

# Holly Hill Methodist CofE Infant and Nursery School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103479
<b>Local Authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	376916
<b>Inspection dates</b>	4–5 October 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Michael Merchant

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	207
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	John Richardson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Christine Parker
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 January 2007
<b>School address</b>	New Street Rubery B45 0EU
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Fifteen lessons or part-lessons were observed, taught by seven different teachers. Meetings were held with pupils, members of the governing body, staff and the headteacher. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including records of pupils' attainment and progress, school policies including safeguarding documentation, and the school development plan. In addition, questionnaires from 32 parents and carers, 48 pupils and six teachers were analysed.

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

- The effectiveness of strategies to improve pupils' attainment, particularly in writing at Key Stage 1.
- The accuracy of teachers' assessments and the use of assessment information to plan further steps in learning.
- How well the school supports those pupils with particularly low levels of prior attainment and those who join partway through the school year.
- The effectiveness of middle leaders and the governing body in checking attainment, progress and teaching and contributing to the school's improvement.

## Information about the school

This school is smaller than most other primary schools. Most pupils live locally and the large majority are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is lower than average. The percentage of pupils who are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. Their needs relate mainly to moderate learning difficulties. However, a below average proportion have a statement of special educational needs. A high number of pupils join or leave the school partway through the school year. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in the Nursery and two Reception classes.

The school has a breakfast club, an after-school club and a children's centre on the site, but they are not managed by the governing body and are subject to a separate inspection. In 2009, the school gained 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

Holly Hill Methodist CofE Infant School provides a good education for its pupils, which fully reflects its strong ethos. It has sustained and built upon the many successful aspects of its work since the last inspection and enables its pupils to make good progress in their academic and personal development. The school forms strong relationships with families, including those that may be considered harder to reach, and parents and carers are delighted with the support provided for their children. As one said: 'We are really pleased with the school. My child really enjoys school and is very proud to be a Holly Hill pupil.'

Care, guidance and support for pupils are good, as are safeguarding procedures. The curriculum is imaginative and exciting, and supports pupils' personal development well. As a result, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and pupils keep themselves healthy and feel safe.

Children get a good start in the Nursery. The wide range of stimulating activities provided means that children make good progress. By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment is broadly average and rising. Pupils' number skills in particular have improved markedly, although not all are fully confident in solving number problems. Pupils make good progress in relation to their starting points when they joined the school, and different groups achieve well. Plans to teach writing more effectively, such as through raising awareness of the differences between formal and informal language, are now embedding, but as yet not enough pupils reach the higher levels in teacher assessments at the end of Year 2. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive good support, both in class and in small group or individual tuition sessions, which enables them to make good and sometimes excellent progress in their learning. Pupils' very strong enjoyment of school, however, is not reflected in the overall attendance rate, which is rising as a result of actions taken by the school, but still only average.

The headteacher, very well supported by the deputy headteacher, has a very clear vision of high-quality provision. She has established a culture where inadequate teaching is not acceptable, and where every teacher is enabled to improve through effective professional development. As a result, teaching is good. The best teaching is marked by enthusiasm for the subject and high levels of engagement and fun. Learning is sometimes held back, however, because in a small number of lessons tasks do not always provide maximum challenge for the more-able pupils.

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Even though the school has many consistently good features, staff and the governing body are not complacent and want to lift pupils' attainment even further. They know exactly what actions to take next as a result of thorough systems of self-evaluation. The governing body is well placed to review developments and to challenge the school to improve further. Together with the improvements already made to provision and pupils' outcomes in the last two years, these strengths show that the school's capacity to improve further is good.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- By December 2012, raise attainment so that most pupils exceed expected levels for their age in reading, writing and mathematics by:
  - ensuring that effective techniques to teach writing are employed consistently so all pupils write confidently and creatively
  - developing pupils' higher-level problem solving skills in mathematics
  - making sure that teachers plan for and extend the learning of the more-able pupils at a consistently challenging pace throughout lessons.
- Work more closely with the few parents and carers whose children do not attend regularly enough to ensure that the overall rate of attendance is 95% or better in the next school year.

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

Children join the Nursery classes with skills and abilities that are below those expected for their age. The pupils' work seen confirms that their attainment is broadly average by Year 2, and improving strongly. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with particularly low levels of prior attainment, achieve well. There is no significant difference in the rates of learning and progress of boys and girls. Key to this success is the introduction of rigorous procedures for monitoring and evaluating the progress of all pupils towards challenging targets, coupled with good and often inspiring teaching. Consequently, the quality of learning in lessons is good. Pupils are keen to do their best, work purposefully in lessons and greatly enjoy what they are doing.

Pupils' number problem solving skills have improved markedly since the last inspection. For instance, in a fast-paced Year 2 numeracy lesson, all groups of pupils made good progress and really enjoyed working in groups to complete the challenging task of deducing the properties of three-dimensional shapes. However, this is not always the case as there are occasions when higher-attaining pupils are not fully challenged. The pupils make good progress in their writing and reading skills as a result of the positive actions taken to promote speaking and listening skills and knowledge of sounds and letters. This was seen clearly in a Reception class lesson when the pupils made good use of their knowledge of sounds to write simple sentences about the story of *The Gruffalo*. This approach is not consistently applied in all classes, however, and pupils' attainment in writing lags behind their

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mathematical skills.

In all year groups, pupils profit from the welcoming ambiance of the school. They widen their understanding of the world through growing links with schools in India and in contrasting areas in Britain. The good range of well-attended after-school activities such as the 'Malachi' drama club have a positive impact on pupils' well-being and help them develop new areas of interest. Parents and carers and pupils alike say that pupils are safe at school and know how to avoid dangers and risks. Pupils make a strong contribution to the school community through the school council, by being class helpers and by helping younger children in the playground as 'squaddies'. They are learning to take responsibility for their behaviour, which is good, although they still need fairly frequent reminders of what is expected of them in lessons. Attendance is average and improving; particularly noteworthy is the reduction in persistent absence as a result of the coordinated efforts by a team of staff. Pupils get on well with each other, taking turns, sharing and helping one another. This, together with improving key skills in reading, writing and mathematics and good use of information and communication technology in lessons, means that pupils are well prepared for the next stages of their lives.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

## How effective is the provision?

There is a high proportion of good lessons and there are many exciting lessons where all pupils are keen to learn. Many staff model good practice, with fast-paced, highly engaging lessons. Most teachers use questioning well to draw the pupils into

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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discussion. However, some inconsistencies remain, and this slows some pupils' progress. In a few lessons all pupils sometimes work at the same pace, as directed by the teacher, and this leads to insufficient challenge for the most able pupils. Teachers mark books carefully, accurately and regularly and the advice teachers give to pupils on how to improve their work is effective. Most pupils, therefore, are clear about the next steps in their learning.

The school has recently revised its curriculum to make it more exciting and creative, and it meets the range of pupils' needs well. The changes have had a particularly good impact on pupils' enjoyment of learning because it provides more opportunities to fully develop their creativity and imagination, although this approach does not yet extend to full development of their extended writing skills across all themes. An excellent range of out-of-school activities provides pupils with many additional opportunities to enhance their learning and makes a valuable contribution to pupils' high levels of enjoyment.

The atmosphere in the school is warm and welcoming and this encourages pupils whose circumstances make them particularly vulnerable, and those new to the school, to feel secure. Pupils greatly enjoy the breakfast and after-school clubs which contribute well to their social skills. Pupils are confident that they will get good advice. Detailed plans identify the strategies that will be adopted for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who join the school with particularly low levels of attainment. Induction programmes are very effective for those who arrive throughout the year and those starting in the Nursery class.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Senior leaders, staff and the governing body share a determination to make Holly Hill Infant School an exciting school that aims for the highest possible standards of attainment. The headteacher has directed improvement well to improve pupils' educational opportunities. For instance, she swiftly reversed a recent downturn in attainment. This could not have occurred had not staff at all levels shared her vision and ambition to further improve standards and accelerate pupils' progress. Senior leaders track pupils' attainment closely, and ensure class teachers are aware of anyone in danger of falling behind. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are high, and the team acknowledges that there are still a few pupils who could achieve even more, especially in the more advanced level of writing. At the time of the inspection,

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there was no evidence of any discrimination, and the school promotes equality of opportunity for all pupils vigorously through sophisticated monitoring and good support. Progress for all groups of pupils is broadly similar, showing that the school’s commitment to equal opportunities is translated effectively into practice.

The effectiveness of the governing body is good. It is increasingly able to hold the school to account for its work and has been influential in helping senior leaders to secure school improvement. It fulfils all legal requirements, and all safeguarding arrangements were found to be effective at the time of the inspection. Good practice in safeguarding and child protection is evident in all areas of the school’s work. For instance, checks on the suitability of adults to work with children are thorough.

The school prides itself on working well with the local community and forms good and ever-strengthening relationships with families, including those that have traditionally been harder to reach. In this inclusive school, every child matters and individual needs are considered very specifically. The school works well in partnership with external agencies to secure extra support for those pupils who need it. Leaders ensure that pupils are developing into caring citizens who respect and value the views of others, and that a set of common shared values is embedded in every child. The school's work to promote community cohesion is good. There are good links within the local community and work to improve pupils' understanding of national and global diversity is continuing. The school itself is a very harmonious community and pupils of different ethnicities get on very well together.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Effective liaison between the school and the children’s centre ensures that children



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settle in to the Nursery classes quickly, are keen to learn, play together well and are well behaved. The excellent space for the youngest children is used to good effect. It is effectively organised and well resourced, bright, airy, safe and secure. Inside spaces are fresh and clean, with clearly marked labels on drawers and containers so that children can find and put away equipment independently.

Adults effectively develop children’s language and ideas. For instance, the children were observed having a splendid time writing their names and making ‘silly soup’ from a range of materials. The outside area offers much opportunity for learning and is used well by adults to help develop children’s climbing and other physical skills. The teachers and teaching assistants plan and organise activities well but do not always make the most of opportunities to develop creative role play or writing. Very good records are kept of children’s achievements, in photographs, notes and samples of their work.

The children move into Year 1 working securely towards their early learning goals and this represents good progress in relation to their starting points. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader provides good leadership. She has a very secure understanding of the early years curriculum and constantly reviews her practice to ensure that all children receive high-quality care and support.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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 proportion of parents and carers who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire, at 15%, was below average. However, the school clearly enjoys their confidence and support. A number of individual comments praised the extremely high quality care, support and guidance given to pupils, particularly to those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those new to the school. The very few individual criticisms were followed up during the visit. The views of the parents and carers interviewed informally at the beginning and end of the school day confirm the positive responses in the questionnaires.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Holly Hill Methodist CofE Infant 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 32 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 207 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	18	56	12	38	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	18	56	11	34	2	6	1	3
The school informs me about my child’s progress	11	34	17	53	3	9	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	13	41	14	44	3	9	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	14	44	15	47	2	6	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	11	34	19	59	2	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	12	38	17	53	2	6	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)	10	31	18	56	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	13	41	15	47	3	9	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	38	16	50	2	6	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	8	25	18	56	3	9	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	9	28	18	56	4	13	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	15	47	15	47	2	6	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 8 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



6 October 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Holly Hill Methodist CofE Infants School, Birmingham B45  
OEU**

Thank you all for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. What a lovely two days we had. We enjoyed meeting and talking to you and loved watching you sing. You go to a good school and you are right to be proud of it. Here are some of the things we liked best about Holly Hill Infants.

- You make good progress as you move through the school and you achieve well, because you work hard and benefit from good teaching.
- Your teachers and other adults take good care of you. You told us they make sure that everyone feels safe and secure.
- You behave well around the school and in your classes and you look after each other well. You relish helping each other to learn and you readily help your classmates when they find things difficult.

Your headteacher, the governing body and all the other staff know in detail how to make sure that your school continues to improve. We have asked them to do the following three things.

- Make sure that more of you reach higher levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics in the teacher assessments at the end of Year 2.
- In lessons, ensure that all teachers plan your work more carefully so that it is always well matched to your different abilities.
- Make sure more of you attend school regularly and take fewer days off school.

I am sure that you will help them by always working hard and aiming really high.

Yours sincerely

Michael Merchant  
Lead inspector

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