

Holdbrook Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	117091
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	395721
Inspection dates	26–27 June 2012
Lead inspector	Andrew Saunders

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The registered childcare provision, managed by the governing body, was inspected under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	206
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Joe Brock
Headteacher	Karen Scudamore
Date of previous school inspection	14 October 2008
School address	Longcroft Drive Waltham Cross EN8 7QG
Telephone number	01992 716789
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Registered childcare provision	123861, Holdbrook Pre-School
Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision	18
Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision	14 October 2008

Age group	3–11
Inspection date(s)	26–27 June 2012
Inspection number	395721



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Introduction

Inspection team

Andrew Saunders

Additional Inspector

Samuel Ofori-Kyereh

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 19 lessons or parts of lessons delivered by 12 teaching staff. Observations totalled nine hours. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at records about the performance of pupils, leaders' analysis of this data, the monitoring of teaching and learning by senior leaders, pupils' work in their books, and documents recording the school's self-evaluation. The inspectors evaluated the views of parents and carers in the 91 questionnaires returned, as well as through informal discussions. Inspectors also considered the responses by pupils and members of staff, through the questionnaires, formal and informal meetings, and spoke to members of the governing body.

Information about the school

This is an averaged-sized primary school, in an urban area of Waltham Cross. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is double the national average. The majority of pupils are from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. Over half of these pupils speak English as an additional language, including Polish, Turkish, Italian and a wide range of other languages; a few of these pupils join the school speaking little or no English. Many more pupils than usual join or leave the school other than at the usual times, and some stay with the school for only a short period of time. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including those supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, is three times the national average and represents the majority of pupils in some cohorts. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which indicate the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of pupils. The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a Nursery and a Reception class. There is an afternoon pre-school run by the governing body, which is located in the same classroom used by the Nursery class in the morning. Children can join the pre-school from the age of two years and nine months. This was inspected as part of this inspection.

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	1
Achievement of pupils	1
Quality of teaching	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	1

Key findings

- This is an outstanding school because the exceptionally effective leadership has maintained a relentless focus on improving outcomes for all pupils, developing the highest quality of teaching, and providing pupils with an excellent curriculum, leading to outstanding achievement.
- Achievement is outstanding. Pupils make very rapid progress from their low starting points, because teachers carefully assess pupils' performance and ensure tasks meet their needs very well. Attainment is rising, and all groups of pupils are very rapidly closing the gap with their comparable groups nationally, most notably in mathematics and reading, where attainment is now average. While the gap in attainment in writing is also closing, fewer pupils than might be expected reach the highest levels because more-able pupils do not always get off to a prompt start with their tasks.
- Teaching is mostly outstanding, and never less than good. Teachers demonstrate excellent subject knowledge, frequently share best practice and ideas about how to make learning effective, and evaluate their own and each other's teaching. Consequently lessons move quickly and pupils typically make excellent progress. Occasionally, pupils do not have time to respond to the high-quality comments teachers make in their books.
- The pupils' impressive love of learning comes about because the curriculum is exciting, they are given high-quality resources to use, and they thrive on tasks which challenge them. They get along amicably, showing great care and respect towards one another. Pupils feel very well cared for by the adults at the school and feel that they are kept safe.
- The well-established leadership team has consistently focused on improving teaching to be the best possible, establishing an ethos of self-reflection and peer support. This is done in a calm, encouraging atmosphere so that all members of the community feel highly valued and do their best to improve.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in writing to at least the national average within a year, by:
 - giving more-able pupils more opportunities to get on with their work as soon as they feel confident they know what to do
 - ensuring pupils always respond to the high-quality comments teachers make in their books.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

When they join the school in the Nursery, children have skills and knowledge which are often well below those expected for their age, most noticeably in communication. They settle quickly into carefully established routines and develop great curiosity about the opportunities available. Excellent teaching in Reception builds on this. By the time they join Year 1, they have made up considerable ground and established highly positive attitudes to learning.

In lessons seen during the inspection, outstanding progress was typical. For example, Year 6 pupils produced writing of impressive quality, because the task was challenging and high-quality tablet computers gave them the freedom to concentrate on the content. The attainment of pupils in reading has improved and is average by the end of Key Stage 1, because of a school culture which expects pupils to read at least two books a week. Pupils who find reading more difficult are helped by well-trained staff, who give them close attention in learning to link sounds and letters (phonics) and consequently they make rapid progress. As an older pupil said, 'I caught up two years in a few months'. Year 6 pupils enjoy reading a great deal, and said they would like even more time to read. They reach average levels of attainment, which represents exceptional progress from their very low starting points. The innovative approach to the curriculum means that the skills pupils develop are consolidated within a wide range of practical situations and real-world problems.

The performance of boys, previously a concern, has been addressed with notable success, and boys make similar, outstanding progress to the girls. Pupils who speak English as an additional language, including those at the very start of learning English, receive excellent support which nurtures their confidence to try out new words, and to record their ideas. As a result, they make very rapid progress, some catching up with their peers within a year, or reaching the highest levels expected by the end of Year 6. Language difficulties are not allowed to constrain the level of challenge for pupils and expert support means that they thrive, for example in mathematics. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds make outstanding progress to reach levels of attainment which are average for similar pupils. Pupils who join the school outside normal times are quickly drawn into the climate of learning and their

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progress accelerates. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are accurately identified and their needs are closely tracked by knowledgeable staff. The school has developed great expertise and understanding in meeting these needs, as well as seeking out helpful partnerships, to ensure the best possible support. As a result, these groups of pupils make brisk progress and participate in all aspects of school life. Parents and carers were almost unanimous in agreeing that their children achieve well; inspectors found that pupils' achievement is even better.

Quality of teaching

Teachers have very high expectations of pupils, through the level of challenge and the quality of work expected. They ask probing questions, testing out what pupils know and deepening pupils' thinking. They use the comprehensive data about the performance of pupils to plan lessons which accurately meet the needs of all groups of pupils. The school provides pupils with the highest quality resources, such as the extensive computer facilities, exciting playground facilities and access to online learning resources. Adults show great respect for pupils and this is reciprocated. Together these factors cultivate a sense of awe and wonder so that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Teachers are skilled at using a wide range of different strategies to enhance lessons. For example, Year 3 pupils developed exciting sentences, using physical gestures to reinforce accurate use of punctuation.

Teachers give pupils accurate verbal feedback which helps them to know what they need to do next. However, very occasionally teachers spend too long explaining what to do, when some of the more-able pupils are ready to get on with their task, particularly in writing. Books are marked regularly and include very helpful comments from teachers and pupils' peers so that pupils know what they need to do next to improve. However, not all pupils have sufficient time to respond to this feedback so that they occasionally miss out on opportunities to reinforce their progress. Parents and carers almost universally agreed that their children are well taught and looked after. Inspectors found that teaching is highly effective.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

All the staff are exceptionally skilled at developing pupils' belief in themselves and promoting a calm, 'can do' attitude. Consequently, pupils mainly perform to the best of their ability and play an important role in determining what learning they should pursue. They are polite to adults and each other, and say that most pupils get along very well. Lessons observed during the inspection regularly revealed the excitement that pupils feel about being set challenging work. They relish the chance to grapple with difficult tasks and celebrate together when they succeed. Year 2 pupils spoke excitedly about the process of developing their characters and storyline for a book which has been recently published; this was wonderfully motivating and they were keen to get started on their next book.

Opportunities to share ideas, their beliefs and cultures, mean that there is a great

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acceptance of the views of others. Pupils are well aware of different forms of bullying, including prejudice-based bullying. They say that although occasional incidents do occur, they are never allowed to fester and so bullying is very rare. Pupils' love of learning, their feeling of security in being at school and the exciting opportunities they have, mean that attendance has improved rapidly from low levels and is now average. As one pupil said, 'I like school so much, I would rather be at school than on holiday!' Pupils are very supportive of those who find it more difficult to behave well, and particularly of those who face extremely difficult circumstances outside of school. The school can show extraordinary success in helping pupils who have joined outside normal times to settle quickly and make impressive progress in managing their own behaviour. Pupils readily remind each other about the high expectations and consequently behaviour is almost always exemplary. Parents and carers held views that were equally positive about pupils' excellent behaviour and their safety.

Leadership and management

The headteacher and senior leaders have worked with great dedication to implement an ambitious vision for pupils' performance and personal development so that achievement has risen and behaviour is exemplary. Staff share this vision, and effectively promote equality and tackle any discrimination, so that all pupils can aim to achieve their very best. The responsibility for evaluating the quality of teaching is widely shared and teachers themselves reflect on how they can improve, with excellent use made of performance management. Leaders use this to develop and provide highly effective professional development and sharing of expertise.

The skills-based curriculum is well established so that it is a key factor in pupils' excellent attitudes towards their learning and in raising their aspirations. It is regularly reviewed and adapted to match the needs and interests of pupils closely, and to ensure that it prepares them well to succeed in the world around them. The approach to the curriculum develops excellent independence because pupils often take charge of their own learning, deciding what direction they want their learning to go, and promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well.

The school provides many opportunities to involve parents and carers, such as adult language classes, open days and learning alongside their children. The school has had tremendous success in local competitions, winning a number of categories in 'Cheshunt and Waltham Cross Growers', and, more recently, winning the district sports meeting. Members of the governing body support the school in raising achievement and promoting pupils' aspirations. They hold leaders to account for the results, and encourage great learning through the certificates they award. They actively ensure that all groups of pupils have equal opportunities and that no discrimination is tolerated at any level. Together with all the staff they ensure that policies and procedures to keep pupils safe are robust and well understood. Arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils meet requirements. Parents and carers expressed deep appreciation for the improvements that have been brought about,

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and the quality of leadership in the school. The success in raising the quality of teaching, improving attendance and behaviour and increasing the rate of progress for pupils, demonstrates the exceptional capacity of the school to continue to improve.

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The Early Years Foundation Stage delivered in the registered childcare provision

The pre-school benefits from the resources and the expertise of some of the Nursery staff. Adults work well together and have a good understanding of the development of young children and the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The outdoor area has been well developed and children typically choose to do much of their learning outside. This good provision means that there are rich opportunities for children to learn; they make up ground quickly and their outcomes are good. When they join the pre-school, most of the children have skills and knowledge which are well below those typical for their age, although there is wide variation within this. This is particularly noticeable in children’s spoken communication and some receive additional support in developing their speaking skills. The majority of the children speak English as an additional language, many at the early stages. Particularly effective support from caring, knowledgeable adults means that children quickly gain understanding and confidence in using English. For example, staff use puppets and songs very effectively to get children to join in.

Although the leadership of this part of the school is new, the wider leadership has ensured that expertise is shared and developed. Leaders, working closely with all the staff, have ensured that appropriate policies and procedures are in place, that children’s needs are well known and their needs identified and met. Good teamwork means that assessment is accurate and planning ensures good progress and positive attitudes to learning. Consequently, leadership of the pre-school is good.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage of the registered childcare provision, inspected under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006

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 for the registered provision	2

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



28 June 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Holdbrook Primary School, Waltham Cross, EN8 7QG

It was a great pleasure to talk to many of you when we visited your school and to see the excellent work you were doing. We were particularly impressed by how much you enjoy learning and the way you get along with one another so well. Many of you told us about lots of things you like about your school. We have judged that it is an outstanding school.

The teachers make sure that the lessons are very well planned and that you have work that is just hard enough for you, so that you make outstanding progress. They think carefully about how they teach, so that lessons are interesting and move on quickly. All the adults help you very effectively and check how well you are doing regularly. They look carefully at the information they have about your performance and provide extra help if you need it. You make every effort to do your best work and said that you particularly like the topics you study. You can be proud of the way you behave so well, and remind one another about what is expected.

Even though it is such a super school, we know that the headteacher and other adults want to keep making it even better. We have asked them to make sure you do even better in your assessments at the end of Year 6, particularly in writing, by:

- making sure that those of you who find learning easier get more chances to work on your own and start your work earlier
- giving you more opportunities to respond to the helpful comments teachers put in your books.

We wish you all the best for the future and would like to know that you continue to enjoy learning and try your very best at all times.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Saunders
Lead Inspector

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