

Holly Grove Primary School

Holly Grove Lane, Chase Terrace, Burntwood, Staffordshire WS7 1LU

Inspection dates

8–9 November 2017

| Overall effectiveness | Requires improvement |
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| 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 | Good |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Good |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not yet good. The strongest teaching is not shared widely enough. As a result, pupils' progress varies across the school and is not consistently strong.
- Some teachers' expectations of pupils' achievement have not been high enough. Pupils are not routinely challenged in their learning.
- Leaders and governors' evaluation of the school's effectiveness is too generous. Self-evaluation lacks precision.
- Outcomes across the school vary. By the end of key stage 2, not enough pupils are making the progress required to reach the levels they are capable of.
- There are gaps in achievement between boys and girls. Some boys are not adequately engaged in their learning or making sufficient rates of progress.
- Pupils' basic skills are not adequately developed across the wider curriculum. Learning in subjects such as history and geography lacks challenge.
- Although assessment procedures have developed, more time is required to fully embed these new systems.
- Some parents hold mixed views about the school's performance. Parental concerns include the effectiveness of day-to-day communication and homework.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders and governors have a sound grasp of the school's areas for development. They have demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure improvements in some aspects of the school's work.
- The early years foundation stage is well led and children get off to a strong start at Holly Grove. Children develop and grow in a nurturing and purposeful learning environment.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils are well mannered and cooperate with one another well. Pupils speak positively about their experiences and enjoy opportunities to learn with their friends across the school.
- Attendance is consistently strong. Leaders have effectively supported any families who have lower attendance. There are very few persistent absentees.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by ensuring:
 - leaders instil consistently higher expectations in teachers
 - teachers are provided with good opportunities to share what works best in the school
 - self-evaluation is more precise and clearly identifies the key weaknesses in practice
 - swift action is taken to tackle any differences in achievement between different groups of pupils
 - leaders and governors review their strategies for communicating with parents and continue to respond promptly to any queries from parents
 - the curriculum is monitored with greater rigour to ensure that pupils are challenged and have more opportunities to apply their basic skills.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and thereby pupil outcomes, by making sure that:
 - assessment information is used promptly and accurately to inform teachers' planning and offer pupils a higher level of challenge
 - teachers ensure that boys are routinely engaged in their learning and that their progress is monitored with greater frequency.
- Further improve personal development, behaviour and welfare by ensuring:
 - boys are focused on their learning and adequately challenged so that they make more rapid progress.
- Further improve early years by ensuring:
 - the outdoor environment is developed so that it is as appealing and inviting to children as that found indoors
 - assessment systems allow teachers to better identify those children that are ready for even more challenge so that they can achieve at a higher level.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders and governors have been over-generous with their self-evaluation of the school's overall effectiveness. Evaluation documents and plans do not always precisely identify the school's key weaknesses. Although the school has several strengths, teaching is not yet ensuring that pupils make strong progress across the curriculum by the time they leave at the end of key stage 2.
- Improvement plans are beginning to develop teaching and learning but many strategies are new. For example, leaders have introduced new procedures for assessing pupils' achievement. The systems that have been used previously have not allowed the school to accurately identify underachievement quickly and respond appropriately. As a result, outcomes vary across the school.
- The leadership team recognises that further work is required to reverse the decline in achievement in some parts of the school. Leaders and governors are committed to improving the rate at which pupils progress, particularly in key stage 2.
- Leaders and governors have ensured that teachers are supported and challenged to improve their practice. This is resulting in improvements but teachers' expectations still vary. Expectations of what pupils can and should achieve as they move through key stages 1 and 2 are not yet consistently high enough.
- A programme of training has been devised to support and develop all staff. The programme rightly responds to areas that require development. However, leaders acknowledge that the programme does not fully take account of the most important issues in school, or set out how these areas will be monitored over time.
- Leaders have made changes to the curriculum following the introduction of the new national curriculum. The curriculum provides pupils with opportunities to learn in different ways and undertake 'enrichment' activities. Pupils speak positively about opportunities to learn new skills with their younger and older friends from across the school. However, some teaching in subjects such as history and geography does not offer enough challenge. Leaders are not ensuring that pupils have frequent opportunities to practise and apply their basic skills. As a result, progress varies across the curriculum and is not rapid enough.
- Parents who responded to Parent View hold mixed views about the school. The school's own parent questionnaires have identified some concerns in relation to communication and homework. The school has acted upon these areas and made changes to its practice. Leaders and governors are receptive to feedback and recognise that there is more work to be done.
- Some parents are very happy with school life. One parent commented: 'Holly Grove staff work hard to make sure the school is a happy place to be.' This view was typical of those parents who express greater satisfaction with the school.
- The school's vision and values are embedded and understood by all. Holly Grove's 'TORCH' values (Tolerance, Ownership, Respect, Cooperation and Happiness) support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are proud of their school and are able to clearly explain the importance of values such as tolerance and respect.

They value one another and say that it is OK to be different at their school.

- Leaders ensure that British values are promoted and incorporated into daily life. However, pupils are not able to articulate a secure understanding of some values. Leaders recognise that there is scope to monitor the promotion of British values more rigorously and are taking steps to do so.
- Pupil premium funding is used to fund the position of a pupil premium champion and a range of relevant strategies. The pupil premium champion understands pupils' needs well and uses this knowledge to offer pupils effective additional help. As a result, disadvantaged pupils are improving their attendance and receiving well-targeted support. However, much of this work is new and is not yet fully embedded.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are well supported. Leaders assess pupils' needs promptly and work with external agencies to secure additional support. Funding is used effectively to establish extra adult support and help pupils secure progress.
- The use and impact of the physical education (PE) and sport premium is a strength of the school. Coaches with specific skills and expertise have supported teachers to develop their practice and overall confidence. This support has had a marked effect on the quality and impact of teaching in PE. Pupils at Holly Grove participate in a wide range of physical activities both in school and at external events. The school has gained accreditations for its effective work in this area. One of the school's football teams has recently reached the district finals. The school is rightly proud of its sports provision.

Governance of the school

- Governors recognise what needs to improve in the school. Governors:
 - are committed to developing pupils both academically and personally
 - are focused on succession planning and understand the importance of ensuring that leaders continue to be held to account for the variation in pupils' achievement in some areas of the school
 - have ensured that the effectiveness of safeguarding is carefully monitored
 - acknowledge that the school's key issues must be identified more precisely through self-evaluation and improvement plans.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have created a culture of safeguarding in the school. Every pupil who inspectors spoke to said that they feel safe in school. Pupils are confident that there is someone to talk to if they have a concern. Pupils very much value the school's 'Hub' (a dedicated base at lunchtime with staff on hand to offer extra help and support to all pupils).
- Staff are regularly trained in a wide range of safeguarding matters. Staff have a strong awareness of safeguarding procedures and know what to do if they have a concern.

- Records are detailed and well organised. Leaders engage well with parents and other stakeholders to ensure that pupils are safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment varies across the school. Teaching is not yet ensuring that pupils make consistently strong progress.
- Teachers' planning is not routinely meeting pupils' needs. Some pupils are not moved on quickly enough when learning is too easy. As a result, pupils' progress is not rapid enough, particularly in key stages 1 and 2.
- The wider curriculum in particular lacks rigour and challenge. In subjects such as history and geography, pupils are generally undertaking the same learning regardless of their ability and needs. Some activities do not provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to practise and develop their writing skills.
- Some teachers have high expectations. Where this is the case, pupils make better rates of progress and are more engaged in their learning. However, these higher expectations are not consistent across key stages 1 and 2. In some classes, boys are not routinely focused on their work or able to explain the skills that they are learning about or getting better at. Consequently, there are gaps between the attainment of boys and girls, particularly in writing. Leaders are aware of these gaps but more needs to be done to secure more rapid rates of progress.
- Assessment procedures have evolved significantly in the last year. Teachers now have access to systems that will help them make more frequent and accurate judgements about pupils' achievement. However, this work is very new and more time is required to ensure that systems are embedded and effective. Assessment information is not yet used well enough to ensure that pupils are adequately challenged.
- Teachers have positive relationships with pupils. Teachers are proud to work at Holly Grove and state that they are well supported by leaders. Some teachers, including leaders who have class responsibilities, have a range of strong skills and expertise. However, leaders have not planned adequate opportunities for teachers to share this good practice.

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 confident and were generally very happy to speak to inspectors about their learning. Pupils particularly enjoy opportunities to learn with their peers from different year groups.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different faiths. They are able to talk about important festivals and special times in the year.
- Pupils enjoy a range of different responsibilities including opportunities to be a school councillor, a member of the eco-committee, a peer mediator or a sports ambassador.

- Some parents raised concerns about how well the school deals with bullying. Inspectors discussed bullying with pupils during their visits to classes and in separate meetings with different groups. While the majority of pupils raised no concerns about behaviour in school, some pupils did talk about bullying. However, all pupils who inspectors spoke to feel that any concerns they raise are dealt with quickly by teachers.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Inspectors observed no incidents of poor behaviour throughout the inspection. Pupils are well mannered, are proud of their school and are keen to share their views.
- Leaders track pupils' behaviour rigorously. They analyse information at frequent intervals to check for any trends and establish appropriate actions.
- The school's 'Hub' is particularly effective. Pupils identify it as somewhere safe and welcoming where they can share any concerns or worries.
- Levels of attendance are strong. Holly Grove sustained attendance levels above national in 2016-2017. Any persistent absentees are quickly identified and supported to make improvements. As a result, the proportion of pupils with low attendance is small.
- Although behaviour is a strength across the school, it is particularly impressive in the early years. Staff in the foundation stage waste no time ensuring that children settle quickly and become confident and cooperative learners.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes for pupils vary across different groups and key stages.
- Children make better rates of progress from their different starting points in early years. Pupils' progress in key stages 1 and 2 is mixed.
- The proportion of pupils that pass the phonics screening check in Year 1 has improved over the last three years and is now in line with national.
- The proportion of pupils that reach the expected standard in key stage 1 is rising but there are some significant gaps between boys and girls. This is particularly the case in writing. The school's own assessment information, and work in pupils' books, evidences these differences.
- By the time pupils leave at the end of key stage 2, some have not made sufficient progress to ensure that they reach or exceed the expected standard. Progress is low compared to the national average for some groups, particularly boys.
- Some of the most able pupils are not adequately challenged by teachers to ensure that a greater proportion attain at a higher level. Some teachers do effectively challenge pupils but this practice is not yet consistent across the school.
- The number of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is often too small within different year groups to draw meaningful comparisons. However, due to careful tracking, it is evident that the needs of this group of pupils are being met and that progress is being secured.

- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils across the school is also small. Tracking systems have been devised for these pupils. However, these are not yet embedded, or providing leaders with an accurate picture of progress over time. As with other groups of pupils, leaders and teachers are not yet making best use of information to ensure that disadvantaged pupils secure more rapid rates of progress.
- Strong improvements have been secured in the key stage 2 English, grammar, punctuation and spelling test. Due to the effective action of leaders and teachers, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in this test rose sharply in 2017 and is above the national average. This demonstrates the capacity of leaders to address key weaknesses in the school's performance.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years foundation stage is effectively led. Children are well supported by skilled staff and make strong progress from their starting points.
- Relationships between children and staff are well established. From a very early age, children listen attentively and are engaged in their learning. This is particularly well evidenced in Reception's recent woodwork learning. Children have learned to manage risks and effectively used a range of tools to construct pretend fireworks. Children have used hammer 'tapping' skills to secure different parts, such as bottle tops and beads, to their fireworks to create sounds. Children have used their learning in woodwork to explore their writing skills and describe the sounds that fireworks make. Activities like this typify learning in early years.
- Children's literacy and mathematics skills are developed from the earliest point in early years. Nursery children have been photographed by staff keeping tally charts of building blocks and making marks to describe what their friends are doing.
- Teaching in the early years is having a very positive impact on children's learning. Staff use a range of resources and strategies to keep all pupils fully engaged. Boys are motivated to learn and enjoy opportunities to read and write.
- The behaviour of children in the early years is strong. Children quickly learn the school's routines and expectations. Children are eager to please and receive praise from their teachers.
- Children's books also demonstrate the progress that they are making. However, there is scope for some children to receive an even greater level challenge. Current cohorts are entering the school with levels of skills and knowledge that are typical for their age. With suitable challenge from staff, there is scope for the most able children to reach an even higher level. Information about what children can do, and what they need to do next, is not yet used rigorously enough to drive more rapid rates of progress.
- The outdoor environment is not as appealing as that found indoors. Some resources are tired and are in need of replacement. The outdoor provision requires further development to ensure that it routinely provides children with opportunities to fully develop their literacy and mathematical skills.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 124212 |
| Local authority | Staffordshire |
| Inspection number | 10037875 |

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

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| 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 | 345 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr Darren Lennon |
| Headteacher | Mrs Dawn O'Hare |
| Telephone number | 01543 278 620 |
| Website | www.hollygroveschool.co.uk/ |
| Email address | headteacher@hollygrove.staffs.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 8–9 May 2013 |

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The large majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, is well below average.
- Governors are responsible for the operation and management of a before-and-after school club called Holly Berries.
- Several classes across the school are mixed age.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in every class. The majority of observations were undertaken jointly with leaders. Inspectors conducted a book scrutiny with leaders on the second day of the inspection.
- Inspectors held meetings with leaders to review provision in the following areas: the curriculum, SEN, additional funding, early years, personal development behaviour and welfare, and safeguarding.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents to ascertain the effectiveness of safeguarding. Documents included: the single central record, policies and procedures, training certificates and risk assessments.
- Inspectors took account of all the responses to Ofsted questionnaires. These included 17 from staff, 34 from parents on free text, 115 from parents on Parent View, and 53 from pupils. Inspectors spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day. Inspectors spoke with pupils throughout the inspection and held separate meetings with small groups.
- The lead inspector met with four governors including the chair of governors. The lead inspector held a telephone discussion with a representative from the local authority and met them in person at the end of the inspection.

Inspection team

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|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Jonathan Keay, lead inspector | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Nadeem Bhatti | Ofsted Inspector |
| Linda Brown | Ofsted Inspector |

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