

Holmwood School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111775
Local Authority	Middlesbrough
Inspection number	356978
Inspection dates	13–14 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Pauline Hilling-Smith

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	75
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sue Pattison
Headteacher	Mrs Jan Mather
Date of previous school inspection	3 October 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 13 lessons given by eight teachers and two higher-level teaching assistants. Meetings were held with pupils, partners, representatives of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, looked at the school's evaluation of its performance, the current development plan, minutes of meetings of the governing body and documentation to ensure that pupils are safe. The responses to 31 questionnaires from parents and carers were analysed.

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

- The rate of progress of all groups of pupils towards their targets especially in writing and mathematics.
- How well the curriculum and teaching makes effective use of time and matches the learning and behaviour needs of the pupils.
- How effectively leaders are bringing about school improvement and how the school is helped by its partners.

Information about the school

Holmwood is an average size school which caters for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, a number of whom have more complex learning needs. Most pupils are in Key Stage 2, the majority of whom are in Years 5 and 6. The large majority of pupils in the school are boys and most are of White British heritage. All of the pupils have a statement of special educational needs or are undergoing assessment. The school is funded for five places for pupils from Middlesbrough primary schools who are registered on the roll of both schools. These pupils stay in the school for varying lengths of time. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. The school has achieved Healthy School status and Active Mark.

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

This is a satisfactory school which cares, guides and supports its pupils extremely well. It is highly effective in the way in which it works with its partners to promote pupil's well-being and learning in personal development. Although progress in English and mathematics is satisfactory overall it is not as marked as progress in personal development. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are outstanding and, as a result, pupils say they feel very safe, and parents and carers overwhelmingly agree. This enables pupils to make the most of the opportunities the school offers.

Progress since the last inspection is satisfactory overall and has developed further over the last year due to the restructured leadership team. The leadership has a strong vision of care for pupils attending the school and has established high morale within the staff team, who share this ambition. A strength of the curriculum is its enrichment; however, it does not always build on what the pupils can do in basic skills and opportunities for learning are sometimes lost. Self-evaluation is largely accurate and gives school leaders a view of strengths and areas for improvement. This process takes account of the views of others. The headteacher and senior staff understand about how teaching can be improved and actions taken have shown some impact. All this demonstrates that there is satisfactory capacity to sustain improvement.

Everyone involved with the school shows a keen understanding of pupils with emotional and behavioural needs. Meeting these needs for all is at the heart of what the school does. Its entire ethos is underpinned by the belief that the school can cater for any pupil's needs. Close partnerships with other agencies, parents and carers have contributed to some striking impacts on pupils' well-being. Pupils' behaviour is good. This is because pupils are very clear about what constitutes good behaviour and they respond well to additional guidance from individual members of staff about how to modify their behaviour if necessary. Attendance is satisfactory.

The way in which the school supports and works in partnership with other primary schools and the primary pupil referral unit in the local authority is exemplary.

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 progress in English and mathematics by:
 - ensuring that pupils are engaged in work which meets their individual learning needs in English and mathematics in all lessons.

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- Ensure that the curriculum meets pupils' individual learning needs in English and mathematics by:
 - ensuring that it builds on what pupils already know in English and mathematics in all areas of the curriculum.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

All groups of pupils make satisfactory progress overall. Progress in social and moral development is good because it is well attended to in lessons as well as at other times during the school day. This means that pupils are able to make the most of the learning opportunities the school offers. For example, in one good lesson pupils worked well together, and with other adults in the classroom, to sequence the events which led up to the Fire of London. They explored the issues as well as sharing the resources needed to cut out and stick the sentences which described these events on another sheet of paper. In other lessons pupils improve their knowledge of letter sounds well. Pupils particularly enjoy lessons given by the sport and dance specialists, and achievement is good in these lessons.

Procedures to establish where the pupils are in their learning when they start at Holmwood show that most pupils arrive with below average attainment and sometimes well below average. This is usually because their social, emotional or behavioural difficulties have not allowed them to learn as easily as other pupils. During their time at Holmwood, pupils make satisfactory progress in English and mathematics because staff plot pupils' progress and targets are reviewed and adjusted. This means that some pupils reach nationally expected levels before they leave. However, some pupils are not given challenging enough targets, which limits their progress. Pupils with other special educational needs and/or disabilities also make satisfactory progress towards the targets set for them. Parents agree with pupils when they say they feel safe and secure, which helps them to learn. Pupils' behaviour is good and this contributes well to learning in lessons for all groups of pupils.

Pupil voice is developed well in school through the student council and pupils are keen to express their views. They know they are listened to as they can see decisions made by the council put into practice. For example, they are committed to leading a healthy lifestyle. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory overall and improving.

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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	
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	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	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
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

* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory overall and some teaching is good. Teaching promotes good behaviour, positive attitudes and a good aptitude for learning. However, too often the pace of lessons is too slow and expectations of what pupils will do are too low. The use made of teaching assistants in lessons varies: where they are used well they support pupils learning skilfully but too often they are only involved in supervising behaviour at the beginning of lessons when the teacher is teaching the full class. Teachers have good subject knowledge but planning is not always sharp enough to address the needs of pupils at different levels by specifying different activities for pupils. Marking often refers to overall lesson objectives and success criteria for the lesson but less to individual targets. Pupils' books show more writing and exercises and less investigation and research. Interactive whiteboards are used effectively; however, lessons observed showed little modelling of vocabulary to support writing.

The curriculum is satisfactory. A strength of the curriculum is the opportunity for extended experiences after school and on out-of-school activities and visits. The curriculum is enhanced by sport and dance opportunities offered by specialists in return for the use of the school's excellent sport and dance facilities at other times. Personal health and social education is given priority in the curriculum and this plays a significant part in pupils'

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personal development and well-being. This enables pupils to thrive and enjoy school. However, opportunities to capitalise on wider opportunities to develop basic skills are less well developed. The curriculum in classrooms is over reliant on worksheets, which are not adapted well enough to meet individual needs and do not build sufficiently well on what pupils already know. Curriculum planning does not, as yet, provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to be involved in more practical or creative ways of learning and recording in classroom activities. For example, opportunities for information and communication technology are built into subject planning but do not as yet fully address possibilities for individual pupils to record work in different ways.

Care guidance and support are outstanding because all staff know the pupils very well and target their efforts carefully and to great effect. The school environment is very attractive and welcoming and pupils are greeted personally every day as soon as they get off the bus. Every effort is made to support the emotional and behavioural needs of the pupils by staff who have an outstanding understanding of these particular needs. The ambition of the staff in working to find solutions, changes and improvement to provision is exemplary. Pupils, including those with very significant needs, have great confidence in the adults around them and, consequently, are able to make great progress in their personal development. This enables them to re-engage with learning. Links with other agencies are used very effectively to support pupils and their families. Work with other schools is very effective in enabling pupils to make moves to other schools very effectively. Other primary schools in Middlesbrough access the knowledge and resources of the school to improve their own provision to care and support pupils in their own school with emotional and behavioural needs.

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?

Although the headteacher is not new to the school she is relatively new to the role of headteacher. The deputy headteacher is new to the school. This means that the senior leadership team has worked together for only a relatively short time. The assistant headteacher has been in post for longer and she has established good management procedures, over time, in her areas of responsibility. A period of change, leading up to the current leadership arrangements have meant that the areas set for improvement at the last inspection have not yet been fully addressed successfully. This means that attainment in English, especially writing, and mathematics has not yet improved sufficiently. As such, capacity to improve is satisfactory. The exemplary standard of provision in care, guidance and support has been maintained. The composition of the governing body reflects the needs of the school and this enables members to support and challenge the work of the

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school well. The governing body, ably led by an established chair of governors, also plays a part in strategic direction and development. For example, in identifying the impact of the provision of an internal corridor to the sports hall.

Procedures for identifying what the school does well and what it needs to do to improve are satisfactory. Arrangements for monitoring the work of the school collect information but this is not always fully evaluated or systematically linked to improvement priorities. For example, attendance data is not always clearly evaluated in detail or against national benchmarks. Observations of teaching and learning are carried out by a number of leaders, but do not always generate targets for improvement, nor are targets carried through to the next observation. The link between teaching and progress is not always consistent and, as a result, outcomes are sometimes too generous.

Processes for tracking pupils' progress enable clear identification of targets set and levels achieved for individual pupils. However, analysis by groups of pupils is not yet fully developed, which means that some targets set are not sufficiently challenging. Pupils' targets, reviewed and adjusted each term, are communicated to parents and carers.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Procedures for safeguarding and health and safety are outstanding and staff assess safety carefully on trips and residential visits. Highly-developed partnerships play a very effective part in improving learning for all pupils and contribute substantially to their well-being. Many projects based in the sport and dance centre contribute to community cohesion and the school works with a link school overseas. The commitment of leaders to ensure that the school is active in promoting equality and diversity is good as seen in the positive atmosphere felt throughout the building.

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	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

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Early Years Foundation Stage

At the time of the inspection there was only one child of Reception age in the Key Stage 1 classroom. However, the indoor and outside provision was arranged so that this child and other younger pupils could involve themselves in the learning areas of their choice. In one lesson observed they were baking and sharing a cake and the member of staff joined in and extended their mathematical language skilfully. The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good, as they are well organised and careful attention is paid to development planning. As a result children make good progress and enjoy their learning.

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	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Forty-two per cent of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. The overwhelming majority were positive. A very few expressed some concerns and these were followed up by inspectors. The inspection endorses the positive views expressed by the majority of the parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Holmwood 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 31 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 75 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	24	71	10	29	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	31	91	3	9	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	23	68	8	24	2	6	1	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	20	59	13	38	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	28	82	6	18	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	22	65	10	29	2	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	20	59	13	38	1	3	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)	22	65	10	29	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	71	9	26	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	74	8	24	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	21	62	10	29	2	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	24	71	9	26	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	27	79	5	15	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).

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.



17 January 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Holmwood School, Middlesbrough, TS4 3PT

Thank you for being welcoming when we inspected your school. We enjoyed talking with you and visiting lessons. We were impressed by how attractive and well cared for the inside of the school was and we were very impressed by the sports and dance halls. Thank you for taking the time to give us your views of the school. It was clear from talking together and the questionnaire replies we received from you and your parents and carers, that you feel safe at school and are confident that the staff will help you if needed.

We found out that Holmwood is a satisfactory school and outstanding in the way it cares for you. You are making good progress in your personal development because the staff are very skilful in helping you to understand how to do as well as you can.

We have asked the teachers to do two things to make Holmwood even better. They are to:

- make sure that you do as well as you can in English and mathematics lessons
- make sure that you use your English and mathematics as much as possible in other subjects.

We know you will do all you can to help your teachers and we wish you every success in your future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Pauline Hilling-Smith

Lead inspector

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