

Holmgate Primary School and Nursery

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112530
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	357124
Inspection dates	12–13 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Doris Bell

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	195
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Kinsell
Headteacher	Ruth Swailes
Date of previous school inspection	16 October 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 12 lessons taught by eight different teachers. They also met with parents and carers, groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including teachers' planning, the school improvement plan, assessment data, and safeguarding policies and procedures. The responses from the pupil and staff questionnaires were analysed, as were the responses from the 46 parents' and carers' questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- How effectively has the school sustained the improvements seen last year?
- How well does the new curriculum support teaching and learning, and promote basic skills, including information and communication technology (ICT)?
- How effectively do leaders and managers at all levels understand and carry out their roles, and are the systems they are establishing robust enough to keep up the recent improvements?
- Is the Early Years Foundation Stage continuing to improve, and is children's learning, indoors and out, supported well enough.

Information about the school

This average size primary school has an above average proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic groups, or for whom English is an additional language. The school achieved Healthy Schools Status in 2009 and it runs its own breakfast and after-school clubs. There have been several staff changes in the past year. The headteacher took up her post in September 2009.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The good quality education this school provides for its pupils ensures that they develop well, personally and academically. The headteacher's excellent leadership has enabled the school to overcome the legacy of underachievement evident in previously published data. Staff have responded very positively to her drive for improvement and to the clear sense of purpose it has engendered. The thoroughly positive learning ethos, felt throughout the school, is based on a strong desire to accelerate pupils' learning. It includes an unrelenting focus on what pupils are learning rather than on what they do. Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. It is improving with additional equipment and a greater focus on learning, which includes allowing children to select some activities themselves, and to learn through play.

Pupils, from the least to the most able, achieve well. This is because they know what and how well they are learning, and how to improve. Consequently, their progress is accelerating day by day. Good quality teaching, much of which is outstanding, contributes to this and is helping pupils to catch up on learning they missed previously. In lessons, however, while support staff often provide very valuable support for pupils' learning, there are occasions when some do not follow the guidance teaching staff give them and this limits progress for the pupils concerned. Attainment, as seen in pupils' books, is average. In 2010, national test results, which were considerably better than in previous years, were above average. Taken alongside the school's accurate self-evaluation and its well-founded priorities based on effective monitoring, this shows that the school has good capacity for sustained improvement.

Pupils work and play in a safe, secure and attractive learning environment, free of harassment of any sort. They feel very safe and they know how to keep themselves safe, fit and healthy. They learn to, in their words, 'treat (others) how you want to be treated'. Their understanding of different faiths and cultures at home and abroad is developed satisfactorily through, for example, religious education lessons, but this is the least well developed aspect of their personal development. The school's work on community cohesion is intended to address this but, although satisfactory overall, it is in its early stages. Behaviour is good and pupils very much enjoy school, as their above average attendance shows. They have responded well to the new curriculum, which presents them with many opportunities to determine the direction of their learning and to link it across different subjects. Literacy, numeracy and personal development skills are promoted well within this.

Plans to improve the infrastructure for information and communication technology (ICT) are well under way and pupils were observed using computers competently to support their learning in several lessons. However, discussions with them and with staff show that they do not have regular, spontaneous access to ICT as a tool for learning in different

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subjects. This is because the current system is very slow and valuable learning time can be wasted booting up or waiting for access to different learning websites.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure consistency in the quality of support staff's work so that pupils' learning increases, no matter who is teaching them.
 - Accelerate the planned improvements in ICT to enable pupils to have full access to ICT as a tool for learning across different subjects.
 - Complete the work on community cohesion, particularly in relation to enhancing pupils' awareness of different faiths and cultures nationally and globally.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

When children start school, their attainment is below that expected for their age. By the time they leave, it is at least in line with the national average. Pupils throughout the school are keen to learn and they respond well to the many challenges set for them. A very large majority of pupils have made huge strides in learning in the first five weeks of this school year. More able pupils make the faster progress of which they are capable. Pupils with average ability and less able pupils are catching up fast, as they take advantage of the benefits derived from well-focused teaching.

Pupils contribute well to their own learning, correcting their work, and using the many resources around the classroom to develop their learning independently. For example, Year 6 pupils brainstormed what makes a good story opening, put their ideas on the ideas board, and referred to them and other guidance around the room to check and improve their writing. The writing arising from this was of good quality. As they enjoy the opportunities presented by the new curriculum, pupils are beginning to make links between different subjects. For example, Year 4 pupils used the work they had done on owls in science, as they explored two contrasting poems in literacy. They commented knowledgeably on the use of language and various grammatical conventions to convey mood and feeling. This joined-up thinking is enhancing learning for all groups of pupils, as is their learning from real-life experiences, for example, in mathematics.

Pupils are comfortable in the company of adults. They trust the staff, feel listened to, and are confident that any issues will be dealt with promptly. In lessons, their good behaviour supports their learning well. They are polite and well mannered in and around the school, and, confident in themselves, they show good consideration and respect for others. Pupils' understanding of healthy lifestyles is good. They adopt healthy eating habits, and large numbers participate in the many sporting and exercise activities offered to them. They are justifiably proud of their considerable success in these. Pupils are committed to the school community. They readily take on responsibility, for example, as school councillors and monitors. They like supporting others and helped to design the tyre track. They understand and care about local issues. For example, the proposed building of a new superstore in the area has generated much interest and involvement in debate, including as part of their literacy work in Year 6.

Pupils reflect well on their learning and on different aspects of life. They respect the views of others, while confident in their own views, and present reasoned arguments. Their work on the local community is developing their good understanding of the way communities

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change and develop and how they can contribute to this. Pupils show good levels of respect for those from different cultures. They have a satisfactory understanding of different faiths and ethnic groups, although little first-hand experience of either. All of this, together with their good progress and sound basic skills, means they leave the school as mature young people, well prepared for the future.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
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?

Inspired by good and often outstanding teaching, pupils become confident learners who know how to improve their work. They relish the opportunities they have to discuss it with each other, and use them well to enhance their learning. In most lessons, teaching builds pupils' learning up successfully, step by step, with due attention to individual needs. Teachers quickly assess where a lack of prior learning is hindering progress, and they take well-considered action to fill the gaps. Their good subject knowledge enables them to make skilled adjustments to learning during lessons. Although not entirely consistent throughout the school, marking is often excellent. In most cases, it provides pupils with clear guidance on how to improve and teachers build time for pupils to respond to it in lessons. In the best examples, additional challenges, over and above marking comments, appropriately encourage pupils to work even harder and achieve more. This ensures learning is personalised for each pupil. In the majority of lessons, support staff assist pupils' learning well. At times, some support staff, although well-briefed, do not follow

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directions well enough to enable the pupils they are working with to make the same good progress as the rest of the class.

Pupils are well known as individuals. Their personal, social and educational development is monitored effectively. This enables the school to identify and address the reasons for any decline in learning. Transition between classes and different phases of education is good. Work to engage parents and carers more in their children's education, although not yet fully embedded at all levels, is developing well. This good quality care, guidance and support, which includes well organised breakfast and after-school clubs, contribute greatly to pupils' progress and personal development. The many well-attended enrichment activities that extend the curriculum beyond the normal school day also impact positively on pupils' learning and enjoyment. The newly established curriculum promotes literacy and numeracy well. While opportunities are planned to promote ICT, the limitations of current resources means this is only satisfactory at present.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has embedded in the staff a strong desire to improve the learning outcomes for every pupil. This is very successfully driving improvement throughout the school. It manifests itself in the high expectations senior leaders have of the staff, and the staff have of their pupils. It is also reflected in the rigorous procedures now in place to assess, track and improve pupils' learning. There is a buzz felt throughout the school, underpinned by a clear sense of purpose, effective teamwork and challenging targets for staff and pupils.

Governance is satisfactory. Key governors carry out their roles effectively but the role of the whole governing body in holding the school to account is underdeveloped. Good safeguarding practices are built into the curriculum and adopted across all aspects of school life. The school prompts effective interventions, involving relevant external agencies if necessary, to ensure pupils are kept safe and free from harm at all times. The well developed monitoring systems are underpinned by up-to-date training that helps all staff understand their roles and responsibilities in this.

The school promotes equality of opportunity well, and community cohesion satisfactorily. There are no significant differences between different groups of pupils and pupils understand the importance of respecting others, regardless of faith, ethnicity or culture. Promoting this further is part of the school's action plan to promote all aspects of community cohesion better. The school has a good understanding of its own context. It

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reaches out well to the local community, and forms effective partnerships with parents and external agencies.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
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	2
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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Relationships with parents and carers, who say their children are very happy at school, are good. Children are safe and well cared for. They settle confidently in class, are enthusiastic learners, and they readily engage with adults. While they make some choices about their work, they do not share responsibility for decisions about routines. This makes snack time, for example, rather formal, missing opportunities for social development. The balance between adult directed and child initiated activities is good but support staff are too often involved in directed activities. Consequently, they miss opportunities to build children's learning as they play. Assessment procedures are satisfactory. They are developing well and the outcomes are used to inform planning, ensuring the needs of all children are met.

Children develop satisfactory early reading, writing and number skills. Reception children are very keen, for example, to show how well they can write their names, or count rings to find out how old a tree is. Learning takes place indoors and out but the outdoor area is still relatively under-equipped, and at times under-used. Nevertheless, it successfully encourages children's curiosity and supports their learning. This was seen when they investigated the mini-beasts under the logs, or examined different vegetables and prepared a shopping list of soup ingredients.

The headteacher's excellent support is based on her in-depth understanding of what good provision means in this age group. This enables the Early Years Foundation Stage leader to develop a good understanding of how to improve provision and outcomes further. Good use has also been made of external support.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	3
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Just under a quarter of parents and carers completed the inspection questionnaire. The vast majority of them are pleased with the school. They comment, for example, that they are 'impressed by the caring, secure, friendly atmosphere' where issues 'are dealt with quickly and effectively'. Several praise the headteacher for the way she is improving the school. Inspectors found that pupils do indeed work and play in a safe, secure and friendly learning environment and that the school is improving fast under the headteacher's well-focused leadership. A few parents feel the school does not take account of their suggestions. The inspection found no evidence for this. The headteacher is working hard to consult parents on a number of issues through questionnaires and workshops which a small number of parents have started to attend.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Holmgate Primary School and Nursery 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 46 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 195 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	35	76	10	22	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	33	72	11	24	2	4	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	21	46	25	54	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	22	48	22	48	0	0	2	4
The teaching is good at this school	26	57	17	37	2	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	20	43	25	54	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	41	24	52	2	4	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)	17	37	27	59	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	20	43	25	54	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	35	23	50	4	9	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	43	20	43	5	11	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	32	70	13	28	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	28	61	15	33	2	4	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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 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. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

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.



14 October 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Holmgate Primary School and Nursery, Chesterfield S45 9QD

Thank you very much for the very warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. It was a real delight to talk to you and to find out how much you enjoy school. We also noticed how eager you are to learn, and that you really want to help improve the school and your learning.

You go to a good school where staff care, guide and support you well in your learning and personal development. Your teachers show you how to check and improve your work in lessons and through their marking. You work well and, along with the additional challenges your teachers set you, this is helping you to make better and faster progress. You behave well and you showed us that you have a good understanding of how to keep yourselves safe, fit and healthy. You play a good part in this by, for example, taking part in the many sporting activities available to you. We noted that you helped to design the tyre park that encourages physical exercise. You certainly feel listened to and it is good to hear that you trust adults to deal promptly with any concerns you might have.

Your headteacher is leading staff and governors really well in the drive to improve the school further. We have made some recommendations to help them in this. They are:

- to make sure that all support staff help the pupils with whom they work, to make the same good progress as other pupils
- to accelerate the planned improvements in ICT so that you can have full access to it as a tool for learning across different subjects
- to complete the work on community cohesion, so that you will have a better understanding of different cultures nationally and globally.

You can help by continuing to work hard, by listening carefully to your teachers, and by finding even more things out for yourselves. We hope that you will continue to enjoy learning as much as you do now, for the rest of your lives.

Yours sincerely

Doris Bell

Lead inspector

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