



Hollyfast Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103639
LEA Coventry
Inspection number 276965
Inspection dates 31 January 2006 to 1 February 2006
Reporting inspector Graham Sims AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Hollyfast Road
School category	Community		Coventry
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		West Midlands CV6 2AH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	024 76332521
Number on roll	326	Fax number	024 76338902
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Graham Stanley
Date of previous inspection	22 May 2000	Headteacher	Mr Roger Marshall

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This larger-than-average primary school draws its pupils from socially and economically diverse backgrounds across a wide area in the north-west of Coventry. The school has two classes for each age group, but class sizes are smaller than in most schools. Just over 10% of the pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds, but none is at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Hollyfast Primary School is a good school. Its most striking features are the good behaviour of its polite and friendly pupils and its calm, happy atmosphere. Pupils achieve well throughout the school. Standards when children join the Reception classes are generally average. The quality of education in Reception is good, enabling children to settle quickly into school, and they make good progress. When pupils leave school at the end of Year 6, standards are substantially above average, particularly in science. The quality of pupils' writing is better than in many schools, but not as good as other aspects of their work in English or other subjects.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Some of the teaching is excellent. The school covers all aspects of the National Curriculum thoroughly and provides good enrichment through extra-curricular activities and visits. However, teachers miss opportunities to deepen pupils' understanding and develop basic skills further because they do not link work in one subject with what pupils are learning in others. The quality of care, support and guidance provided by the staff is good, but more opportunities could be provided for pupils to use their initiative and to work independently.

The school is led and managed well. The senior staff provide strong leadership and have an accurate perception of the school, which accords with that of the inspection. They are fully aware of areas for development and have successfully raised standards since the previous inspection. Governors fulfil their roles well and provide knowledgeable support. The school provides good value for money and has good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of pupils' writing, particularly their ability to generate and write about their own ideas
- Develop more links between subjects when planning the curriculum in order to deepen pupils' understanding and provide them with more opportunities to apply and consolidate their basic literacy and numeracy skills
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to use their initiative and develop their ability to work independently.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils of all abilities achieve well throughout the school, and standards are now much better than those reported at the time of the last inspection, when they were judged to be average. By the time pupils leave school at the end of Year 6, standards are now substantially above average, particularly in science. From broadly average beginnings, children make good progress in the Reception classes. They make particularly good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Overall, standards are just above average by the time they start Year 1.

Because of a strong emphasis on teaching basic skills, pupils have made good progress in recent years in English and mathematics in Years 1 and 2. Pupils consolidate their basic skills well in Years 3 to 6 and broaden their knowledge, skills and understanding of other subjects. Standards in English are above average, although the proportion of pupils exceeding the nationally expected standard is lower than in mathematics and science. This is because pupils' writing skills are not as strong as other aspects of their work in this subject. They produce good writing working under the guidance of their teachers, but are not always able to produce the same quality when working under their own steam. The school sets itself reasonably challenging targets, but fell just short of meeting them in 2005.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good, so that they develop into polite, friendly young people. Teachers develop pupils' self-confidence and esteem very well and encourage them to appreciate different cultures, and styles of music and art. Pupils enjoy coming to school, work hard and behave well during lessons and at other times. Pupils' positive attitudes are reflected in their good attendance, which remains consistently above the national average. They look after each other well, and bullying is rare. They say the school acts quickly to resolve any issues that arise.

Pupils make a positive contribution to the school community, readily assuming positions of responsibility, such as representing their classmates on the school council. Pupils were behind the introduction of the 'friendship bench' in the playground, and Year 6 pupils help younger children with their reading. They also raise money for local and national charities and sponsor a child in Uganda. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe and healthy. For example, they enjoy physical education lessons and many take part in extra-curricular sporting activities, such as football and netball. Although their ability to work independently is not as strongly developed as it could be, their good personal qualities and strong basic skills equip them well for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Consistently thorough planning, good subject knowledge and teachers' enthusiasm give rise to good teaching throughout the school. Some of the teaching is excellent, vibrant, full of energy and motivational. Assessment is used well to ensure that work is planned to meet the needs of all learners. Warm, caring relationships between staff and pupils, good standards of behaviour and the pupils' positive attitudes enable them to learn effectively. In most lessons, pupils are challenged well to do their best and, consequently, they achieve well. Occasionally, however, expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough, and pupils' learning slows down because they are kept sitting on the carpet for too long or given too much time to complete a task.

Pupils have good opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills by answering questions, working in pairs and discussing issues in groups. Teachers, teaching assistants and parent helpers work together well to provide knowledgeable support for learning. The marking of pupils' work is often detailed, challenging and helpful, showing clearly what pupils have done well and what they need to do to improve. Children in the Reception classes have good opportunities for learning independently through play. However, not enough opportunities are given to older pupils to use their initiative or become less reliant on the support of teachers.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school's well-planned curriculum provides a wide range of interesting activities. It successfully meets the needs of individual pupils, including those with learning difficulties and the more able pupils. In addition to a broad statutory curriculum, there are many opportunities for pupils to participate in extra-curricular activities, visits, links with other schools and, for the oldest pupils, a residential visit. Special 'themed' weeks, such as those for design and technology, science and art, are memorable highlights of the year. They are greatly enjoyed by the pupils and contribute significantly to their learning. However, the cross-curricular approach which is used so successfully during these weeks is not developed sufficiently during the rest of the year. As a result, teachers miss opportunities to deepen pupils' understanding in a range of subjects and to develop their ability to write at length in different contexts. The curriculum for reception-aged pupils is good, but the use of the good outdoor environment is not sufficiently well developed.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Pupils feel they are looked after well, and parents agree. Health and safety arrangements are comprehensive. Child protection and welfare procedures are thorough, and staff receive regular training. Good links with outside agencies ensure that pupils with particular needs and difficulties are supported well. The school sets high expectations of pupils' behaviour, and members of staff treat pupils with respect and gain their full trust.

Academic guidance is good, and the school is currently improving it further by setting short-term targets for improvement in English and mathematics. The school tracks the progress of different groups of pupils well, so that pupils' needs are identified and addressed. Pupils are aware of how they can improve their work because their targets are discussed regularly with them and their parents. Pupils with learning difficulties are supported well

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are good. Senior managers and the staff team have not only maintained the very good ethos of the school since the last inspection, but have improved academic results. The supportive and knowledgeable governing body has enabled sensible management decisions to be taken. For example, staff with particular skills have been given the opportunity to share these with other teachers, and this is helping to improve the quality of the teaching throughout the school. Greater autonomy has been given to subject coordinators, so that they now take greater responsibility for the development of their subjects. The decision to spend a greater proportion of the budget on staffing costs, in order to keep class sizes as small as possible, continues to have a positive impact on the ethos of the school and pupils' learning.

The school's evaluation of its own performance is detailed, accurate and perceptive. There is a dogged determination to improve standards, and the latest initiatives to improve pupils' writing are already starting to bear fruit. The school is responsive to parents' views, which are canvassed regularly, and pupils have a voice through the school council. The rise in standards indicates good improvement since the previous inspection. This improvement and the impetus of the leadership team indicate that the school has good capacity for further improvement.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

You work hard and make good progress in most of your subjects, but some of you still have to improve your writing a bit more

The staff care for you well, and you feel safe in school

You clearly enjoy school and particularly like the good range of activities and special occasions, such as 'themed' weeks and school trips

You are polite, friendly and well behaved, and this is a great help to your teachers and a credit to you

The quality of the teaching is good, and sometimes it is excellent, although it would help you to learn more if you had more opportunity to use your initiative and to learn to become more independent

The school teaches all the right subjects, but you don't always have time to explore subjects in detail because what you learn is not always linked together in the way that it is during your 'themed' weeks

The school is well run, and staff have good ideas for making it even better. We hope that you continue to enjoy your school and work together with your teachers to make it even better.