



# Holyhead School

## Inspection Report

---

**Unique Reference Number** 103517  
**LEA** Birmingham  
**Inspection number** 286687  
**Inspection dates** 28 June 2006 to 29 June 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Cathy Morgan HMI

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive	<b>School address</b>	Milestone Lane
<b>School category</b>	Foundation		Handsworth
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16		Birmingham, West Midlands B21 0HN
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 523 1960
<b>Number on roll</b>	1003	<b>Fax number</b>	0121 523 1960
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	26 November 2001	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Martin Bayliss

---

<b>Age group</b> 11 to 16	<b>Inspection dates</b> 28 June 2006 - 29 June 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 286687
------------------------------	---	------------------------------------

---

---

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

Holyhead School is an oversubscribed, mixed 11–16 comprehensive in a very deprived area of Birmingham. The school was designated a Specialist Business and Enterprise College in September 2004. Half of the school population are eligible for free school meals. More than two thirds of students speak English as an additional language. Whilst the proportion of students with a statement of special educational need is broadly in line with the national average, over one third of students are identified as having learning difficulties. The school has received a number of national good practice awards and was awarded Training School status in 2000. The school is a founder member of the Titan schoolbased Initial Teacher Training Partnership.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

Holyhead is a good school with many outstanding features. It believes itself to be an outstanding school. Under the outstanding leadership of the headteacher and senior team, there is a shared commitment to provide an interesting, enjoyable and relevant education for its students. Good progress has been made since the time of the last inspection. By strengthening its identity, including the introduction of a new school uniform, the school has created a sense of pride amongst staff and students which is evident to visitors to the school. Significant improvements to the learning environment and information and communication technology (ICT) resources also engender pride, celebrate success and help to inspire and motivate students. As a result, the school has gained the confidence of a wide range of partners and established an excellent reputation amongst parents, local schools and the diverse, wider community. The school has implemented a range of successful short- and long-term strategies to ensure students remain in school until the end of Year 11 having achieved accreditation which exceeds that achieved nationally. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is outstanding and reflects the cultural diversity celebrated within the school. Students are extremely well prepared for their economic future. They benefit greatly from the school's specialist status and an outstanding curriculum in Years 10 and 11. There is rigorous analysis of the performance of specific groups of students. The school is working continuously to improve standards which, although improving at the end of Year 9 in mathematics and English, remain low in science. Students' progress in relation to their prior attainment is good from the age of 11 to 16. GCSE and vocational examination results improved significantly in some subjects in 2005 but need to improve further in English and mathematics. Students benefit greatly from good and some outstanding teaching. They are well cared for, guided and supported, and they make good progress in lessons. The school recognises that some higher attaining students do not always make the progress expected of them. Students' literacy could be further improved to address this, and younger students would benefit from more guidance about how they might improve their work. The school provides a safe and secure environment for its students and has the full confidence of parents. There is a strong ethos of care throughout the school and as a result, students' personal development is outstanding. There is no doubting the determination of staff to provide the best opportunities for all students. Links with other partners are extremely strong and help to improve provision, especially for the more vulnerable students. Systems for self evaluation, review and planning are used well and clearly demonstrate that the school's capacity to improve is very strong. The school recognises that there are areas for development and that recent initiatives and those planned for the future will need time to realise their full impact, particularly in regard to improving student performance in the lower school.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Further extend the sharing of good practice in the school to improve the progress of students, particularly by the end of Year 9.

- Develop an effective whole-school strategy to address the students' weaknesses in literacy.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

The students come to the school with standards of attainment that are well below the national average. More than two thirds of students speak English as an additional language and in some year groups over 40% of students have learning difficulties and disabilities. The school recognises that low levels of literacy, in particular, are a significant barrier to achievement for many students. Standards of attainment in national tests at the end of Year 9 are below national averages, particularly in science. However, given their prior attainment, the students make satisfactory progress in the lower school and those with learning difficulties achieve well. Recent results in mathematics demonstrate significant improvement, with 67% of students gaining Level 5 or higher in 2006. The school makes rigorous use of data to identify individual students who are at risk of underachievement in Years 10 and 11 and they receive highly effective additional support. GCSE results have risen since the time of the previous inspection. Despite a reduction in the proportion of students gaining grades A\*–C in English and mathematics at GCSE level in 2005, 52% of students attained five or more A\*–C grades. This represents good achievement since 45% of candidates had learning difficulties. Students' performance in some subjects, such as dance and home economics, exceeded the national average significantly. Most students, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, make good progress by the time they reach the end of Year 11. Strategies to improve the performance of students in the core subjects show signs of success with more than one third of Year 11 students passing their mathematics GCSE with at least a grade C on early entry in November 2005.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Students' personal development and their well-being are outstanding. Behaviour in lessons, assemblies and around the school is excellent. Students enjoy being in school and they feel safe. There have been few exclusions, which exemplifies the school's commitment to inclusion. The school works extremely hard with families to emphasise the benefits of punctuality and regular attendance. Both are now good and this is a considerable achievement. Students are friendly and helpful. They treat staff and one another with respect and this creates a relaxed and orderly atmosphere throughout the school. Students have good opportunities to voice their views which are valued and acted upon by staff. Students are proud to take responsibility as school council and form-group representatives and act as senior students. They have been effective in bringing about improvements, such as the healthy eating initiative, and they have a positive impact on the well-being of others. There are many planned opportunities for students to reflect on their lives, express their feelings and increase their awareness of a culturally diverse society. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is

excellent and integrated into the programme of assemblies and the well established Personal Effectiveness Programme (PEP). Students make positive contributions to the community through their extensive links with local companies and involvement with charities. Students effectively develop workplace skills through the comprehensive and highly successful work experience scheme. Staff have high expectations of students. They provide excellent role models and work well together to encourage students to become mature, self-motivated adults.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Inspectors agree with the school's view that teaching and learning are good overall. Many lessons are lively and interesting, and some are outstanding. Relationships between students and teachers are a strength of the school. In the most successful lessons, students make very good progress. Teachers plan carefully and provide class and homework which challenges their students. Activities in these lessons are varied and the pace is brisk. Students are often able to participate in practical work and discussions. They receive regular feedback which ensures that they are aware of their targets and what they must do to improve. In a few, less successful lessons, students are not always able, or expected, to participate in discussion. Questioning is not used effectively to check their understanding and promote learning. Occasionally, teachers do not provide sufficient challenge for the most able students. In these lessons, marking and end of lesson plenary sessions are not effective in assessing and guiding students in what they need to do to improve their work. Many students have low levels of literacy and their difficulties with reading and writing prevent them from making more rapid progress in lessons and over time. The school recognises this barrier to achievement and is developing strategies to address it.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

The school provides an outstanding curriculum for its students. Imaginative planning enables students in Years 10 and 11 to choose from a wide range of academic and vocational courses. Three 'pathways' have been carefully designed to provide excellent opportunities for students to select individual learning programmes based on their prior attainment, preferred learning styles and personal aspirations. The lower school curriculum contains a broad and balanced range of subjects. The school is currently re-designing this curriculum to provide more opportunities for students to build on their strengths and prior learning experiences. This is already having a positive impact on students' achievement in mathematics. The school's specialist business and enterprise college status impacts well on the curriculum, particularly in ICT. The very strong links with local primary schools have led to a number of initiatives, including the provision of a collaborative 'saturday school' which involves a significant number of schoolchildren in the local area. The school works hard to form productive links

with local businesses and the wider community and the curriculum benefits greatly from this. The well-planned PEP programme leads to formal qualifications in personal effectiveness and career planning for many students. It enables them to make a positive contribution to their community. The extensive enrichment programme provides a wide range of sporting and other activities including residential visits, trips and a summer school.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The quality of care provided by the school is good with some outstanding features. Staff are very supportive and are successful in building trusting relationships with the students. All requirements for child protection are in place and support for the most vulnerable students is excellent. Teachers ensure that students work in a healthy and secure environment. Support is carefully and successfully targeted at those with particular difficulties such as disaffection, problems in preparing for examinations or coping with learning difficulties. The school has forged excellent links with families and external agencies to support this work. Links with partner primary schools are strong and highly effective initiatives are used to aid the transition of students into Year 7. Some teachers offer students valuable guidance on how to improve their work. However, there is inconsistency in the quantity and quality of this advice in the lower school, which means that students are not always clear about the next steps in their learning. Careers advice is outstanding. The well structured PEP, work related learning programme, and strong links with industry and colleges in the community prepare students very well for life beyond school.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. His passionate commitment and clear strategic vision have been instrumental in developing a culture of high expectations and a belief in success. Overall improvement has been achieved through effective collaboration, teamwork and well-established systems for self-evaluation. Developments are carefully prioritised and costed. Judicious financial planning ensures that the school provides excellent value for money. Initiatives, such as the specialist business and enterprise college status, have an outstanding and beneficial impact on students, particularly in ICT. The senior leadership team is strong, pro-active and has a good range of complementary skills. All managers have a detailed understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and are effective in monitoring and evaluating its work. Senior managers have rightly given high priority to improving the quality of teaching and students' learning. The programme of lesson observations gives managers a clear and accurate overview of the quality of teaching, and effectively feeds into performance management, the professional development of individual staff and the whole-school improvement process. Heads of department provide good leadership and are encouraged to be innovative and autonomous managers. Developments are suitably

guided by the rigorous analysis of assessment data, regular monitoring and wellstructured planning. There are some inconsistencies, however, for example in assessment practices and the emphasis placed on developing students' literacy skills in order to improve their performance. Teachers have high aspirations for their students and respond positively to new initiatives aimed at improving students' learning. Parents are very supportive of the school, they are kept well informed of activities and are frequently invited into the school to discuss any issues they may have. The governing body is led by a very astute and experienced chairperson who ensures the school is held to account. Governors provide strong support for the headteacher and senior leadership group.



**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**

## Inspection judgements

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

### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	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	NA	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	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	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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	NA

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	2	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	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

30 June 2006 Dear Students Thank you for being so welcoming and helpful when we came to inspect your school recently. You were mature and sensible in the way that you spoke with each of us and we really enjoyed talking to you. Many of you were keen to tell us how much you enjoy school and how proud you are of your new school uniform. We agree that you all look extremely smart. Your parents believe that your school is successful. Holyhead is a good school with some outstanding features. We were impressed by your excellent behaviour, your positive relationships with one another and with your teachers. Your opinions are valued and, through your school council, you have helped to make some important decisions about healthy eating, payments for school trips and how to improve attendance and punctuality. Your senior students work hard on your behalf. Some of them even kindly returned during the inspection to help us to find our way around the school. The quality of teaching is good and some of your lessons are excellent because you are able to take part in activities which you enjoy and which help you to learn well. Your teachers work hard to ensure that you make good progress by the time you take your GCSE and other examinations. You have an excellent choice of subjects to study and the results have really improved since the last time your school was inspected. We have asked your school to help you to make better progress in the lower school and to improve your reading and writing skills even further. This is particularly important because you need these skills to enable you to achieve as well as you possibly can in your tests and examinations. You all receive good care and guidance. You said that you feel that the school is a safe place to be and that you have many opportunities to become involved in a wide range of enrichment activities and visits. The headteacher and his senior managers make an outstanding team. They know how your school is doing, where things are working well and where they can make improvements. The managers, teachers, governors and staff are rightly proud of your school and are highly committed to their work. We are confident that your school has the potential to do even better and we wish you every success in the future. Yours sincerely Cathy Morgan  
HMI Lead Inspector Alexandra House 33 Kingsway London WC2B 6SE T 0207 421 6800 F 0207 421 6707 [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)