

Holywell Green Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107505
Local Authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	363723
Inspection dates	22–23 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Ronald Cohen

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	225
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Rod Harris
Headteacher	Mr Paul McVeigh
Date of previous school inspection	18 June 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 11 lessons, involving nine teachers, and held meetings with representatives of the governing body, staff, parents and carers, and groups of pupils. Inspectors also looked at a range of documents, including the school's policies on safeguarding, minutes of governing body meetings, the most recent local authority evaluations and an extensive sample of pupils' work. They examined the 43 responses to questionnaires that had been completed by parents and carers, together with those which had been completed by staff and pupils.

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

- The progress children make in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- How well all pupils are learning and progressing in mathematics and English, particularly writing.
- Inspectors examined whether teaching is consistently effective across the school.
- How effective leaders and managers have been in taking measures to improve the school.

Information about the school

The school is average in size compared with most primary schools. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is higher than average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, but the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is higher than average. The school has achieved Healthy Schools status.

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, in which pupils make good progress. The school provides an outstandingly caring and supportive environment. Pupils feel happy and safe in the school because of the excellent relationships and good safeguarding arrangements, and consequently they enjoy school. As one said, 'School is good because it's friendly; people are nice, staff are good and we have fun while we are learning'. Pupils know well how to keep healthy and fit, and they are well behaved and courteous.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The ethos of the school underpins a strong tradition of respect, tolerance and care, both in and beyond the school. Attendance is above average.

Pupils' achievement is good. A large majority of children start school with skills that are below those expected for their age. By the end of Year 6, pupils make good progress from their starting points and attain broadly average standards. The standards which pupils currently attain are also broadly average, but attainment in writing continues to lag behind those attained in mathematics and reading. A particular weakness here is the lack of use of extensive vocabulary.

The recently introduced creative curriculum is good. Pupils' learning is enriched by many exciting in-school activities such as Arts Week, as well as a range of visits and visitors. Teaching and learning are good overall. A small minority of lessons are, however, no better than satisfactory. Here, the challenge and the opportunities for independent learning are less pronounced. Moreover, in these lessons, teachers' assessment of learning is less well utilised to assess accurately pupils' progress in order to set work that will move them forward in their learning. Consequently, a few higher-ability pupils do not always reach the above average levels that would normally be expected of them.

The school is well led by the headteacher, who is well supported by the deputy headteacher and the recently strengthened senior management team. Morale is high and teamwork is strong. The knowledgeable and challenging governing body is systematically involved in evaluating the school to hold it to account in all areas. The school's evaluation of its performance is accurate and it has systems in place and a clear development plan to address its few weaknesses. It has already had successes in raising attendance and in embedding a new and exciting curriculum. These factors explain its good capacity to improve further. The school gives good value for money.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in writing by:

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- – formalising opportunities for pupils to encounter and learn extensive vocabulary when they are reading, speaking or listening in order to improve their vocabulary for writing.
- Ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is consistently at least good by:
 - – always planning and implementing strategies which give pupils opportunities to become fully involved in active independent learning
 - – ensuring that all lessons move forward smartly from one challenging learning task to another so that all pupils, including all those of higher-ability, are fully stretched
 - – making it crystal clear when marking how pupils can improve their work
 - – capitalising on opportunities in all lessons to assess pupils as they learn, and as a result adapt teaching to meet all pupils' needs.

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

The outcomes for learners are good. Pupils make good progress overall from below typically expected attainment when they enter the school. Progress is quickest in Years 2, 5 and 6. Pupils who join the school in later years, and who often come with well below average attainment, make especially good progress. Pupils in the current Year 6 are attaining broadly average standards. This is particularly pleasing for the school because their attainment at entry to Key Stage 2 was well below that expected for their age.

In lessons, pupils mostly make good progress and are enthused to learn because teaching motivates them and largely provides activities that challenge them. Strong in-class support is particularly effective in assuring that pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those known to be eligible for free school meals, make similar good progress. Pupils take on a range of responsibilities both in and beyond school. For example, older pupils take an active role in maintaining the plant life in the school grounds, and they are involved in supporting local institutions, such as the St Helens Sheltered Housing.

Pupils say how much they enjoy school. This is not surprising since an outstanding strength of the school is its caring and supportive ethos that successfully encourages and underpins the good behaviour, kindness and respect for each other.. These positive attitudes and good behaviour contribute strongly to their good progress. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils adds to this good interaction. The school also introduces pupils to other cultural experiences, whether it be meeting children from other ethnic and religious backgrounds or having the opportunity to play African drums.

Pupils have good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. They say they are safe and secure in the school and they are aware of when and where dangers might occur. Pupils' horizons are widened through the strong personal, social and health education programme. This also leads to pupils securely gaining the personal skills they will need as they get older. Although their academic skills, particularly in writing, are not quite as well developed, pupils are acquiring a range of skills including in information and communication technology (ICT). They are also developing cooperative and independent learning, and good attendance and punctuality, which also prepare them well for the next stage of their education and their future economic well-being.

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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	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?

Good teaching enables pupils to make good progress. Good relationships underpin learning and pupils are motivated by the encouragement provided by teachers. Pupils are usually engaged because lessons are exciting and relevant to their interests. Teaching assistants are used very effectively to support and engage pupils. The pace of lessons and the buzz of excitement and work are typical of the vast majority of lessons seen. However, in a small number of lessons, higher-ability pupils are not challenged sufficiently; additional work designed to stretch their learning is not provided to help them achieve their best and produce high level work.

In most lessons, the use of directed questioning successfully develops pupils' thinking. This also helps pupils know how well they have done and what to do to maintain good progress. Moreover, where marking is good, pupils are using their targets and responding positively to their teachers' helpful suggestions to review and improve their work. However, in a small number of lessons these practices are not consistently applied.

Pupils' interests and well-being in the mixed-age classes are taken fully into account when planning the imaginative curriculum. Music and sports are well served by visiting teachers, and links with the nearby high school, which has specialist Sports Status.

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The curriculum is based on themes and topics. During the week of the inspection, the theme was 'Arts'. Throughout the school, pupils' lessons were based on the theme. Thus, for example, a Year 4 ICT lesson required pupils, working in pairs, to use various programmes to design and produce a 'blueprint' for face-masks, based on careful observation of their partners' faces. This had a palpably positive impact on encouraging pupils in the skills of close observation and evaluation, design and re-assessment of their own work.

This is a remarkably caring school. Pupils are supported and nurtured extremely well throughout their time in school. Excellent systems are used to identify underachievement and provide early intervention and good support for the very large group of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There are very good procedures which aid transition into and from the school.

Several parents and carers commented on this caring aspect of school. The following comment typifies the parents' and carers' responses to the school's ethos: 'My child has special needs and the school is excellent at meeting his needs. I am pleased to have found a school which goes that extra mile for a child with complicated needs.'

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?

Under the clear direction of the headteacher, the school has focused, with some success, on improving the quality of teaching and learning in order to accelerate pupils' progress and to raise their attainment. The headteacher and the supportive, effective and increasingly challenging governing body communicate high expectations, have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and monitor the work of the school well. Judicious use of staffing is effective in removing the inconsistencies they have identified. There has been some success. Leaders know that while teaching and learning are improving, work still remains to be done in order to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good in all lessons.

The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination is good. It has clear ambitions for all groups of pupils, and takes concerted action aimed at helping them achieve their best. It has had some marked successes, such as in improving the progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and by those pupils who enter the school at times other than the normal year for starting school. Where pupils are not yet fully maximising their potential, such as a few higher-ability pupils, the school has identified where improvements can be made and is developing strategies to remedy the situation. There are particularly good links with

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outside agencies which have been effective in supporting some of the school's pupils and their families whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Links with parents and carers are good. The school has clear and firm plans to strengthen these links by using the children's centre, which is on the school's site, and which is due to open very shortly.

Arrangements for safeguarding are in good order and well documented. For example, the school integrates issues of safety into the curriculum. The school is addressing this in a purposeful manner.

The school successfully broadens pupils' understanding of the wider community through effective links with a school in the centre of Halifax, which has a large majority of pupils from a range of different ethnic backgrounds. These links encompass joint activities, which have been of immense benefit to all the pupils. Within its own school community, the school promotes an ethos of understanding and respect, which leads to a strong sense of community cohesion. However, the school is aware that it does not yet evaluate its work in this area consistently. It is addressing this in a purposeful manner

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	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

From starting points which are below those expected for their age, children make good progress across the Early Years Foundation Stage, and by the time they reach Year 1, the majority have attained their expected learning goals. Good teaching and high quality welfare provision in a welcoming environment ensure that children quickly feel secure and happy, and they obviously enjoy their learning. Activities are led by children's interests so that engagement is high and skills of problem solving and perseverance are developed well. For example, children delighted in working out how pouring additional water in a water tube, moved boats more quickly to their destination. Such activities are complemented by activities led by staff, and this ensures that learning takes place in all

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situations, and reinforces good progress. Indoor resources and the outdoor environment are used well to extend learning, particularly in Nursery. Activities for Reception children are not as imaginative as in the Nursery and, generally, progress here is a little slower.

Assessments and observations are well embedded to track children's progress. This is proportionate so that maximum time can be focused on supporting continued learning. This is done well by all the teachers and support staff, who work well together as a team. This good team is well led by the Early Years Foundation Stage coordinator, whose expertise in these matters underpins the good start that children receive in their education.

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

The percentage of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire is slightly below average. Overall, responses are very positive about the school and the inspection endorses these views. Of the small number of parents and carers who opted to write additional comments, these were divided between those who were happy with the school (the majority) and those who had some concerns. A very small minority of parents and carers had concerns regarding bullying and relationships between some staff and pupils, and the school's communications with them. Inspectors saw no evidence of bullying during the inspection, and there was much evidence to support the strongly positive views expressed by most parents and carers concerning the caring relationships and attitudes which teachers had for the children. In discussion with pupils, they all agreed that they were very safe in school. They all affirmed that, on the very rare occasions when potential actions by some pupils might cause concern for others, teachers deal with it rigorously and effectively.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Holywell Green 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 55 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 225 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	35	64	17	31	3	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	39	71	14	25	1	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	28	51	21	38	5	9	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	28	51	23	42	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	31	56	21	38	2	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	26	47	24	44	3	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	30	55	21	38	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)	31	56	19	35	0	0	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	29	53	20	36	5	9	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	21	38	21	38	6	11	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	36	22	40	8	15	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	32	58	16	29	5	9	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	31	56	22	40	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	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.



26 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Holywell Green Primary School, Halifax, HX4 9AE

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we inspected your school recently. We were very impressed with your very good manners, how polite you are with each other and with your teachers and with your good behaviour. Many of you told us how much you enjoy being in school and we found that you have a good understanding of how to stay healthy by taking regular exercise and enthusiastically eating all the healthy food at lunch time.

We found that Holywell Green Primary provides you with a good education. All the adults look after you well and make sure that you are safe within your harmonious school community. Your headteacher, the staff and governors have made lots of improvements recently.

To make Holywell Green an even better school, we have identified some other things which need to happen. We have asked the school to ensure that:

- when you are reading, speaking and listening, teachers ask you to note all the 'wow' words that come up, and then make sure you learn them so you will have more exciting vocabulary which will then help you to do better in your writing
- all lessons give you opportunities to do more things by yourselves, and that they make sure all of you have to think carefully and work hard right through to the end of the lessons
- marking always helps you to know exactly what you have to do to improve your work or to reach the next level.

I know that you will continue to work hard and enjoy lessons as you have done this year.

Best wishes for your future.

Yours sincerely

Mr Ronald Cohen

Lead inspector

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