

Holme Slack Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119234
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	379759
Inspection dates	26–27 January 2012
Lead inspector	Naomi Taylor

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	144
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Keith Manogue
Headteacher	Michelle Peck
Date of previous school inspection	16 June 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Naomi Taylor
Hilary Ward

Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 12 lessons, taught by seven teachers. Discussions were held with school staff, groups of pupils, a representative of the local authority, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body and parents and carers. They took account of any responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation provided by the school, including safeguarding documents, records of pupils' attainment and progress and pupils' work. The responses to questionnaires from 41 parents and carers, 41 pupils and 15 staff were also analysed.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average primary school. The vast majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is well above the national average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is also well above the national average. There has been a considerable amount of instability in staffing since the previous inspection.

The school has a unit for children with hearing impairments. The school has Healthy School status and holds the quality mark for basic skills. It meets the current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Key Stage 2.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall Effectiveness	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a satisfactory school. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about their 'lovely school'. They value opportunities for them to engage in their children's learning, but some would welcome greater involvement. From entering the school with skills that are well below those expected for their age, pupils achieve satisfactorily. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is below average overall, but improving. Instability in staffing over recent years has had a negative impact on Key Stages 1 and 2 national test results but these are, however, improving securely. Pupils' attainment in mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2 has improved and the school is now focused on improving attainment in English, which is already beginning to rise rapidly.
- Teaching is satisfactory and improving. The school provides good support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. As a result, these pupils make good and sometimes better progress. Pupils with hearing impairment are well supported and cared for. In English, pupils, particularly the more able, are not always consistently challenged. Marking and the use of self and peer assessment are too variable.
- Pupils typically behave well in lessons and around the school and they feel very safe. There is a strong emphasis on pupils' personal development, which gives them confidence to move on to the next stage in their education. The new attendance policy has led to an improvement in attendance and the number of exclusions has fallen.
- The headteacher and staff have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Performance management has been used well to help make good improvements to the quality of teaching and learning and to make best use of staff's skills. Phonics (linking letters with the sounds they make) is now rightly taught by ability rather than age. There have been a number of recent and significant changes, supported by the local authority, which are having an immediate impact on accelerating progress.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure consistently good quality teaching and learning in Key Stages 1 and 2 to raise pupils' attainment in English by the end of Year 6 by:
 - ensuring that the tracking of pupils' progress is consistently and precisely used to plan lessons to meet individual needs, particularly the more able
 - using a consistent approach to marking in order to help pupils to understand how to improve, by providing more opportunities for them to reflect on their work through peer and self-assessment
 - developing further opportunities for parents and carers to engage in their children's learning both in school and at home.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Children start school with skills and knowledge that are generally below or well below those expected for their age. Throughout their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, children achieve satisfactorily due to the successful reorganisation of teaching and learning. A nurture group is accelerating the progress of a small group of pupils. Similarly, pupils are making better progress now that phonics is taught across the school by ability rather than by age. Evidence from lesson observations and the school's monitoring demonstrate that all pupils are fully engaged in learning and making satisfactory progress.

Attainment at the end of Year 6 is broadly average in mathematics, but lower in English. Following turbulence in staffing, the headteacher quickly instigated support from the local authority and this is having an immediate, positive impact on the quality of teaching and progress of pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2. More able pupils are now being provided with more challenge, particularly in mathematics lessons, and the less able pupils have appropriate bespoke support.

Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs gain much in their development from regularly working in small groups. In line with other groups of pupils their achievement is satisfactory. Parents and carers believe that their children are now making good progress and there was evidence of this during the inspection for mathematics, but not English.

On entering Reception, children generally have extremely limited communication and language skills and this is still reflected in their reading ability at the end of Year 2. They are, however, able to use their reading skills to break down and sound out difficult or unfamiliar words. Some were less confident in demonstrating their understanding of what they had read as they tried to retell the story in their own words. The more fluent readers talked excitedly about how much they enjoy reading at home. Attainment in reading is below average at the end of Key Stage 1. Analysis of data shows that attainment in reading is, however, improving with reading interventions every day for the weaker pupils. By the time pupils leave school, reading is still below average but the gap is rapidly closing. The school is focusing on ensuring that the pupils who are eligible for free school meals and who are not making expected progress in reading have interventions every day and this is having a positive impact.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is satisfactory and improving. The good and better lessons seen during the inspection had pace and a variety of activities drawn from the planned curriculum to engage and enthuse pupils. For example, in a Key Stage 1 lesson, having recalled their experience of making pancakes in a previous lesson, pupils embarked on writing instructions and were able to bring into a real life situation the importance of ordering each stage accurately. As 'talk partners', they enthusiastically embarked on how they would inform a pupil new to the school on the order in which they would do things before lunch. This reinforced taking care of themselves and each other. Generally, teaching makes a good contribution to promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

In Reception, children enthusiastically learnt about putting objects in size order. Some worked independently on the computers, putting different sizes of footballs in order; others developed their writing skills by recording what they could find that was shorter or taller than them. In the shed, pupils measured and sawed pieces of wood which they were then able to place in order when they returned to the classroom. The teacher and teaching assistant asked open questions to encourage the development of children's vocabulary.

Weaker lessons were seen when the pace of activities did not match each pupil's needs so precisely. For example, a spelling session led by a teaching assistant involved some pupils not being consistently challenged as they waited their turn to compete with another pupil. There was not enough challenge for the more able pupils and their concentration lapsed. The tracking system to monitor progress is now allowing teachers to plan more accurately to meet the needs of individuals, but this is not consistent as sometimes the more able are not challenged enough. Parents and carers rightly believe that following recent changes their children are receiving better teaching. Some have engaged in activities provided by the school to play a greater part in their child's learning. The school is rightly encouraging all parents and carers to play an active part in listening to their child read every day, but recognises that more work needs to be done.

The new marking system has recently been adopted and is yet to be embedded. Pupils' work is marked frequently although there are some inconsistencies in providing clear information about the next steps to improve their work. Using the tracking system, teachers now set realistic and challenging targets. Most pupils know and understand their targets. This good practice is now becoming embedded across the whole school. However, some aspects are not so well established in all lessons, for example the use of peer assessment by older pupils which would give them the opportunity to reflect on their work.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils say they feel safe in school and they can turn to any adults if they have concerns. They have a good understanding of the risks they might be exposed to, both within and beyond school. A new attendance policy has seen an improvement in attendance which is now average, but improving rapidly. Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. There is a clear behaviour policy which the pupils understand and celebration assemblies reward and promote good behaviour. Overall, parents, carers and pupils say behaviour is good. Records show that bullying is rare, but procedures are followed when concerns are raised. The family learning mentor is very effective in working with those who have any concerns. The improvement in behaviour is reflected in the reduction of exclusions since the previous

inspection. The curriculum includes activities that raise pupils' awareness of different types of bullying and how to stay safe. The school ensures that pupils, parents and carers have a good understanding of e-safety both at school and at home.

Leadership and management

The headteacher, governing body and all leaders and managers have focused successfully on identifying the school's strengths and areas for development. Consequently, there have recently been significant improvements in the progress of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and pupils in Key Stage 1. Attainment in mathematics by Year 6 has improved and now the gap is rapidly closing between pupils' performance in English in Key Stage 2. Coupled with improvements in attendance and pupils' behaviour these significant improvements demonstrate the school's good capacity to improve further.

The school has an accurate view of the quality of teaching and knows what needs to be improved. There has been sound professional development in partnership with the local authority and this is impacting on improving the quality of teaching. For example, teachers are adapting learning to meet individual pupils' needs better and more effectively providing personalised support for pupils who are not making the expected progress.

The governing body has made significant changes, for example, in appointing new leaders and managers who have instigated effective actions to drive whole school improvements. Safeguarding procedures are good as demonstrated by the child protection policy and procedures which ensure that the school is a safe place for everyone. The behaviour policy has had an impact on improving the attitude of pupils towards learning, and their conduct in and around the school. The headteacher has implemented a tracking system to monitor and evaluate pupils' learning and this has had a significant impact on the improvements in teaching and learning.

The impact of the curriculum on the outcomes of pupils is good. The curriculum is now carefully adapted to help pupils maximise their progress, thereby effectively promoting equality of opportunity and appropriately tackling discrimination. For example, there are now more opportunities for pupils to enjoy learning, which was clearly evident when they went bird watching. Within the curriculum, the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. There are opportunities for pupils to develop an understanding of other cultures, for example, in the Chinese New Year celebration in Reception which many parents and carers attended. Pupils talk very knowledgeably about their responsibility to raise money to aid those less fortunate than themselves. The school is an integral part of the local community and provides a wealth of opportunities to develop pupils' personal skills. Those who attend the hearing impairment unit are very well cared for and supported.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



30 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Holme Slack Community Primary School, Preston PR1 6HP

Thank you for the warm welcome when we came to inspect your school recently. A particular 'thank you' goes to those of you who gave your time to talk to the inspectors about how much you enjoy your work and the activities you take part in outside lessons. Some of you who read to us showed how you work out unfamiliar words and told us why reading skills are so important.

You attend a satisfactory and improving school, where the staff do all they can to encourage and support you. There have been a number of changes since the previous inspection, which are enabling you to make satisfactory and in some cases better progress. The teaching you receive is satisfactory and improving. Your behaviour is good in lessons and around the school and the school ensures that you are very safe. You look after each other very well and this helps the younger children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to settle quickly into school.

We have asked that the school continues to improve the quality of teaching of English and to provide more opportunities that better meet the needs of all ability groups, but especially those of you who find learning easier than most. I have also asked that marking and assessments by all staff are consistent and that they increase the opportunities for you to reflect on your work through assessing your own and each other's work. I have asked that the school provides even more opportunities for your parents and carers to engage with your learning. This should help to raise your attainment further and help you to achieve more.

You can help by continuing to attend school regularly and working as hard as you can.

Yours sincerely,

Naomi Taylor
Lead inspector

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