

# Holmer Lake Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123429
<b>Local Authority</b>	Telford and Wrekin
<b>Inspection number</b>	359433
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 February 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Andrew Stafford

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	216
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Deva Odedra
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sian Deane
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 November 2007
<b>School address</b>	Brookside Avenue Brookside, Telford TF3 1LD
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons taught by 10 teachers. They held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at the data the school has collected on pupils' attainment and progress, the school strategic plan, lesson and curriculum planning, and procedures for keeping pupils safe. Forty two questionnaires from parents and carers were returned and their responses were scrutinised by the inspection team, who also spoke with a number of parents.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Inspectors considered the progress made by pupils in Years 3 to 6, especially by the boys.
- They looked at the quality of the challenge that teachers provide to secure good progress in Years 3 to 6.
- The inspection team evaluated the effectiveness of improvement planning to accelerate progress across the school.

## Information about the school

Holmer Lake is an average-size primary school. Most of the pupils are White British. The remainder come from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. A small proportion of pupils speak a language other than English at home. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. Most of these have moderate learning or speech and language difficulties. The school provides for six physically disabled children. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. A larger than average proportion of pupils join and leave the school other than at the normal times. The school has recently gained a number of awards, including Basic Skills Award and the Intermediate International School's Award, and has achieved national Healthy Schools status. The school has undergone a period of instability in staffing over the last four years. The current senior leadership team started at the school in January 2010.

**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: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

Holmer Lake Primary provides a satisfactory education and a safe, caring and happy atmosphere in which pupils grow into confident and mature young people. Parents and carers are very pleased with the quality of education the school provides. Typically, one parent wrote: 'My son and I are more than happy with the school. He is enthused by the teaching and we are pleased with his progress. Holmer Lake provides a very supportive and caring environment for the children and realises that home and school are interlinked and makes every effort to support parents'.

Since the last inspection the school has improved aspects of leadership, the provision for care and the curriculum, and the quality of teaching and learning. The school's robust use of its tracking system to identify quickly any pupils making slow progress is helping to improve outcomes. Recently the school has experienced some staffing difficulties during which progress in Years 3 to 6 slowed. Now that staffing is stable, the school has successfully tackled this underachievement through effective improvement plans and the determined leadership of the headteacher. As a result, progress and achievement are satisfactory and improving. Improvement is particularly evident in the Reception class and in Year 6 where progress is good. The curriculum is now good. Attainment, which has been low in recent years, is average. The leaders' drive to improve the school is clearly articulated and enthusiastically embraced by staff, especially in literacy and numeracy. However, leadership lacks clarity in some areas. The strategic roles and responsibilities of subject leaders, other than in English and mathematics, are not clear enough, resulting in an inconsistent emphasis on pupils' progress and raising standards. Leaders' very rigorous monitoring of the school's performance provides them with secure and accurate information for self-evaluation. Their subsequent actions have brought about significant improvement. This leadership record shows the school has a good capacity to improve further.

There are many signs that teaching and learning are improving as a result of focused professional development. Teachers plan interesting and relevant work that leads many pupils to make good progress. As a result, relationships are strong and pupils have positive attitudes to their work and try hard. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to learning through the well-timed use of their expertise in supporting those who need help with literacy and numeracy. This is most evident for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those with mobility difficulties and pupils who do not speak English at home. While many good lessons were seen across the school, teaching overall is satisfactory. This is because the level of challenge and progress in lessons is not yet consistently good throughout the school. Typically this is because teachers do not always use progress data well enough to plan work that matches closely the needs of different pupils in the class. The quality of marking and feedback to pupils, especially the

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older ones, is also inconsistent, which means that not all of them are clear about what they need to do to improve their work.

Pupils are cared for very well in school and feel safe. They really enjoy lessons, school clubs and meeting friends. The interest and challenge that the curriculum provides, especially for the boys, is promoting accelerated progress. For example, an ongoing outdoor learning project on dinosaurs in Year 5, and the regular use of computers and games across the school, engages them well. Pupils share a range of religious festivals, which gives them a developing insight into the diversity of British culture. Most pupils come to school regularly making attendance average.

Up to 40% of the 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?**

- Improve teaching so that the level of challenge and progress in lessons is consistently good, by making better use of assessment information to plan work that closely matches the needs of each pupil so they are fully stretched.
- Sharpen the quality of marking and other feedback to older pupils so that they better understand how to improve their work.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
  - making clear the school's expectations about the roles and responsibilities of subject leaders
  - ensuring that subject leaders have a consistent impact on pupils' attainment and progress.

### **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

<b>3</b>
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All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, enjoy learning, and their achievement is satisfactory. The progress of boys has accelerated and they now make the same progress as the girls. Children start Reception with skills below those expected nationally for their age. Pupils who join the school part way through the year, as well as those who are at the early stages of acquiring English, make rapid gains in the language because of the expert help they receive from staff. The learning observed in lessons was at least satisfactory and often good. Pupils are keen to learn, try their best and take pride in their work. Their research and basic skills are improving quickly and many are becoming proficient as independent learners. Pupils enjoy discussing ideas in small groups and with their class, which is promoting their self-confidence, communication skills and understanding. This was seen when parents joined in with Year 1 children making masks for the animals in their jungle. There was a lot of glue, many sticky fingers, mess, mistakes and laughter as communication and creative skills were developed at a brisk rate. However, occasionally pupils find their work either too hard or too easy and this slows their progress.

Pupils are confident that the rare cases of bullying will be quickly resolved by the school. They know precisely how to keep themselves and others safe. They do their best to eat a healthy diet and take plenty of exercise, and this is reflected in the school's national recognition in this area. Pupils are keen to take responsibility. For example, the school

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council regularly passes its views to the governors. Older pupils act as play leaders with younger children at playtimes. Pupils collect generously for charity. Positive attitudes and average standards in the basic skills mean pupils' preparation for secondary school and future work is satisfactory. Pupils reflect maturely on their own feelings and those of others, for example through the study of Shakespearean texts. A strong moral code supports their good behaviour. Pupils work productively in teams. These opportunities contribute effectively to their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

## How effective is the provision?

Teachers have developed skills that enable them to plan interesting and relevant work that engages pupils well. Generally, they are raising their expectations of the effort and progress that pupils need to make. They make good use of resources, such as electronic whiteboards, to develop learning. The impact of this strengthening of teaching was evident in the good progress made by Year 6 pupils in 2010. In Years 1 and 2, teachers' questions and the tasks they set really make pupils think. The challenge provided by teaching is inconsistent in Years 3 to 6. Pupils have an improving understanding of their challenging targets.

The curriculum supports aspects of pupils' personal development well. For example, 'Building Learning Power' is part of the school's philosophy that provides pupils with good opportunities to think about their own performance and reflect on that of others. Recent

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changes to the English and mathematics curriculum, to guide learning more actively, have given these subjects greater appeal, especially to the boys. The school exploits the rich resources found within its boundaries to extend, for instance, opportunities to study the natural world. A good range of well-attended clubs and many educational visits, including a residential stay in Wales, add to pupils' enjoyment of school and widen horizons.

Staff use their detailed knowledge of each pupil expertly to provide them with outstanding pastoral care. Pupils with a concern turn confidently to an adult knowing that it will be quickly resolved. The tracking of academic progress gives accurate information that teachers use to give individual support. This enables teachers to provide effective support for pupils who are falling behind and help them catch up. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive sympathetic support and learning programmes that mean they join in all that the school offers. The school's targeted support for pupils whose circumstances have the potential to make them vulnerable is effective. It works closely with many external agencies to promote pupils' education and welfare. The rise in attendance this year shows that the school's hard work with pupils, parents and carers to improve attendance is proving successful. The provision of the popular breakfast club is appreciated by working parents and improves overall levels of punctuality.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders articulate clearly to staff their ambitious targets and their plans to make the school better. The English and mathematics subject leaders take a high level of responsibility for checking standards in their areas and ensuring they are improving. Leaders have accurately identified needs and, supported by good partnerships with local authority consultants, have provided successful training that has sharpened teachers' skills. One example of this is teachers' better understanding of how to make English and mathematics lessons interesting and relevant. The governing body is very supportive of the school. Governors' good understanding of data means that they are able to challenge the school over its performance and rigorously hold leaders to account. Through links with subjects and staff, the governing body has an up-to-date view of what is happening in the school and this is helping to improve provision.

Regular homework and the valuable help and advice given to parents are examples of the school's support for parents with children's education at home. The school puts its commitment to equal opportunities at the centre of its ethos and the success of its plans to remedy previous gender differences in progress shows that its policies are having a good impact. The thorough way that school carefully checks the progress of different

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groups of pupils reflects the school's strong commitment to promoting equal opportunities and tackling discrimination. Safety and safeguarding are a high priority. The school makes rigorous checks on the suitability of adults to work with pupils. Child protection procedures are robust, regularly updated and fully meet current safeguarding requirements. The school is a happy and harmonious society in which pupils from all backgrounds integrate well. It promotes community cohesion well in the local area and there are many notable successes. For example, it works with volunteers to improve the local environment and pupils see themselves as members of the community through their work with the local council. The school promotes religious cohesion through the celebration of a range of religious festivals that encourage an understanding of Muslim and Christian worship. The school's developing links with a school in a black community in South Africa supports pupils' understanding of diversity.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

**Early Years Foundation Stage**

Boys and girls make similarly good progress in all areas of learning because teaching is good. Most children enter the school with levels of attainment below those expected for their age and most of them reach average levels by the time they start Year 1. Children are well behaved and polite to each other and to adults and their personal development is good. Parents feel well informed about their child's progress and are happy with the advice they are given about how to help their learning at home. Children are very safe and well cared for in the stimulating classrooms and large outdoor learning area.

Teachers' good planning ensures there is an appropriate balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities which promotes good learning. For example, in one lesson for the youngest children, letters and sounds from the previous day were reinforced before new sounds were introduced. The children were soon working independently on the formation



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of letters on their whiteboards as first steps in acquiring literacy skills. In a PE session children happily expressed themselves through being 'chilli beans, broad beans and string beans' during their warm-up. They rapidly cleared up the bags, balls and rings that the teacher had strewn across the gym floor, improving their appreciation of number, their gaining of independence and their skills of collaboration. Occasionally learning slows when children spend too long sitting on the carpet before doing things themselves.

The training provided for adults who work in the Early Years Foundation Stage is promoting their teaching skills well. Leaders are correctly working hard to fine tune assessments to make planning more precise so that children's progress is even better.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

About one in five parents and carers returned a questionnaire. These showed they are very happy with the quality of education the school provides. Many added positive comments about how much their child enjoyed school and how confident they were about their child's safety. Many parents and carers said they felt the headteacher led the school well and that teachers were welcoming and approachable. Inspectors endorse these positive comments. A small number of parents wrote that they have concerns about poor behaviour at the school. Inspectors explored these concerns and found that behaviour is well managed by staff and that is it good in lessons and around the school.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Holmer Lake Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 42 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 216 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	20	48	15	36	3	7	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	22	52	15	36	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	18	43	19	45	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	21	50	13	31	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	22	52	14	33	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	50	15	36	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	22	52	14	33	1	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	18	43	18	43	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	40	16	38	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	43	11	26	6	14	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	17	40	14	33	2	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	27	64	11	26	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	23	55	14	33	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## 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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.

**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.**



3 February 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Holmer Lake Primary School, Telford, TF3 1LD**

Thank you for being so polite and friendly when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed our visit and having the opportunity to talk to some of you and to see you in lessons and at play. I especially enjoyed joining a group from Reception exercising in the hall. You are rightly proud of the school's happy atmosphere in which you all get on so well together. Holmer Lake is a satisfactory school and it is improving. Here are some of the things we found out.

Your teachers ensure that you get off to a good start in Reception.

You told us you enjoy school and feel very safe and secure.

You try your very best to eat a healthy diet and take plenty of exercise.

Your behaviour is good.

You have good relationships with your teachers and you try hard for them.

The curriculum provides you with exciting clubs and visits, which you enjoy.

Adults look after you well and are always ready to help you.

The headteacher and staff are working hard to make the school get better.

We have asked the school to do three things to help you do even better in your learning.

Make sure teachers always provide you with work that is neither too hard nor too easy, so that you make better progress.

Provide older pupils with more information about how they can improve their work.

Ensure that all staff with responsibility for subjects have a good effect on your learning and progress.

All of you can help the school by continuing to try your best in lessons, behaving well and supporting your classmates. We wish you all the best in the future.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Stafford

Lead inspector

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