



Holdbrook Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 117091
LEA HERTFORDSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 279983
Inspection dates 31 January 2006 to 1 February 2006
Reporting inspector Ms. Margaret Jones LI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Longcroft Drive
School category	Community		EN8 7QG
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01992 716789
Number on roll	161	Fax number	01992 716799
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr. Joe Brock
Date of previous inspection	22 May 2000	Headteacher	Mrs. Karen Scudamore

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools and an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Holdbrook is a smaller than average primary school, serving an area of mainly social housing. The surrounding community is made up of many faiths and cultures, with significant Italian and Turkish populations. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. Many pupils start or leave the school at times other than the beginning of the academic year. Over a quarter of pupils have learning difficulties. The children in Foundation Stage at 3-5 years old were awarded Hertfordshire's quality mark in 2004. The school has the Investors in People award and is part of the Excellence in Cities programme.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. The school is too modest, in its self-evaluation, when it describes itself as 'only satisfactory'. Parents think that it is a good school too. Every child is valued and standards of care are outstanding. A lively, attractive and welcoming atmosphere is created for all. When children start school, many of them find it hard to listen and to speak clearly. Over a third speak English as their second language. By the time they leave, at the age of eleven, most of them do as well as other children of their age because the teaching is good so the pupils enjoy learning. As a result, they make good progress. The progress pupils make is tracked carefully in English, mathematics and science but is not assessed in the other subjects. The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage are good. The very youngest children get a good start, having been prepared well by the pre-school that is attached to the main school. Pupils' personal development is good. They are friendly, confident and they express themselves well. Pupils are offered lots of interesting things to do such as dance and computer clubs. The school has made excellent partnerships with a variety of organisations to improve services, both for pupils and parents. This enables all pupils, whatever their level of ability, to make good progress. It would be helpful, and build relationships further, if the school sent out communications to parents in their mother tongue. The school is well led by the headteacher and deputy who are helped by knowledgeable and hard-working governors. The school development and the quality of planning across the school is not consistent. Not all staff are fully involved with planning for the future. The school is in a good position to move forward and raise standards further. It provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Assess pupils' progress in all subjects as well as English, maths and science. - Improve the process of whole-school development-planning by including all members of staff in its creation and implementation. - Continue to build even stronger relationships with parents by ensuring they receive written information in their mother tongue.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children begin school with low levels of skills and knowledge. They get off to a good start in the nursery and Reception classes due to good quality teaching and they are currently achieving well in all areas of their learning and personal development. The 2005 national test results show that, by the time pupils reach the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are consistently above average. Results at the end of Year 6 have been below the national results for several years but they are improving. In 2005, results were almost in line with the national averages for mathematics and science but below average in English. This was due to many pupils moving in and out of the school and some disruption to staffing. Achievement across the school is good. The school is effective in meeting the needs of different groups

of pupils. For example, more-able pupils achieve well because teachers use computers imaginatively to engage and motivate them and provide them with challenging activities. Pupils with learning difficulties often receive effective extra help in small groups. All pupils are encouraged to write at length and they produce some very interesting stories.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils speak enthusiastically about the school and thrive in its stimulating environment. Parents have commented that their children cannot wait to return to school after the long holidays. However, attendance is still slightly below the national average. Through its close, supportive relationship with the parents, the school is making every effort to promote the importance of regular attendance. Pupils behave very well, are enthusiastic about their work and have excellent relationships with all staff and one another. They love to learn and are keen to do well because the school makes pupils feel good about themselves. Pupils know that their opinions are valued through the work of the school council. Pupils learn what to do to stay safe and they understand how healthy food and exercise are important. Children in Reception, for example, were keen to eat the healthy snack provided, and take-up of the healthy school meals option is high. Pupils are proud of their school, are smart in their uniform and they enjoy accepting responsibility and helping others in their community. Pupils develop their entrepreneurial skills by thinking up money-raising schemes for charity and putting on concerts and drama productions. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. There are many opportunities for reflection in assembly, and discussion time in class groups helps to foster pupils' spiritual awareness. They learn to value different cultures through working and living alongside people from different cultures and faiths.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning is good. Staff act as good role-models for pupils and treat them with respect. Teachers use an interesting range of resources and methods to help children to learn. In an outstanding Year 6 lesson, the teacher modelled the use of a protractor to measure angles. Pupils quickly grasped this new skill because the teacher showed them how to do it using an interactive whiteboard. Pupils with English as a second language are helped to learn well because they receive effective support from bi-lingual teaching assistants. Most teachers have good subject knowledge and this enables them to explain clearly new things to pupils. They move the lessons along at a good pace so that pupils do not get bored or restless. Computers and other forms of technology are used frequently in lessons. Books are marked with useful comments so that pupils know what they have to do to improve. Occasionally, teachers do not share the aims of the lesson with pupils clearly or make enough use of individual

targets to help pupils improve their work. Pupils do not always understand the targets they have been set.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets the needs of pupils by concentrating on reading, writing mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). Other subjects, such as history and geography are taught well, but the progress pupils make in them is not assessed. Planning for these subjects, with schemes of work and lesson plans with clear learning objectives, is not always in place. Children starting school in the nursery and Reception class have a good range of interesting activities to help them develop social skills. Older pupils have been allocated to groups according to their ability for English and mathematics and this is helping them to learn at their own pace. The school works hard to provide pupils with experiences they might not otherwise enjoy. There is an impressive range of activities for pupils to participate in outside of lessons. This encourages pupils to lead an active and healthy life. Pupils visit local sites of interest and go on a residential trip every year. These visits are well planned and enrich their education. Local members of the community visit the school to talk about various aspects of their work.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Teachers and support staff know the pupils very well and work hard to provide an outstanding level of care and support. The school takes the initiative and liaises very successfully with outside agencies to ensure that all pupils receive the support and guidance they need. For example, a children's counsellor has recently been employed and, as one pupil who had received attention said, 'All kinds of people come in to help you'. Pupils and parents feel valued and they know they have someone to talk to if they have any worries or concerns. The school makes effective use of its knowledge of how well pupils are doing to set them appropriate work at the right level. Child protection arrangements are in place and understood by all staff. Younger children are helped to settle in very quickly when they join the school, and older pupils are prepared well for the move to secondary school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher is dynamic. She leads the school well with energy and determination and has created a caring and supportive atmosphere. The views of parents are taken into account appropriately, but partnership with parents could be improved by providing written information for some of them in their own languages. Governors are proactive and support the school well. Accurate evaluation of teaching has taken place and inspectors agree with the school's judgements. The school is developing its ability to use data to track and improve the performance of individual pupils. The school

development plan identifies the right areas and the relevant staff responsible for action, but objectives are not specific enough and have not been effectively shared with all staff. This was an issue for improvement at the time of the previous inspection. In most other areas the school has made good progress and it is in a good position to improve further. The accommodation is well-maintained and provides a stimulating learning environment. Currently, the school has a very large under-spend but this funding is earmarked for future capital projects such as re-surfacing the playground and the car park.

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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	3	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	3	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	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	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?	3	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?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	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

Following our visit to your school I am writing to tell you what we found. We enjoyed talking to you and your teachers and watching you learn. We thought you would like to know what we liked about your school and how we thought it could get even better. What we liked about your school - You made us all feel very welcome in your school and greeted us with a friendly smile. - You all looked very smart in your school uniform. - You are all learning to read and write very well. - You all behave very well around the school. You play nicely with your friends and the grown-ups at lunchtime and speak very politely to your teachers and visitors. - Your teachers and teaching assistants work very hard to make sure that you all get the right sort of help you need to learn well. - Your headteacher runs the school well. - Your parents and carers are right in thinking that you go to a good school. What we have asked your school to do now to make it even better: - Record the progress you make in all subjects. - Improve the planning for the future. - Send out letters to your parents in different languages as well as English. I wish you all well for the future.