

Holly Primary School

Holly Drive, Forest Town, Mansfield, NG19 0NT

Inspection dates 18–19 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Strong leadership and management, especially of teaching and learning, have successfully improved the quality of teaching and raised pupils' achievement.
- Standards are rising quickly.
- Children are given a flying start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. By the time they leave Year 6, pupils have achieved well.
- Pupils' progress through Key Stage 2, which had been lagging behind, has improved considerably, especially in Years 5 and 6.
- This year's Year 6 cohort is on track to have made outstanding progress from their starting points in Year 1.
- Teaching is good. Careful planning includes a variety of activities designed to maintain pupils' interest and help them to think hard.
- Pupils feel safe in school and they behave well. Their attitudes to learning are exemplary at times.
- Pupils say that they enjoy coming to school because their teachers help them a lot.
- The vibrant provision for music and drama has a highly beneficial effect on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and on their enjoyment of learning.
- Governors know how good the school can become and challenge leaders determinedly to continue improvement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although excellent practice is beginning to be shared, this has not yet ensured outstanding teaching.
- While there is excellent marking and guidance in English, that for some other subjects, including mathematics, is not as effective.
- Some of the school written policies are not tailored well enough to Holly Primary to effectively underpin the good practice evident in school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors saw 20 lessons and part lessons, five of which were observed jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with members of staff, pupils, a representative from the local authority and governors.
- Inspectors took account of 38 responses from parents via the online Parent View questionnaire as well as the results of a recent survey of parents' views conducted by the school. Questionnaires completed by 26 staff members were also taken into account.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and examined a wide range of documentation including: national assessment data and the school's own assessments; the school's own view of its work; local authority reports; minutes from governing body meetings; samples of pupils' work and a range of school policies and their implementation, including those related to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Ruth McFarlane, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Brian Simber

Additional Inspector

Malcolm Johnstone

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school in which most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium funding is below average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority).
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average. This includes pupils supported by school action. Similarly, a below average proportion of pupils are supported by school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs.
- The school meets the current floor standard, which is the government's minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- A breakfast club and an after-school care club are provided for pupils during term time.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching to outstanding by:
 - sharing the excellent practice in the school more effectively
 - improving marking so that the high standard seen in English books is matched in all subjects.
- Improve the quality of the school written policies to ensure they clearly fit Holly Primary and underpin the good practice in the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The majority of children enter Nursery with skills and abilities that are below what is typical for their age. Starting skills in numeracy, communication, language and literacy are sometimes well below expectations. Exciting activities planned for all children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, supported by, at times, outstanding teaching gets them off to a rapid start.
- The wooded outdoor learning area was abuzz with good learning throughout the inspection. In an Early Years session, children learned much from a much-enjoyed activity in which they found pre-placed vegetables in the forest area, and matched them to cards designed to extend their mathematical skills. Good and sometimes outstanding progress enables the majority to reach the standard typically expected in all that they do by the end of Reception.
- Good progress and achievement continues in Years 1 and 2. Year 1 pupils did well in their phonics screening check in 2013 and are on track for similar results this year. This has a good effect on reading standards in Year 2 as well as encouraging children to write more confidently.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 2 are currently broadly average, having improved recently. This represents good achievement from their earlier starting points.
- Previously, pupils in Key Stage 2 had ground to make up, especially in writing. Progress is still variable in lower Key Stage 2 but is good for most classes. It is strongest in Year 6, who entered the key stage below average. Data indicate that the current cohort has made outstanding progress. This is due to strong leadership and better teaching.
- Accurate school assessments, backed up by pupils' current work, show that standards are on track to be at least average overall in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6. A much higher proportion of pupils are on track to achieve the higher Level 5 and Level 6 in Year 6 than previously.
- The school's focus on improved progress has been relentless. As a result, good progress is firmly established. Attitudes to learning have not been neglected. Most pupils' presentation of their work in all their books is a joy to behold.
- Pupils build well on the good start they make in reading in Key Stage 1. At the end of Year 6 pupils read fluently from texts they have not seen before. They recognise the importance of reading and are clear about the authors they like.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. Their particular needs are planned for very carefully. Outside help from other agencies is provided, where necessary, to good effect.
- The school identifies the most able pupils and makes provision for their learning. Generally, they make similar progress to others.
- Pupils who are supported by the pupil premium make good progress. There are too few to compare their attainment with others in their class without potentially identifying them. Governors check the group's progress rigorously, as well as use of the funding, to make sure that it is effectively supporting equality of opportunity.

The quality of teaching is good

- Activities planned are always lively and interesting. Time is filled with tasks and the next target for pupils to reach is never far away.
- The focus on writing involving rigorous half termly checks and training has led to a noticeable improvement in pupils' writing and in their understanding and use of grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- Teaching assistants are very much a crucial part of the teaching team. They are trained well and provide good support for small groups and when working alongside teachers in classes.
- Expectations in mathematics are generally high and pupils respond well because they enjoy the challenges. Teaching helps them to learn a variety of ways to calculate and use their knowledge of numbers to solve problems. Pupils' work shows that over time, teaching enables them to pick up skills at a good pace.
- Activities take account of varying abilities in the classes. This is why this year's Year 6 cohort is set to reap the benefits by achieving more of the higher grades. In most other classes work is set at a higher level for the most able pupils, but this is not effective in lower Key Stage 2 in terms of helping pupils think more deeply and work things out for themselves.
- There is good teaching in most subjects. When pupils' views about physical education were canvassed pupils were very positive. Music and drama has a high profile in the school. Pupils and staff displayed much enthusiasm for their current film making and scheduled screening for parents of *'Alice the Musical'*. The excitement spills over into planning in a number of subjects. Many of the mathematics tasks set in the run-up to the production featured problems Alice and the other characters might face, such as hazards to calculate while tumbling down the rabbit hole. This strategy held pupils' interest and perseverance and led to excellent learning.
- Teachers check progress and revise pupils' targets at regular intervals. English books are marked exceptionally well in most classes so pupils always know how well they have achieved and what to do next. Marking in other subjects is not as effective. Sometimes misunderstandings are not picked up and corrected, and guidance is limited.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and sometimes their behaviour and enthusiasm in lessons is excellent.
- Attendance has risen recently to above average. Pupils arrive promptly for the day, dressed neatly in their school uniform.
- Pupils behave well around the school. Playtimes are enjoyable. Pupils are well mannered and keep their school building and play areas clean. They are mindful of each other and show respect for adults. They understand and respect others' different circumstances and lifestyles.
- Pupils contribute well to the everyday life of the school. The school council has some good ideas for improvement and makes sure that everyone has a say.

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils feel safe in school and say that they are well cared for. Almost all those who expressed a view would recommend the school to others. All believe their child is happy and kept safe. Parents appreciate the additional care provided via the breakfast and after-school clubs.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying, and how hurtful name-calling can be. They say that any such incidents are very rare in school and are confident that they would be dealt with swiftly should they occur.
- Pupils also understand how to avoid some of the possible risks outside of school and to keep themselves safe and healthy.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher form a highly effective team. Their skills and ability to bring out the best from colleagues and in knowing what was needed to raise pupils' achievement has been crucial in the school's recent improvement.
- The vision for the school's progress is fully shared by staff and governors. All work with determination to fulfil the ambition they share for every pupil.
- Robust checking of the school's work has provided an accurate picture of what is going well and what still needs to be done. Leaders know the importance of improving teaching further and smoothing out the remaining inconsistencies in order to raise achievement to outstanding.
- The local authority has provided effective support. It is confident that school leaders are well capable of managing the school's further improvement.
- The skills of teachers to lead subjects are improving. Good headway is being made in preparing for the introduction of a new curriculum (subjects and activities taught) in September 2014. The current programme meets pupils' needs and helps them to achieve well. Music and drama are strengths, promoting pupils' spiritual; moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well. Every Year 3 and 4 pupil learns the violin and older pupils may continue with it.
- Allocated sports funding is used effectively to enrich the scope of sports and other outdoor activities. Teachers' skills in leading those activities are improving because of their work alongside the specialist professionals bought in with the funds. There is a strong impact on pupils' skills and understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle.
- The leadership of teaching and learning has been central to the school's work and has brought changes for the better. Generally, teachers have successfully risen to the challenge of higher expectations underpinned by the Teachers Standards and are fully aware of how their performance is linked to increases in salary. However, the small amount of excellent practice in the school is not shared well enough to be an effective influence for others to reach the highest level.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - There is a good range of experience and expertise within the governing body. Governors' understanding of national assessment data, and how well the school works generally, equips them well to challenge the school effectively and help to set its clear direction for further improvement. Governors manage finances efficiently but have relied on generic policies to

underpin their fulfilment of statutory duties. While these comply, they do not currently reflect the good practice in school. Safeguarding requirements are met.

- Governors are particularly watchful over the use of pupil premium funding and its impact on achievement as well as the school's actions regarding sports funding. They also have a clear overview of teaching quality in the school and of how the school's pay policy is to be applied to ensure the best value.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	122727
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	441946

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	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	357
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Amanda Proctor
Headteacher	Duncan White
Date of previous school inspection	31 October 2012
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