

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



17 April 2018

Mrs Louise Pearce  
Headteacher  
Hollycombe Primary School  
Wardley Green  
Milland  
Liphook  
Hampshire  
GU30 7LY

Dear Mrs Pearce

### **Short inspection of Hollycombe Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 12 March 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in October 2013.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

Leaders have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since joining the school in September 2017, you have led the school with determination and confidence. You have settled in quickly to the position and have the full backing of the staff, families and governors. All speak about you highly and are pleased with your impact on the whole staff team. You have evaluated accurately what the school does well and what could be even better. Your actions for making improvements are well under way. Under your leadership, senior and middle leaders are having a positive impact on teaching and learning. They uphold your high expectations well. With them, you have created a clear vision for improving the school. You are a collaborative leader who works transparently with staff and governors. This has enabled the whole school community to flourish. Parents and carers are very positive about the school and the impact you have had since arriving. One parent said, 'This is a fantastic school, where everyone is an individual.'

Pupils clearly find Hollycombe Primary School a very happy place to be. They radiate confidence and have only positive things to say. One pupil said, 'I love being at this school.' This enjoyment is reflected in their improved attendance, although attendance remains below average. Relationships across the school are warm and respectful, and there is a real sense of community and of 'being in it together'. Pupils of all ages play happily together and enjoy each other's company. Adults join in willingly with the activities at breaktimes, creating a positive buzz of enjoyment.

Leaders have successfully addressed those areas for improvement identified at the

last inspection. The quality of teaching is now consistently strong. A new, whole-school approach to assessment has been developed effectively. This has ensured that information about pupils' progress and attainment is robust and accurate. Pupils said that teaching supports and challenges them in equal measure. The teaching of mathematics has also improved. You have introduced interventions to ensure that those pupils who fall behind are identified quickly and supported successfully.

Current pupils behave well and have good attitudes to learning. Work in their exercise books demonstrates that they are making good progress in a range of subjects. Nevertheless, pupils are not supported to make consistently strong progress in writing. Similarly, staff new to leadership have developed well. However, some still need to consolidate their work by monitoring provision and outcomes more closely and taking swift action to address any issues that arise.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Arrangements to keep pupils safe are effective. For instance, when recruiting staff, leaders carry out all appropriate checks to ensure that all staff are suitable to work with pupils. Similarly, governors undertake regular checks of records and procedures and ensure that they have up-to-date knowledge to carry out their safeguarding responsibilities thoroughly.

Importantly, you ensure that there is a culture of keeping pupils safe from harm. Staff are vigilant and have a clear understanding of their responsibilities to protect pupils. They know what to do if they have concerns. The school keeps clear records and follows up any areas of concern immediately.

Pupils feel really safe at Hollycombe. Relationships are very positive across the school and pupils feel that they can talk to any member of staff if they have a problem. Pupils reported that bullying is not an issue. They are confident that if it does happen staff are very good at dealing with it. You ensure that pupils know how to keep themselves safe. For example, the school's website provides helpful information for parents about online safety.

Parents are positive about the high level of support that Staff provide for pupils. All parents who spoke to me during the inspection feel that their children are safe in school. As one parent commented, 'Hollycombe is a school that really cares.'

### **Inspection findings**

- During this inspection, we looked closely at specific aspects of the school's provision, including the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements and attendance, pupils' achievement in writing and mathematics, and the quality of the provision in the early years.
- You have introduced a number of successful strategies to ensure that pupils miss less time in school. You have analysed reasons for a drop in attendance in 2017 and communicated to parents the importance of pupils coming to school every

day. The school is now quick to follow up when a child is absent. This has stabilised attendance, but you are aware that more needs to be done to improve attendance.

- Leaders have focused successfully on developing pupils' spelling and phonics skills. You have provided additional high-quality staff training, raised expectations and introduced new, effective interventions. You have also strengthened the way the school assesses pupils' outcomes. Pupils' writing is improving, and a clear progression of skills across the age range is developing. However, pupils are not given enough opportunities to consolidate their writing skills, for example by writing at length, and this hampers their progress.
- Leaders have taken robust steps to improve pupils' mathematics skills by improving the quality of teaching. For instance, teachers have been given the opportunity to observe good teaching throughout the school to help refine their own skills.
- You ensure that leaders monitor the teaching of mathematics well. They provide teachers with effective feedback that has had a positive impact on pupils' achievements. Consequently, pupils' confidence in reasoning and problem solving has grown, and work in their exercise books shows that they are making good progress. However, in some other subjects, leaders' monitoring is not as effective.
- Teaching in the early years is effective and the learning experiences are vivid. There is a very good range of well-organised resources that encourage children to develop independence. Children learn well with their peers, and relationships are strong throughout the classroom. Children are assessed accurately, and books show that this information is used to ensure that children make strong progress across the curriculum.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- attendance continues to improve
- teachers ensure that pupils' progress in writing is consistently strong and provide more opportunities for them to consolidate their skills
- middle leaders have greater impact on securing stronger outcomes for pupils, by monitoring provision more closely and taking effective action to address identified issues.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for West Sussex. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Felix Rayner  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I visited classrooms, assessing the progress pupils were making and talked to them about their learning. I observed pupils' behaviour throughout the day. Discussions were held with senior and middle leaders, the chair of the governing body and three other governors. I spoke with a representative of the local authority on the telephone. I talked to parents at the start of the school day, and considered 57 replies to Ofsted's online parent questionnaire, Parent View, 13 replies to the staff survey and 53 replies to the pupil survey. A wide range of documentation was scrutinised, including the single central record of staff checks, safeguarding documents, pupils' progress and attainment information, the school's self-evaluation and development planning, and records of visits by the local authority.