

Holly Park Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101286
Local Authority	Barnet
Inspection number	376539
Inspection dates	21–22 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Nick Butt

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	504
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Vicky Hobart
Headteacher	John Maxwell
Date of previous school inspection	18 June 2009
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspection team visited 30 lessons or part lessons taught by 17 teachers. Inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, staff, groups of pupils and spoke informally to parents and carers. They observed the school's work and looked at a selection of documentation, including planning, evidence of monitoring such as lesson observations, and analyses of pupils' work and other assessment information. The inspection team scrutinised inspection questionnaires returned by 93 parents and carers, as well as those from staff and pupils.

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

- How well teachers use assessment information to plan work that meets the needs of all pupils in their classes.
- How effectively marking and target setting show pupils what they need to do to improve.
- What the school is doing to raise attainment in mathematics.

Information about the school

Holly Park is much larger than the average-sized primary school. The large majority of pupils are from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds, many from Eastern Europe. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is high. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is average. The school runs a popular breakfast club. Pupils also attend a privately run, after-school club that is subject to separate inspection. The school holds the Activemark and the Eco-Schools Bronze award.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Holly Park Primary is an outstanding school. It is a hive of energy and activity that provides an excellent curriculum that excites and enthuses pupils. The exceptional quality of its music brings invitations to sing at international conferences and most recently live on national television for 'Children in Need'. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes make an excellent start to their education because the provision is outstanding. Pupils achieve well through Years 1 to 6 from below average starting points. Attainment at the end of Year 6 is broadly average overall, but a little stronger in English than in mathematics. The school has provided training for teaching assistants to become more effective in supporting pupils' mathematical development and focused on improving pupils' problem-solving skills. These measures are having a beneficial impact in closing the attainment gap with English.

Teaching is mainly good with some outstanding elements. Teachers use assessment information well to set work that challenges pupils and actively involves them in learning. Marking often helps pupils to understand how well they are learning, although this is not fully consistent. Similarly, while most pupils know their targets for improvement in writing and mathematics, these are not always sufficiently aligned to National Curriculum levels of attainment. There are excellent opportunities for pupils to practise their basic skills across the curriculum and teachers take full account of their interests and views when planning programmes of study.

Outstanding partnerships with other schools and organisations enhance the provision further. The pastoral care of pupils is outstanding, with some innovative and highly effective work to help pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable overcome potential barriers to learning.

Pupils' above-average attendance testifies to their enjoyment of school. They thrive in an attractive and safe learning environment where behaviour is outstanding and older pupils support the younger ones. Pupils have an excellent understanding of keeping healthy and the award of the Activemark confirms that they take plenty of exercise. They grow their own vegetables which they sell to raise funds. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the school community through their participation in the school, eco and learning councils and through undertaking a wide range of other responsibilities. They also reach out extremely well to the wider community. Music makes a significant contribution to pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher give the school a clear and dynamic lead,

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sharing their passion for education with staff and pupils alike, and spearheading the drive for improvement with verve and energy. They have built up strong curriculum teams in six areas of learning based upon the Early Years Foundation Stage model. This means all teachers contribute to leading and monitoring aspects of the curriculum, share good practice and support one another well. There is a shared vision for rapid improvement backed up by meticulous analysis of data to measure how well individual pupils are progressing. Self-evaluation is consequently accurate and well informed. The school has made good progress since its last inspection and is well placed to continue to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics by:
 - refining marking so that pupils understand how to improve their work
 - aligning target setting more closely to National Curriculum levels of attainment so that all pupils are fully aware of their next steps in learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

Although attainment has been broadly average over time at the end of Year 6, in 2011, pupils reached significantly higher levels in English following a successful drive to improve writing, in particular. Current attainment is broadly in line with national expectations in most year groups in both English and mathematics, with English tending to be a little stronger. All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress over time from starting points that are often well below expectations because work is pitched at the correct level for them. The quality of support is also good. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress and benefit from additional resources and the flexibility of staff, who adapt work to suit their requirements.

Pupils say how much they enjoy learning. One said, 'I like big discussions, where everyone's brains are working!' They particularly appreciate the fact that teachers listen to their views and actively involve them in lessons. Year 4 pupils showed great interest in exploring ancient Egyptian artefacts to work out the occupation of the person who might have used them. Pupils relish a challenge and show creativity and ingenuity responding to open-ended questions in their homework books. Year 6 pupils enthusiastically engaged with some complex work on the area of shapes, trying to prove the theory that 'a regular hexagon with 5cm sides has a greater area than a regular octagon with 4cm sides'. Pupils rise to their teachers' high expectations of them, both in terms of their outstanding behaviour and in the quality of their work. This is particularly apparent in music lessons, where pupils achieve extremely high levels of excellence in response to inspirational teaching.

Pupils have a good knowledge of how to resist bullying and say it very rarely occurs. They say they would feel comfortable approaching an adult if they had a problem.

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Pupils have strong views about keeping healthy and have introduced their own guidance about acceptable playtime snacks. The school council is influential in improving aspects of school life, for example in arranging for toilets to be refurbished and designing new play equipment. The eco-council is very active in promoting energy conservation and has taken steps to secure the school’s Bronze Eco-Schools award. The learning council briefs pupils in assembly about what it considers to be the key components of a good lesson. Pupils are active in local democracy and have interviewed a former Mayor of London at election time. School choirs have sung at the Royal Albert Hall, a top-class London hotel for world climate-change leaders and to an audience of prime-time millions at Television Centre. Pupils willingly take on new experiences and wrestle with moral dilemmas. They are well prepared for secondary school because they transfer with the good study habits and the wider skills and personal qualities they need to succeed in addition to their basic skills.

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	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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	1

How effective is the provision?

Teachers make good use of resources to interest pupils and plan lessons well, ensuring that they make the objectives clear. They often involve pupils in deciding what a successful outcome to the lesson would look like, and encourage collaboration and discussion. They use questioning well to probe pupils’ understanding. In an outstanding lesson, Year 6 pupils considered the viewpoint and intentions of an author by comparing and contrasting a series of texts. The teacher managed the discussion extremely well, making sure a wide range of pupils contributed, and challenging their thinking. Assessment is good, as teachers know

¹ 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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pupils very well and use this understanding to set work that matches their needs. The extent to which pupils know the next steps in their learning varies because of some unevenness in the consistency of marking and occasional lack of precision in target setting.

The outstanding curriculum fires pupils’ imaginations and gives them a love of learning. Pupils practise their basic skills in a wide variety of imaginative and interesting ways. Year 2 pupils made dictionaries that contained words related to their transport topic. A focus on key learning skills helps pupils to become self-reliant, reflective and team players. An excellent range of visits, visitors and clubs enrich the curriculum even more. Teachers consult pupils about what they would like to learn to the extent that Year 6 pupils could choose to attend lessons on either the Romans or the Ancient Egyptians depending on their preferences.

The school cares for pupils particularly well. Staff visit all new arrivals at home regardless of their age group to help prepare them for joining the school and to find out their interests and needs. A skilled and experienced team of teaching assistants makes a valuable contribution to pupils’ learning. The school caters extremely well for pupils with a range of complex needs and has established excellent relationships with other agencies and support groups, often hosting events. Attendance is rising as a result of stringent measures to tackle term-time holidays and other avoidable absences. The well-run breakfast club provides large numbers of pupils with a nutritious and sociable start to their school day.

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	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and deputy headteacher have complementary strengths and make an outstanding team, highly ambitious for the school. Their motto, ‘Once a Holly Parker, always a Holly Parker’, reflects the school’s distinctive character. Parents and carers and pupils say how proud they are to be a part of the school community, and recognise how special it is. The school’s success is underpinned by well-established systems and procedures that ensure its smooth running and enable leaders and managers to assess accurately the quality of its work. Wide-ranging curriculum audits give a full picture of the strengths and areas to improve in different subjects. The impact of leaders and managers is good. Teaching is more consistently good and standards are continuing to rise. Strategic plans have the right priorities and are evaluated regularly. The effectiveness of the governing body is good. Members of

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the governing body ask probing questions of leaders and spend time in school checking its work. They are linked to the curriculum teams and are becoming increasingly confident in evaluating their performance.

The school has outstanding partnerships with a wide range of other schools and local organisations. It works closely with a homeless charity and hosts English language classes for a local college. It works in partnership with a local professional theatre and its pupils have taken part in productions such as *The Wind in the Willows*. Pupils benefit from the support of a local charitable body in subsidising their enrichment activities and receive coaching in a variety of sports. Their participation in local and national artistic and cultural events makes an excellent contribution to their personal development and boosts their confidence. The school has the promotion of equality at the heart of all it does and keeps meticulous records of the progress of all its pupils, ensuring that all achieve well and that any remaining differences are minimal. An innovative enrichment project with a group of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and at risk of underachieving is helping to secure their accelerated progress. There is no evidence of discrimination and pupils all work and play harmoniously together. Safeguarding arrangements are good, with particularly thorough risk assessments of the school premises and high-quality training for all staff in the school’s procedures and policies. The school promotes community cohesion well and celebrates its diversity, reaching out to local groups. Its excellent reputation for inclusion attracts visitors from far and wide including a recent delegation from Norway. Pupils have first-hand experience of a wide range of different cultures and traditions, and the school itself is a highly cohesive community. The school makes excellent use of its resources and represents outstanding value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

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Early Years Foundation Stage

The rich, varied learning environment provides an outstanding stimulus for children and offers many exciting activities in all areas of learning both inside and outside. Children quickly adapt to classroom routines and grow rapidly in independence, able to sustain concentration for long periods of time. For example, a group of eight children were able to wrap up birthday presents using scissors and sticky tape sensibly without adult supervision. Children make outstanding progress because the teaching is of a consistently high quality and adults intervene extremely well in promoting language and extending learning. Children enjoyed rolling Christmas baubles and toy cars down a slope to see which would go the furthest. Children respond to challenges with great enthusiasm and give freely of their suggestions for what they would like to learn about. An impressive space ship is one result of this in the Reception unit. There is a good mix of activities led by adults and for children to choose for themselves, all of which are purposeful and promote learning. There is a great emphasis on developing children’s early basic skills. Children’s behaviour is outstanding and they make very rapid progress in their personal and social development.

Staff keep careful assessments of children’s achievements and use these to build up a comprehensive picture of their strengths and to identify next steps in learning. Outstanding leadership and management have built an extremely effective team that has an excellent understanding of how young children learn. Rigorous self-evaluation promotes further improvement, encapsulated in detailed action plans.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of questionnaires returned by parents and carers was below average compared with most primary schools. All those who responded agreed that their children enjoy school, the teaching is good and the school helps children to have a healthy lifestyle. A few felt their views could be taken into account more. The school regularly seeks parents’ and carers’ views and senior leaders hold coffee mornings for them to raise any issues of concern. A few also queried homework arrangements and stated that they do not agree with the more creative approach. Inspectors investigated homework and found that the open-ended tasks run alongside more formal practice in developing basic skills such as learning spellings, times tables and hearing children read. Many pupils told inspectors how much they enjoyed

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responding to the open-ended challenges. A few individual written comments by parents and carers were brought to the attention of senior staff in general terms, but there were no patterns of concern. Many parents and carers wrote in support of the school and its staff.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Holly Park 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 93 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 504 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	68	73	23	25	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	51	55	39	42	0	0	2	2
The school informs me about my child’s progress	28	30	55	59	8	9	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	31	33	46	49	14	15	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	43	46	44	47	5	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	36	39	45	48	9	10	2	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	40	43	48	52	4	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)	33	35	47	51	4	4	4	4
The school meets my child’s particular needs	31	33	44	47	10	11	5	5
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	29	31	51	55	6	6	4	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	24	26	44	47	14	15	8	9
The school is led and managed effectively	36	39	46	49	5	5	4	4
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	47	51	37	40	8	9	1	1

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 08 April 2011 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.



23 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Holly Park Primary School, Friern Barnet N11 3HG

Thank you for your warm welcome when we visited your school recently and for sharing your views with us in person and by returning questionnaires. Holly Park is an outstanding school. Here are some particular strengths.

- You make good progress in learning and say how much you enjoy the lessons.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you care for one another very well.
- You have an outstanding understanding about how to keep healthy and take plenty of exercise.
- You play a full part in the life of the school and take on many important jobs.
- There are lots of exciting and interesting activities for you to take part in.
- The school cares for you extremely well, especially if you are facing difficulties.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher work really well together as a team.
- The school makes sure everybody is fully included and nobody feels left out.
- The youngest children get off to an outstanding start in their education.

We think you could do even better in English and mathematics so have asked your teachers to show you exactly how you can improve when they mark your books and set targets for you.

All of you can help by telling your teachers what you like about learning and continuing to do your best.

Many thanks once again for your help and our best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Nick Butt
Lead inspector

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