



Holt House Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 107026
LEA Sheffield
Inspection number 277687
Inspection dates 8 May 2006 to 9 May 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs Rosemary Eaton CfBT Lead Inspector

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

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|------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Type of school | Primary | School address | Bannerdale Road |
| School category | Community | | Sheffield |
| Age range of pupils | 5 to 7 | | South Yorkshire S7 2EW |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 0114 2553717 |
| Number on roll | 167 | Fax number | 0114 2508449 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair of governors | Mrs Maria O'Brien |
| Date of previous inspection | 15 January 2001 | Headteacher | Mrs J Clay |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school. Around half of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups, predominantly Pakistani, and many of them are in the early stages of learning English. Fewer pupils than average are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is higher than in similar schools. A very small number are looked after by the local authority. The school has been awarded Investors in People status, the Basic Skills Quality Mark, and Artsmark Gold. The governing body owns and manages extended services for the community: pre-school nursery provision and breakfast and after-school clubs. These facilities are inspected by Ofsted's childcare inspectors, who publish a separate report.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Holt House is an outstanding school, providing outstanding value for money. Its success stems from the exceptional effectiveness of its leadership and management. Extremely effective systems for finding out how well the school is performing provide leaders with a detailed view of its strengths and weaknesses. However, the school's judgement that most aspects of its work and its overall effectiveness are good is too cautious. The school was reluctant to describe itself as outstanding despite evidence to justify this. Pupils' standards are high and results in national tests are above average. However, last year, girls' results were much better than boys'. Despite this, the achievement of all pupils is outstanding, because they are taught extremely well. The inspection confirms that pupils' personal development is exceptional. They become confident and independent with a voracious appetite for learning, enthusiastically taking on responsibilities and contributing to school life. An outstanding and innovative curriculum is provided. The provision for the Foundation Stage is outstanding, so these children also achieve exceptionally well. The school's judgement that it provides outstanding care, guidance and support is fully justified. No stone is left unturned in the efforts to provide every child with the support he or she needs in order to learn as well as possible. First rate management systems ensure that plans are thorough and effective, leading to extremely good improvement since the previous inspection. The headteacher's conviction that every child is entitled to the best possible education is shared by all staff and governors, resulting in an excellent capacity to build on the school's already huge success.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to take steps to raise the attainment of boys in reading, writing and mathematics.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

When they join the Reception Year, children's attainment varies widely but is below average overall. Many children speak little or no English. They make outstanding progress, with a significant number exceeding the standards expected by the end of the Foundation Stage. Since 2001, Year 2 pupils' results in the national tests have been above average, although they declined in 2005, owing to the increased proportion of pupils who started school with very low levels of attainment. Nevertheless, standards are high in English and mathematics. Pupils tend to do better in English because a great deal of additional support is provided to boost lower attaining pupils' literacy skills. Pupils who speak English as an additional language, particularly those of Pakistani heritage, score less well in the tests. However, there is clear evidence that, like other pupils, they make outstanding progress and their achievement is also outstanding. In 2005, girls' results were much better than boys'. This was because a significant number of boys had learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which meant that their starting

points were, on average, below those of girls. When this is taken into account, boys and girls achieve equally well. The school is working very effectively to enable boys to reach higher levels. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make the same outstanding progress as others. The school sets very challenging targets for all pupils. These are regularly met and frequently exceeded.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Mutual respect thrives within the cultural richness of the school. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong and their behaviour is exemplary. They are courteous and mindful of others. Attitudes to work are framed in a class rule: 'work hard and don't waste other people's time'. Pupils say lessons are fun because 'there's lots to do'. They form trusting relationships with adults and other pupils and tackle new challenges confidently. Pupils are adamant that they have a safe and healthy school. They understand that by becoming play leaders they can encourage others to take up healthy exercise, and that a sensible diet is important to their well-being. Pupils feel safe in school because, 'if you fall over there is always someone to take care of you'. They show outstanding initiative by making and selling products to raise funds for the school council and deciding democratically how best to spend the money. Pupils eagerly take on responsibilities as playground buddies and supervise corridors to ensure safety. They are exceptionally well prepared for the future. Attendance, currently satisfactory, is improving through strenuous efforts to convince all parents of the importance of not interrupting pupils' education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Teachers take turns to specialise in different subjects, enabling them to build up their own expertise and get to know every child very well. Assessment information is used to the full, in order to provide each child with the right amount of challenge. Teaching assistants work in close partnership with teachers, for instance, supporting pupils who need extra help with language and literacy. During lessons, teachers' very high expectations are always evident. For example, from the Reception Year, children are required to write independently, applying their knowledge of letter sounds to tackle unknown words. Activities are supremely interesting. For instance, during a science lesson, Year 1 pupils were captivated by a pot-bound plant. The teacher's skilled questioning enabled them to identify the problem and decide what needed to be done. Very occasionally, activities are allowed to run on for too long, so pupils find it hard to remain focused. A range of approaches make sure that boys are thoroughly engaged with learning. Plenty of practical activities and topics such as space exploration successfully motivate all pupils to learn, broaden their experiences, and support their personal development.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The quality of the curriculum is outstanding. National guidance on the rights of pupils to enjoy their learning has been fully embraced. Planning goes beyond statutory requirements. The inclusion of innovative elements such as media studies, where pupils make animated films, provide exciting and very worthwhile learning experiences. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language, receive outstanding support. Reception Year children are taught how to be independent learners. They thrive on a balance of challenging tasks and opportunities to follow their inclinations and learn through play. All pupils enjoy a very wide selection of physical activities during and after school and at playtimes. A varied calendar of visits makes extensive use of local facilities, providing pupils with new experiences. Visitors such as musicians, dancers, story tellers and artists bring additional richness and enjoyment to pupils' learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school takes exceptionally good care of its pupils. As one observer commented, 'basically, the staff just love the children'. Pupils are happy and confident because they know how much they are valued. The most vulnerable pupils are supported by mentors so they are fully included in learning and achieve as well as others. Safeguarding children is given the utmost priority. Health and safety checks are robust and child protection procedures are in place. Systems for tracking pupils' progress and setting targets are highly effective. Assessment information is continually scrutinised to identify individuals or groups who may need additional support in order to realise their potential. Pupils are increasingly given choices about how they learn and the skills to evaluate their own progress. They are very well prepared for joining Holt House and strong liaison with local schools ensures that they enter the next stage of their education with confidence.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher is an exceptionally effective leader. Her utter determination to provide every child with an excellent start to their education is evident in every aspect of the school. The claim that Holt House is a 'learning community' is entirely justified, with all staff striving to develop their own ability to meet pupils' needs and enable them to achieve their full potential. The range of activity and innovation packed into the school year is only possible because staff fulfil their particular roles so well; for instance, the responsibilities delegated to the senior team. Rigorous procedures, incorporating the views of pupils, parents, governors and staff, contribute to establishing the school's performance and what more could be done. Perceived opportunities to further raise standards feed into the tightly structured improvement plan, which is a hugely effective tool for moving the

school forward, as seen in the outstanding progress since the previous inspection. The school is extremely outward looking, seeking opportunities to involve the community in enhancing pupils' achievement and personal development. In turn, other schools benefit from learning about Holt House's innovative work. Parents describe the school as 'fantastic'. They are offered numerous opportunities to be partners in their children's education, for instance, through courses on topics such as 'healthy lunches'. Governors provide regular practical support; for example, coaching in cricket or teaching British sign language, contributing significantly to school life. They are extremely well informed and help to ensure that Holt House has an outstanding capacity to continue to improve.

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Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

| | | |
|--|-----|----|
| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 1 | NA |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being? | 1 | NA |
| The quality and standards in foundation stage | 1 | NA |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 1 | 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? | 1 | NA |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 2 | NA |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 1 | NA |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress | 1 | NA |

Personal development and well-being

| | | |
|---|---|----|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 1 | NA |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 1 | NA |
| The behaviour of learners | 1 | NA |
| The attendance of learners | 3 | NA |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 1 | NA |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 1 | NA |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 1 | NA |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 1 | NA |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 1 | NA |

The quality of provision

| | | |
|---|---|----|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 1 | NA |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 1 | NA |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 1 | 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? | 1 | NA |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 1 | NA |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review | 1 | NA |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 1 | NA |
| How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money | 1 | NA |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 1 | NA |
| The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected | Yes | NA |

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|---|-----|
| 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

Thank you for being so helpful and friendly when we visited your school. It was a great pleasure to talk to you and see you working and playing.

What we liked best about Holt House:

- all children are kind to each other and help to make the school a happy and safe place for everyone
- you work hard and always do your best, so you learn very fast
- children who need it are given plenty of extra help
- the teachers and helpers see that you have lots of exciting things to do, in lessons and playtimes
- your headteacher makes sure that the school keeps getting better and better
- we think that Holt House is a brilliant school, where all children matter and are helped to do as well as they can.

What we have asked the school to do next:

- keep working hard to help boys do as well as girls in the Year 2 tests.