

Holly Spring Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109807
Local Authority	Bracknell Forest
Inspection number	310104
Inspection dates	15–16 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Derek Watts

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	182
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Alan Buffett
Headteacher	Mrs Julia Paradine
Date of previous school inspection	6 October 2003
School address	Lily Hill Road Bracknell RG12 2SW
Telephone number	01344 483920
Fax number	01344 305454

Age group	3–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Holly Spring Infant and Nursery is a larger than average school of its type. About 80% of the pupils come from a White British background. The remainder come from a range of other ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average and none of these are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is about average and the nature of these include speech, language and communication difficulties and moderate learning difficulties. The headteacher was appointed in September 2007.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Holly Spring Infant and Nursery is a good school. Pupils are achieving well because of good teaching and an interesting curriculum. Effective pastoral care and support, and a positive school atmosphere result in good personal development and well-being for pupils. Parents hold very positive views about the school and are really pleased with both the care and education provided for their children. The headteacher, approachability of staff, additional activities and communication all receive praise. Typical comments from the parent questionnaire were, 'Well managed school', 'Warm and friendly staff', 'I love the weekly newsletter that keeps me up to date and reminds me what is going on,' and 'Good range of after school clubs'.

Good leadership and management contribute well to the school's effectiveness. The recently appointed headteacher brings good experience to the school and provides clear educational direction. She has quickly gained the confidence and respect of pupils, staff and parents. The school systematically reviews its performance and the findings are used well to bring about any needed improvements. There have been improvements to attendance and, more recently, to Foundation Stage provision. Positive action is being taken to improve pupils' progress in writing. There are adequate systems to assess and monitor pupils' progress but the school has not taken full advantage of efficient systems evident in some Foundation Stage classes. Consequently, although pupils' individual assessments are easily analysed, it is more difficult to monitor the overall performance of a year group. The headteacher receives sound support from other senior staff. Other leaders are strengthening their roles so that they can become more effective in monitoring performance and planning for improvement.

Teachers have good relationships with their pupils. Activities and tasks are usually well tailored to pupils' abilities and needs. As a result, pupils are challenged, their interest is maintained and they make good gains in their learning. Occasionally, learning slows in lessons because of overlong introductions and pupils are not sufficiently involved in their learning. Teaching assistants are well deployed and make a valuable contribution to learning, particularly in supporting those pupils who need extra support, especially with their social skills or their literacy. A wide range of additional clubs and visits enriches a good curriculum.

Standards by the end of Year 2 in 2007 were above average in reading, mathematics and science. Standards were closer to average in writing where fewer pupils attained the higher levels. The school has increased opportunities for pupils to practise their writing and is effectively promoting skills through drama and role-play. Visits to places of interest have also inspired pupils' writing. There are signs that this action is having a positive impact on pupils' progress. However, the school recognises that there is scope to provide even more opportunities for extended writing.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and this is reflected in their keen participation in activities. They are courteous, friendly and relate well to others. Behaviour is consistently good in lessons and around the school. Attendance is average. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles and keep themselves safe. They make good contributions to the school and wider community. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children's attainment on entry to the Nursery is wide ranging but is broadly typical in most year groups. Children settle quickly and make good gains in their personal and social

development. Children enjoy their learning and relate well to adults and other children. There have been significant improvements to the planning and organisation of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Children are provided with a stimulating range of indoor and outdoor activities. Teachers and assistants provide a good blend of adult led activities that encourage children to explore, be creative and work independently. Children are making good progress in all areas of learning. The school is taking positive steps to improve the assessment and recording of children's attainment but the systems are not consistent in the three classes. Current standards in Reception are above those expected except in some elements of literacy, particularly in writing.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement and standards in writing by increasing opportunities for extended writing so that more pupils attain the higher levels.
- Ensure that learning in all lessons proceeds at a good pace and that pupils are involved fully in their learning.
- Implement more efficient systems for monitoring pupils' progress throughout the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well and standards are above average. Children get off to a good start in the Nursery and good progress continues through to the end of Year 2. Standards were above average by the end of Year 2 last year except in writing which was closer to average. There are signs that pupils are making better progress in writing because of action taken by the school. Pupils who need additional support with communication and language make good progress because they receive effective and helpful adult support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are enthusiastic about school and show positive attitudes to learning. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The clear expectations by staff and positive relationships lead to consistently good conduct. Pupils form good relationships with adults and amongst themselves. They work well collaboratively in a range of activities. Since the last inspection, attendance has improved from below average to average levels. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles and possess an excellent understanding of the importance of healthy diets and taking regular exercise. The raising of funds for a variety of charities contributes well to the wider community. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education because by the time they leave, they have well-developed personal and social skills and good reading and numeracy skills. Pupils' writing skills are sound and are improving.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Across the school, teachers have established positive relationships with pupils and manage them well. Pupils are attentive and respond well to their teachers' clear instructions, explanations and effective questioning. In Year 2 for example, speaking, listening, and writing skills are developed well through drama, puppets and story telling. Songs and tunes are used imaginatively

to promote mathematical vocabulary and number work. Pupils are challenged and make good progress because activities and tasks are usually well matched to their abilities and needs. However, introductions to lessons are sometimes too long and this results in a slow pace and a lack of pupil involvement. Teaching assistants are effectively deployed and contribute well to learning, particularly for pupils who need additional support. The marking of pupils' work is constructive and helpful. Praise is given for good work and there are clear comments to guide improvement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum enables pupils to make good progress and contributes well to their personal development. The school places a clear emphasis on developing speaking and listening, reading and numeracy skills. Improving writing is a current priority. The school is developing a thematic curriculum where different subjects are linked within a topic or theme. For example, in Year 2, writing skills, artwork, design and technology, and ICT are all effectively incorporated into the exciting topic 'George and the Dragon'. Interesting themed weeks include, 'Travel Week', 'Music Week' and 'Health week'. These and the links between subjects add enjoyment, meaning add relevance to pupils' learning and help with improving their writing. A wide range of additional activities successfully enriches the curriculum. The clubs and visits provided are much appreciated by the pupils and their parents. Popular clubs include, football, gymnastics, judo and recorders. The school is particularly successful at promoting healthy lifestyles.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pastoral care and support contribute well to pupils' personal development. The headteacher and staff know the pupils well and have established good relationships with them and their parents. As parents commented 'Staff are very approachable, caring and helpful at all times'. Procedures to ensure pupils' protection and safety are good. The school has clear systems to monitor and promote good attendance. These have led to improvements in attendance figures. Procedures for assessing and tracking pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory but some of the systems in use do not enable staff to analyse the performance of a whole year and this hampers their efforts to check pupils' progress and performance efficiently. Assessment is being used appropriately to set individual learning targets in English and mathematics for Year 2. In Year 1, pupils of similar ability have group targets. Consequently, most pupils know what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher brings a good range of experience and skills to the school. Other senior leaders provide sound support. Leadership and management are promoting effective provision and good outcomes for pupils. Effective self-evaluation means that the school knows what it does well and takes positive action to bring about improvements. Rising attendance rates and improvements to the Foundation Stage provision demonstrate a good capacity to improve. The roles of other leaders are developing well so that they are becoming more effective in monitoring performance and planning for improvement. Governance is satisfactory. Some governors are fully involved in the life of the school and have a good understanding of its performance and

improvement priorities. However, others are not sufficiently involved or informed enough to be able to provide the necessary balance of challenge and support.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

30 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Holly Spring Infant and Nursery School, Bracknell, RG12 2SW

Thank you so much for welcoming us into your school and showing us your work. We enjoyed our visit and would like to tell you what we have found. Yours is a good school.

The main strengths of the school are:

- you all thoroughly enjoy school
- children in Nursery and Reception get off to a good start
- the school is a friendly, caring and pleasant place to be
- behaviour is good in lessons and around the school
- teaching is good, which is why you are learning so well
- there is a good range of clubs and visits which help your learning and you clearly enjoy
- your understanding of how to keep healthy is excellent
- your headteacher and the other staff look after the school well
- the teachers and other grown-ups take good care of you and help you when you need it
- your school gets on well with your parents and your parents are pleased with everything the school does.

There are three things that your teachers could work on to make it even better.

- Some of you could do even better in your writing with more opportunities to write long pieces of work.
- Your teachers should make sure that all lessons are lively and that you are fully involved in your learning.
- Your teachers should make sure that the ways they have of checking children's work in Nursery and Reception are good in all the classes. They should also improve the systems they have for checking on how well pupils are doing in Years 1 and 2.

Finally, thank you once again for all your help. I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Derek Watts

Lead Inspector