in carrying out their statutory duties such as including the required information on the school's website.
- Governors are very committed to the school and the community which it serves. They carry out regular visits to the school and are well known to staff and parents.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- This area has been a strong focus for the school, ably and tenaciously led by the headteacher. Systems and procedures are extremely robust and 'no stone is left unturned' when it comes to pupils' safety and well-being.
- Pupils report that they feel safe and know how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations, including online. They understand what bullying is and say that it rarely happens at the school but, if it did, it would be dealt with.
- School leaders liaise with parents to raise awareness of safeguarding, particularly with regard to school attendance and child protection. Records are rigorous and detailed: liaison and follow up with outside agencies is thorough.
- Staff and governor training is up to date and follows required statutory guidance. Staff know what to do should they have a concern about a child; procedures are clear and well established.

- Recruitment practice ensures that appropriate safety checks are carried out on those working with pupils. All other required checks on adults are carried out promptly and accurate records maintained. This includes the single central record of these checks.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- Some teachers do not pay enough attention to planning for the progress of different groups of pupils. As all pupils do the same work most of the time, without account being taken of their individual starting points, it is often too easy for some and too hard for others. This does not ensure strong progress.
- In some classes, when pupils complete tasks, teachers are slow in moving them on, so learning time is wasted. Pupils are well behaved but report, 'We have to wait for everyone else to finish' and 'We still have to do it even if it's too easy.' Misconceptions or mistakes are not always rectified so learning opportunities are missed.
- Pupil progress information is collected but not always used effectively to plan for next steps in learning. Leaders and staff could make better use of this information to identify where pupils are falling behind or when they require harder work. Middle leaders in particular do not yet have the necessary skills or training to analyse and use data in their subject areas to drive improvement.
- The subject knowledge of staff is variable. Where it is strong, for example in Year 6, the teacher is able to recognise when pupils have not grasped concepts such as ratio, and provide concrete materials to demonstrate the concept practically. Where it is weaker, learning opportunities are missed or misconceptions prevail.
- Basic literacy and numeracy skills such as letter formation, using times tables and punctuation, are not reinforced well in the wider curriculum. Work in many books is careless and poorly presented, and expectations from staff are not high enough. Mistakes are, therefore, repeated and bad habits formed. Handwriting is not developed well.
- The school has some readers who lack confidence and experience, many of whom receive no reading support at home. While some groups of pupils, such as those with SEN and/or disabilities, are carefully monitored and supported, others receive very little additional school support to address their reluctance and lack of reading experience.
- Leaders have identified relevant teaching and learning priorities and have started to address historical shortcomings. A new mathematics programme has been introduced and a plan for the curriculum produced. This focus is ensuring greater consistency and the systematic development of skills, knowledge and understanding in all subjects.
- There is a clear focus on the provision for and progress of vulnerable pupils at the school. This includes those who are disadvantaged and those who have SEN and/or disabilities. The leader who oversees these groups is tenacious in her approach, monitoring these pupils carefully using in-house data. This is resulting in improved progress.
- Most pupils who read with inspectors said they enjoy reading. Younger pupils are well supported in developing their early phonics skills. Attainment in the Year 1 phonics screening check has improved and is now in line with national averages. Investment

has been made in developing a wider selection of attractive reading books and resources. These are appreciated by pupils.

- Teachers try hard to make learning activities interesting and engaging for the pupils. They are enthusiastic in their approach. Pupils in Year 3, for example, enjoy the range of techniques used by the teacher to 'hook' them into learning. This is resulting in better engagement and a greater quantity of work produced.
- The learning environment supports pupils in their learning well. Classrooms have relevant and helpful 'learning walls' which provide prompts such as subject-specific vocabulary to help pupils when working independently. The school is a well-ordered, attractive environment, with a range of resources, such as those used to reinforce mathematics concepts, available to all.
- Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress. This has been a focus for the school and has improved over time. A number of information events for parents have been introduced and parents have started to attend these more regularly. Those parents spoken with during the inspection were pleased with recent developments at the school.
- Teaching assistants are well trained to support the learning of individuals and groups and do so effectively. As a result, pupils with additional needs and those who are vulnerable are well supported in class so that they can access learning activities. Planned interventions are successful in addressing individual barriers to learning and consequently vulnerable pupils are beginning to make stronger progress.
- The school gives a clear focus to the promotion of equality and diversity, as well as spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. During one lesson, pupils discussed what it meant to be a Gypsy, as this had arisen in a book they were reading. A sensitively handled discussion about Travellers and appropriate language to use followed.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. This is a strength of the school.
- Pupils are confident, well mannered and considerate of each other. From the youngest classes, they cooperate well and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. They understand respect and clearly demonstrate this in their interactions with one another and with adults.
- Pupils conduct themselves well throughout the day, including when at play or when having lunch. A number of them are encouraged to take on roles of responsibility such as older pupils acting as dinner monitors or play leaders and they do so responsibly and with empathy. Playtimes are orderly, friendly and enjoyable times for pupils, who have access to a range of games and activities such as 'tag'.
- Any derogatory language is swiftly challenged and bullying is not tolerated. As a result, school logs show that incidences of such things as racism or bullying are very rare. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain and learn how to be good citizens.

They are active in the local community such as when they visit local care homes for older people.

- A recently introduced approach to personal, social, health and emotional education is having a positive impact on pupils' attitudes and dispositions to learning and life. An assembly observed during the inspection was engaging and had a clear focus on healthy eating. Pupils have a number of ways in which they can seek help for any worries or problems they might have, including a dedicated facility which supports pupils' emotional well-being, which pupils really appreciate.
- Pupils at times are passive in their approach to learning and wait for additional or more challenging work to be provided. They do not say if work is too easy for them and this impacts on their progress.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is appropriate and well managed. High expectations for behaviour, which pupils clearly respond to, are held by all. Clear systems and procedures have resulted in major improvements in this area. This is reflected in the school's behaviour logs which contain very few incidents.
- Low-level disruption is rare. Pupils with additional behavioural needs are well managed and supported so that they make progress and do not disrupt the learning of others. Case studies demonstrate clear improvements over time for individual pupils.
- Attendance and punctuality, which have been historic issues for the school, have been rigorously tackled by the headteacher. A very wide range of strategies are used to raise awareness of the impact of poor attendance and to reduce absence, including persistent absence, rates. This is slowly impacting on overall attendance percentages.
- Case studies for individual pupils with poor attendance show clear impact over time in reducing absence rates and increasing engagement with school activities. While overall percentages of persistent absence are still higher than national averages, they are showing clear improvement. The school is aware of this and is continuing in its relentless pursuit of further improvement.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Attainment has remained below national averages for most subjects and most groups of pupils since the previous inspection. Pupils' attainment has been slow to improve and remains below that of other schools.
- In 2017, for example, standards at the end of key stage 2 were below the national average expectations in reading, writing and mathematics, including for disadvantaged pupils and the most able. This was also the case in 2016. This, however, hides the fact that progress has accelerated over that period.
- At the end of key stage 1, fewer pupils attained the expected standard in either reading, writing or mathematics than their peers nationally in 2017. Mobility into and



out of the school throughout the school year is a big factor and this has influenced some of these headline attainment outcomes at both key stages.

- While progress in 2017 for pupils between key stage 1 and key stage 2 improved and was broadly average in reading and writing, above average progress was evident in mathematics. However, this was not enough to close the gap in attainment that exists between pupils at Holdbrook Primary and their peers nationally.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities is improving for current pupils as a result of careful monitoring and use of assessment by the SEN leader. She has trained staff in appropriate ways to support these pupils and she leads a number of carefully planned interventions.
- Middle leaders are beginning to focus on the progress of groups of pupils in the monitoring and evaluation of their subject. Further development in their use of assessment data is planned as school leaders acknowledge that this will lead to improved attainment.
- In some classes in the school, progress is more rapid due to effective teaching, learning and the use of assessment. Books in these classes show a range of quality work which is developed over time and which includes the application of mathematics and English skills in the wider curriculum. This good practice is now beginning to be shared with other staff at the school.
- Both attainment and progress are beginning to show improvement. Work in books demonstrates that most groups of pupils are now making progress in line with national averages. Others are showing the better than average rates of progress that are needed for them to catch up with their peers nationally.
- Current school information shows an improving picture for pupils at the school. Since the previous inspection, outcomes in both the Year 1 phonics screening check and the good level of development at the end of Reception have improved to be in line with national averages.

### Early years provision

### Requires improvement

- The teaching of basic skills, such as pencil grip and letter formation, is not as rigorous as it should be. Opportunities are missed by adults to correct mistakes or to facilitate the practice of these skills in a wider context.
- Children's starting points, while being assessed and recorded, are not systematically used to plan activities and opportunities for them to progress, based on their individual needs. As a result, some children easily complete adult-led work planned for them and are not challenged to achieve more or to develop resilience.
- This is particularly the case for the most able children. In a mathematics activity observed, children were asked to put the corresponding number of spots to a numeral on a ladybird. Some children could easily do this and finished very quickly, having to wait for others. No further challenge was provided for them.
- The early years leader understands well the strengths and areas for improvement in the Nursery and Reception classes. She has been unable to have as much of an impact



as she would like on these areas due to her teaching commitments and lack of training in assessment and tracking analysis.

- The quality of teaching is variable. Some lessons and activities, such as in phonics, meet the needs of the children well and promote progress. Others provide activities which are not appropriate to children's individual needs and are not well taught or facilitated.
- The progress of children in the early years improved in 2017 with 69% of the group reaching a good level of development at the end of Reception, compared with 71% nationally. This improvement is expected to be maintained, although staff need to be clearer with their use of assessments to ensure that children do make the progress they should.
- The progress of boys, which was an area for development at the previous inspection, has been addressed. All groups now need to be carefully monitored to ensure that they are achieving as well as they should.
- Behaviour in early years is good. Children are kept safe and welfare requirements are carefully adhered to. Children cooperate well and are developing independence. They are being taught life-skills such as putting on their own coats and helping themselves to snacks and drinks.
- The nursery nurse is skilled at developing children's language and skills. She carries out observations and assessments regularly and knows the children well. During the long-term absence of the teacher, she maintained continuity in tracking children's progress.
- Since the previous inspection, the outside area has been improved, particularly in the Nursery. This has improved the learning environment. Investment has also been made indoors and this has led to an attractive and enabling early years setting.
- Parents are kept informed about how well their children are doing as well as what they have been learning. The children are currently focusing on minibeads. An online system has recently been adopted which parents enjoy contributing to.

## School details

Unique reference number	117091
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10041762

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	188
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Caroline Jenkins
Headteacher	Nick Heald
Telephone number	01992716789
Website	<a href="http://www.holdbrook.herts.sch.uk">www.holdbrook.herts.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:head@holdbrook.herts.sch.uk">head@holdbrook.herts.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	March 2016

## Information about this school

- The school has undergone a period of turbulence since the previous inspection with some staff turnover. The school now has a full complement of staff, including a deputy headteacher, who was appointed in 2017.
- The school serves an area of deprivation. A number of families live in short-term accommodation and movement in and out of the school at times other than at the beginning of the school year is high.
- The number of disadvantaged pupils is higher than at other schools nationally. The number of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is higher than that at other schools.
- The number of pupils with English as an additional language is higher than at other schools. A large number of ethnic groups are represented at the school.
- The school meets the current government floor standards.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors considered a large range of evidence during the inspection. This included lesson observations, several undertaken jointly with school leaders.
- In addition, inspectors conducted learning walks, scrutiny of pupils' work and meetings with school leaders, including governors, and spoke with pupils, parents and staff.
- Inspectors spoke to the local authority improvement partner.
- A range of the school's documentation, including its development plan, self-evaluation, action plans and safeguarding records, was considered. Performance management documentation and governors' records were also scrutinised.
- The school's website was reviewed.
- Responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View were not sufficient to be meaningful.
- Inspectors considered the 17 staff responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.
- Ofsted's pupil questionnaire was not completed.

## Inspection team

Jacqueline Bell-Cook, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Annie Hookway

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](http://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](mailto: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](http://www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings).

### Parent View

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](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://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](mailto: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/](http://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](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2018