

Holly Grove School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135014
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	360676
Inspection dates	4–5 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Alastair Younger

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	2–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	55
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Lisa Parker
Headteacher	Mrs Sue Kitto
Date of previous school inspection	28 November 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Eight lessons were observed with seven different teachers being seen. Meetings were held with senior staff and governors, and short, informal discussions were held with a few individual pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation including that relating to pupils' progress, school improvement and the safeguarding of pupils. Twenty-five parental questionnaires were analysed alongside others from pupils and staff.

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

- It checked whether all pupils, especially the most able, are suitably challenged in classes where there is a wide range of ability.
- It looked at how well teachers use assessment to promote learning during lessons.
- It observed how well staff use all available tools and strategies to promote communication and learning.
- It focused on how well independence is promoted.

Information about the school

This is a small special school which provides for pupils with a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities that vary from moderate to profound. Many pupils have a complex range of difficulties that include speech, language and communication and differing degrees of autism. Many pupils have additional health complications.

About a third of all pupils are of minority ethnic origin but nearly all of their families speak English as their main language. An above average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. Boys significantly outnumber girls.

Since the last inspection the school has been relocated to a new site, where it is co-located with a mainstream primary school, a nursery and children's centre and a sixth form college.

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

This is a good school. It meets pupils' individual needs well and excels in some very important areas. Parents and carers are almost unanimous in their support for the school. Staff are proud to work there and pupils feel safe and happy.

There is outstanding care, guidance and support for pupils. Their safeguarding is treated as the highest priority. As a result, they feel exceptionally safe and well looked after. Pupils behave exceptionally well and are encouraged to do as much as they can for themselves rather than relying too much on adult support. They do everything they can to adopt healthy lifestyles and fully recognise that to stay safe and healthy they have to contribute by respecting the medical regimes that many are subject to. The school works exceptionally closely with parents and carers to help them to be fully involved in their children's learning and development. This is something that parents and carers greatly appreciate. The school also works exceptionally closely with a huge range of professionals and agencies involved in the care, support, education and well-being of its pupils. Outstanding attention is paid to ensuring that all pupils have equal opportunities. Meticulous attention is paid to the analysis of the progress different groups of pupils are making so as to ensure that gaps narrow rather than broaden. All of these outstanding features relate equally to the Early Years Foundation Stage as they do to the rest of the school.

As a result of good teaching, pupils make good progress and achieve well. Some teaching is outstanding; nearly all is at least good. Usually, the difference is accounted for by the way teachers identify learning objectives in relation to pupils' individual targets, make sure that pupils understand them, and assess progress towards these targets.

The curriculum is good. Pupils enjoy the wealth of enrichment activities they are offered. A good balance is maintained between promoting learning and personal development. Occasionally, opportunities are missed by teachers to identify the contribution that each lesson can make to the promotion of the basic skills of numeracy and literacy and to the links between subjects.

The school is led and managed well. Self-evaluation is candid and accurate and information from this is used productively so that areas in need of improvement are identified clearly and acted upon. Good attention has been paid to address weaknesses identified by the last inspection. The school has a good capacity for future improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that in all lessons teachers make it clear to pupils what they are expecting them to learn during the lesson by:

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- linking expectations more precisely to pupils' individual targets so as to be able to make more precise statements about their progress
- reinforcing pupils' understanding of those expectations.
- Improve the curriculum by ensuring that teachers identify clearly in planning how they intend to promote basic skills in all lessons and how learning in one subject relates to that in another.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

The nature of pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities means that they are unable to meet national expectations in terms of their attainment. Nevertheless, all groups of pupils are making good progress and achieving well from what are, invariably, low starting points.

In lessons, it is clear to see that pupils are trying their hardest and thoroughly enjoying their learning. They respond well to teachers and classroom assistants and are keen to impress with their responses. Those who are able to, take great care in presenting their work as well as they can and all pupils, often through using technological aids, take pride in explaining whether they understand what they are being taught. For those with the most profound difficulties this amounts to a growing response to a source of stimulus. For the more able, good progress is evident in the fact that higher-attaining pupils are reaching the lower levels of the National Curriculum because they are suitably challenged to do so. The areas in which pupils make most progress are in improving their ability to communicate and in the development of their personal and social skills.

The progress pupils make in improving their communication skills is vital to their safety and well-being. The school works tirelessly to identify any method by which pupils with the most profound and complex difficulties can express themselves. This contributes enormously to their well-being and safety because, in many instances, they become able to communicate discomfort or concern, allowing staff to take over and care for them. More-able pupils are given excellent advice to help them steer clear of potential unpleasantness or danger. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Lessons are rarely disrupted and social meetings, such as lunch and playtimes are harmonious. Pupils are encouraged to cope with as little adult support as possible and many take on simple responsibilities that encourage a sense of self-worth and independence. Many pupils have little choice over their diet or feeding habits because they are medically dictated. Nevertheless, the outstanding promotion of healthy lifestyles is clearly evident in the way that all pupils engage wholeheartedly in physical activity at the level they can, and those who can choose, make healthy choices in their diet.

Although attendance is low, most pupils attend whenever they can. The school consistently exceeds its targets and attendance has risen rapidly in recent years. Most absence is accounted for by hospitalisation and medical conditions and a little by extended leave for pupils of minority ethnic heritage visiting their relations.

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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	
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	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	4
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 good. Some is outstanding. There is no record of any that is less than satisfactory. This is why pupils make good progress. Relationships between pupils and adults in all classrooms are outstanding. Adults show an in-depth expertise in using aids to help pupils to communicate. Some of these involve computer technology, others the use of signing, the use of pictures and signs or the simplification of language to a level that pupils comprehend. Classrooms are well organised and staff are perceptive to the needs of individuals.

Outstanding teaching is characterised by the attention it pays to planning the expected learning outcomes of pupils. At its best, this makes it crystal clear what each pupil is expected to learn and expectations are clearly linked to individual targets. As a result, progress can be evaluated accurately. This exemplar is not always followed, such as when a learning objective is identified as: 'understand some new vocabulary' without identifying what this new vocabulary should be. This undermines some teachers' ability to quantify the progress pupils are making. In other respects, assessment is good, with teachers paying particularly good attention to the comments of pupils at the end of lessons to evaluate what has been learned and what has not been understood.

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The good curriculum pays excellent attention to the differing needs of pupils by ensuring that extra support, including therapy, is offered to those who need it. It strongly promotes the development of communication skills. A good balance is kept between meeting the learning, physical and emotional needs of pupils. Links, however, between learning in different subjects are not sufficiently identified. Most teachers identify which basic skills can be promoted during a lesson but they are rarely specific as to how this is to be done. A lead could be taken from the excellence with which communication is planned and promoted through activities in sessions in the hydrotherapy pool. An excellent range of enrichment activities is offered to pupils, including many that encourage healthy lifestyles, add to pupils' enjoyment of school and promote their independence, such as through residential visits.

All pupils receive the highest possible quality of care, guidance and support. The school provides extensive access to a huge range of support agencies and professionals involved in the care and support of children. It is quick to recognise when pupils are failing to thrive and to find and offer support to them and their families. Excellent links with parents and carers contribute to 24-hour care, guidance and support for pupils. Parents and carers feel fully involved in their children's learning and are appreciative of the ways the school supports them in it.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers have driven improvement well. Staff are proud to work in the school and morale is high. Staff particularly appreciate the good programme of training and the opportunities they are given to further their careers. This programme includes a particularly good balance of training in the care and support of pupils and the enhancement of their learning. The leadership and management of teaching has been particularly successful in helping teachers whose previous teaching experience was of pupils with either lower, or higher, ability to adapt to the range of abilities now found in the school. Senior managers monitor and evaluate all aspects of teaching and learning. They are aware of the relative weaknesses identified by the inspection but have yet to embed best practice consistently across all classes, for instance in the development of cross-curricular links.

The good governing body plays a significant part in the life of the school, supporting it fully and challenging it equally. Governors take responsibility for overseeing different subjects and operational aspects, such as safeguarding, discharging their duties

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thoroughly. They know the school well and play an active part in monitoring and improving its performance.

Extremely good links are kept with parents, carers and the many other professionals and agencies with which the school works to secure good outcomes for pupils. Links include those with many mainstream schools in which Holly Grove pupils have opportunities to spend time. The lower-attaining pupils in the linked schools gain access to the facilities and expertise that Holly Grove can offer.

Equal opportunities are promoted outstandingly well. There is not a shred of discrimination. The performance of different groups of pupils is monitored carefully. Rapid action is taken to ensure that if differences in performance are detected between different groups the reasons are quickly identified and remedial action taken.

Outstanding safeguarding procedures contribute strongly to pupils' feelings of safety and well-being and the care and guidance pupils are given. They also contribute to the fact that parents and carers are unanimous in feeling that their children are safe and happy while at school. The school operates as a truly cohesive community in which pupils from a diverse range of backgrounds learn to live in harmony. Facilities, such as the hydrotherapy pool are shared with groups from the local community. Staff share specialist expertise with mainstream schools to enhance the lives of other pupils within the disabled community. The school has a suitable action plan to show how it intends to contribute further to the promotion of community cohesion.

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	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The good Early Years Foundation Stage shares all of the outstanding attributes of the rest of the school. From invariably low starting points, children make good progress, especially

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in developing their ability to communicate and in their development of personal and social skills. Children are well taught and well provided for through a good curriculum that encourages them to do as much as possible for themselves and to learn through play and exploration indoors and out. Particular attention is paid to communication with parents and carers to ease anxieties about their children leaving home for the first time. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Good attention is paid to monitoring children's progress, although occasionally there is too much of a lapse between observational and anecdotal evidence being gathered and entered in individual profiles.

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

There was a good response to a questionnaire circulated prior to the inspection. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the work the school is doing to help their children. Inspectors feel that this sentiment is fully justified and support the majority view of parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Holly Grove 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 25 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 55 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	16	64	9	36	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	18	72	7	28	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	16	64	7	28	2	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	14	56	11	44	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	16	64	9	36	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	15	60	9	36	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	14	56	9	36	1	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)	11	44	11	44	2	8	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	16	64	8	32	1	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	60	9	36	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	64	7	28	0	0	1	4
The school is led and managed effectively	18	72	5	20	0	0	1	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	18	72	6	24	0	0	1	4

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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.



8 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Holly Grove School, Burnley, BB10 1JD

What a pleasure it was to visit your school the other day.

Thank you for making us welcome.

Your school is good.

We think you are making good progress because you are being well taught.

We think you are amazingly well looked after and are right to feel safe and happy.

We like your timetable and can see why you enjoy school.

We think your school is well led and managed and is going to keep on improving.

We were very impressed by your excellent behaviour.

We want teachers to make it very clear what they want you to learn in each lesson, to make it easier for you to understand what you have achieved.

We want teachers to make sure that they take every opportunity to help you to develop important basic skills in every lesson.

We wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Alastair Younger

Lead inspector

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