

Holywell Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118549
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	358376
Inspection dates	3–4 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Peter Thrussell

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	205
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ray Kemsley
Headteacher	Sue Lundie
Date of previous school inspection	21 May 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Seven different teachers were observed teaching 15 lessons. The inspectors held meetings with the acting headteachers, members of the governing body, staff and a group of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at documents including the school development plan, data on pupils' progress, policies and procedures relating to safeguarding, and the results of questionnaires returned by staff, pupils and 121 parents and carers.

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

- Whether the school's actions to improve attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics are showing any long-term impact.
- How well teachers use assessment to match work to ability to ensure a good pace of learning for different groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Whether the curriculum provides effective cross-curricular links for pupils to use and develop their core skills, and promotes community cohesion beyond the school's locality.
- Whether pupils' personal development and well-being and the quality of care, guidance and support are as good as the school indicates.

Information about the school

This is a one-form-entry primary school. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average as is the proportion identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are catered for in the Reception class. The school is currently led and managed by two acting headteachers. A new headteacher has recently been appointed, but has yet to take up post. This, along with other staff movement, has meant some recent changes to teaching and other leadership roles.

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

3

Main findings

Holywell Primary is a satisfactory school. Good links with parents and carers, combined with the school's outstanding quality of care, guidance and support, mean that pupils feel extremely safe, enjoy their time in school, behave well and have high rates of attendance.

Children get off to a good start in Reception, where the learning environment, both indoors and out, is excellent. They make good progress in all of the areas of learning. Pupils' progress across Key Stages 1 and 2, although satisfactory, is variable both between year groups and subjects. As a result, attainment by Year 6 in English and mathematics is inconsistent from year to year but overall is broadly average. Assessments at Year 2 also show broadly average attainment, but with a slight ongoing decline since 2008. These inconsistencies in attainment are due to a lack of rigour in monitoring pupils' progress and quickly identifying and addressing any underachievement. At the start of the current academic year, new procedures were put in place to check and record attainment and progress. These have enabled the school to more readily identify and support underachievement both in lessons and withdrawal groups, and to hold teachers accountable for pupils' progress. There has also been an emphasis on extended writing, with opportunities for pupils to look critically at the structure and content of their work and make their own amendments. Lessons observed during the inspection showed that this approach is starting to bear fruit, with samples of pupils' writing showing a gradual improvement. Letters and sounds (phonics) are now taught systematically across the school, helping to improve spelling and reading skills. A focus on problem-solving in mathematics is also helping pupils to use and apply their number skills with improved accuracy. These recent actions have yet to be fully monitored for their effectiveness, but nevertheless, along with improved procedures for managing behaviour, demonstrate the school's satisfactory capacity to sustain improvements.

Teachers use assessment information effectively to group pupils by ability in lessons, but are less confident in using it to match work to different abilities. As a result, work at times lacks challenge, especially for more-able pupils, and proves too difficult for others without adult support so that progress slows. Where work has not been fully discussed with pupils, they often lack the confidence to work independently. In some classes, the marking of work is constructive and shows development points, and pupils' individual targets are well focused and used effectively to guide learning. However, this guidance is variable so that pupils' ability to take responsibility for their own learning is inconsistent.

A number of subject leaders are new to their posts and are not yet taking full responsibility for their different areas, especially in English and mathematics. For example, they are not sufficiently aware of how well their subjects are performing across the school in order to steer improvements with full effect. Their action plans, along with the school improvement plan, although showing appropriate actions, are not focused tightly enough

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on raising attainment and progress within an agreed period of time. Subject leaders, along with senior leaders, are involved in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning through sampling pupils' work and lesson observations. These provide development points for teachers, but when making judgments, insufficient account is taken of pupils' learning and progress.

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?

- Raise attainment and progress in English and mathematics by improving the quality and consistency of teaching, ensuring that:
 - teachers understand and use assessment information to plan the next steps in learning in line with pupils' differing abilities and aptitudes
 - pupils have effective guidance through marking and individual targets to show them how to improve their work
 - lessons provide more time and encouragement for pupils to work independently.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - the school improvement plan is sharply focused on raising attainment and progress, providing a time scale for actions and showing how they are to be monitored and evaluated for their impact
 - the quality of teaching is rigorously monitored in relation to pupils' learning and progress
 - subject leaders play a greater role in analysing how well pupils are doing, especially in English and mathematics, and steering improvements.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and other groups, generally achieve satisfactorily from starting points in Reception that are just below those expected for this age. Lessons observed during the inspection showed that where pupils are challenged and understand what they are learning, enjoyment is evident and good progress is made. This was seen in a Key Stage 2 numeracy lesson where the teacher, through careful questioning, checked pupils' understanding of the properties of shape and the use of mathematical vocabulary. As a result, learning was focused and pupils enjoyed the challenge of identifying different triangles from their properties. In a Key Stage 1 numeracy lesson, the work did not sufficiently challenge more-able pupils, who very quickly saw the link between multiplication and repeated addition. The teacher was unable to challenge this group further as her attention was taken by other groups who were not as confident about their tasks. Pupils' ability to work independently is developed well in the Reception class, where they are able to explore their environment and make choices for themselves. This practice is continued in Year 1 and was evident in the lessons observed here. Pupils benefited from opportunities to look for real-life shapes around them, to discuss them and to sort them into different sets as they wished. Elsewhere in

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the school, learning is often directed too much by teachers and pupils have fewer opportunities for discussion and working independently.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall with cultural development being less well developed. They have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, knowing the importance of diet and physical activity. Pupils make a good contribution to the school community. For example, they helped to choose new playground equipment and had a say in the appointment of the new headteacher. They appreciated their involvement in planning the new behaviour procedures and the introduction of a 'restorative approach'. Although a few pupils still have concerns about behaviour, they like this approach as it helps them to think about the consequences of their behaviour on others and to take greater responsibility for their actions. They also like the fact that good behaviour is rewarded, for example by sitting on the 'golden table' for their lunch. Given pupils' level of personal development and their sound acquisition of core skills, they are adequately prepared for their future life and learning.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ 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?

Lessons are well managed and good relationships ensure that pupils settle quickly to work. In a few lessons where introductions are overlong and pupils are not fully engaged in learning, attention slips a little and a few become restless. Although pupils are encouraged to talk with partners about their learning, lessons do not always set aside sufficient time,

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especially at the end, for them to discuss and evaluate their work and to consider whether they are meeting their individual targets. Lessons sometimes rely on adult support to help all complete a common activity, rather than matching work more precisely to the needs and aptitudes of different groups of learners, and expecting them to spend more time working independently.

The curriculum makes adequate provision for literacy and numeracy. New systems are in place for information and communication technology (ICT) but these have yet to have an impact on pupils' learning and progress. Pupils use these core skills in their topic work, but not always at levels that reflect their full capabilities and help to move their learning forward at a faster pace. Good use is made of specialist teaching, for example in art and design, dance and music during times when class teachers do their own planning and preparation, providing good curriculum enrichment. All pupils in Key Stage 2 learn to play the recorder and clarinet. There is a wealth of lunchtime and after-school clubs which are popular with pupils and effectively add to their personal and social development. Good opportunities for a wide range of sports encourage pupils to be physically fit. Links with other local schools enable pupils to take part in activities such as a maths challenge and a chefs' challenge.

Pastoral care is a strength of the school. Pupils have the fullest confidence that staff will listen and respond to any concerns they may have which contributes strongly to the outstanding degree to which pupils report that they feel safe. Excellent links with outside specialists, good engagement with parents and carers, and very well organised and managed support within school, ensure that the specific needs of pupils, including those who have emotional, social and behavioural difficulties, are very well met. Transition arrangements for pupils within school between Reception and Year 1, and when moving on to secondary school, are excellent. Well-developed school systems contribute strongly to pupils' high levels of attendance.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Staff clearly indicate that they are proud to work at this school. Along with senior leaders and members of the governing body, they work well together as a team, with a shared purpose of bringing about school improvement. However, planned improvements do not always have a sharp enough focus on pupils' attainment and progress and how actions to improve these are to be monitored and evaluated. This restricts the challenge that the governing body is able to make on the school's performance so that not all the inconsistencies in learning and progress have been tackled effectively. Nevertheless, the

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governing body ensures that safeguarding arrangements are fully in place and adhered to. Procedures for checking staff are excellent and meticulously recorded.

The school has a good range of partnerships which particularly support pupils' personal and social development. Engagement with parents and carers is good. They particularly like the presence of a senior member of staff on the playground at the start of the day and the opportunities provided for informal chats. Regular contact is maintained through newsletters and the school's website. Inconsistent monitoring and comparison of the attainment and progress of different groups of pupils mean that the promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. The school promotes pupils' understanding and respect for communities within its own locality well. However, further afield this is not as strong. Some understanding is promoted through the curriculum but, despite a policy being in place, the school is at a relatively early stage in adopting a strategic approach to its promotion of community cohesion.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enjoy their time in Reception. The setting is very well organised to ensure an excellent level of safety and welfare for children, reinforced by the key worker system that promotes very close links with parents and carers. Consequently, children behave very well, quickly settle, make good progress and become very independent in their learning. At the end of Reception, most children are working at expected levels for their age. There is an excellent balance between child-initiated activities and teacher-directed learning. In a lesson on identifying three-dimensional shapes, challenging questioning encouraged children to think for themselves and to apply the language of shape to their investigations. This included the effective use of ICT. During chosen activities, children work and play well together, thus developing excellent personal and social skills. Staff engage well with

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children in these activities, but, very occasionally, opportunities are missed to channel and develop children's learning even further. Newly introduced assessment systems are being used extremely effectively to move children on in their learning. Excellent use is made of both the indoor and outdoor areas, which are organised extremely well to reflect the different areas of learning. The leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage has made significant improvements to the setting. It has been fully refurbished and the outside area developed and extended, with a covered area to allow outside activities in all weathers. Very good liaison with Year 1 is helping to ensure that the good practice in the Early Years Foundation Stage is now reflected in the provision for Year 1 pupils, ensuring good transition and continuity of provision.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The level of response from parents and carers to the inspection questionnaire was above that typically found for primary schools. Most are happy about their children's experience of school and that they are kept safe. A small minority are concerned about behaviour. Inspectors found that the new procedures for managing behaviour are working well and that behaviour is good. The very few pupils who display difficult behaviour are managed well so that learning is not disrupted. A few parents are also concerned about their children's progress and the leadership and management of the school. Inspectors judged progress overall to be satisfactory, and that the arrangements for interim leadership and management are working effectively. Comments from parents reflected this, such as, 'In particular, I would like to comment on the acting headteachers who I feel have done an excellent job under difficult circumstances.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Holywell 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 121 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 205 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	61	50	57	47	3	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	65	54	52	43	3	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	43	36	67	55	11	9	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	49	40	56	46	14	12	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	51	42	60	50	7	6	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	42	35	65	54	10	8	2	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	51	42	65	54	2	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)	47	39	55	45	3	2	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	47	39	54	45	14	12	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	40	33	52	43	20	17	5	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	41	34	66	55	11	9	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	44	36	51	42	16	13	3	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	55	45	55	45	5	4	1	1

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).

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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



7 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Holywell Primary School, Sittingbourne, ME9 7AE

Thank you for taking part in the inspection. We spoke with some of you during our visit and found you interesting to talk to, and very polite and helpful. We find that Holywell Primary is a satisfactory school, which means that some things are good or outstanding, but some things need to be improved.

These are some of the things that the school does well.

- Children get off to a good start in Reception with excellent classroom and outdoor facilities.
- The school looks after you extremely well so that you feel very safe in school.
- You behave well and understand the importance of good behaviour.
- You have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and fit.
- Your attendance is high compared with other primary schools.
- The school encourages your parents and carers to support you in your learning.

However, you could do better in English and mathematics. The following things will help.

- Teachers should use the information they have on how well you are doing to plan work that is just right for each one of you, neither too easy nor too hard, and encourage you to do more on your own.
- Teachers should show you how to improve your work through their marking and the individual targets that you all have.
- Leaders should check regularly that lessons are of the best quality and identify where you need to be making better progress.
- The school has plans to help you do better, but needs to involve all leaders in checking that these are working as well as possible.

Thank you again for your help. You can do your bit by always paying full attention in lessons and working as hard as you can.

Yours sincerely

Peter Thrussell

Lead inspector

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