



Holycroft Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 107261
Local Authority Bradford
Inspection number 287767
Inspection dates 11–12 October 2006
Reporting inspector Doug Lowes

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Victoria Road
School category	Community		Keighley
Age range of pupils	3–11		West Yorkshire BD21 1JF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01535 604183
Number on roll (school)	358	Fax number	01535 681778
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Martin Toch
		Headteacher	Mr Andrew Neal
Date of previous school inspection	29 October 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–11	11–12 October 2006	287767

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school serves an area of extreme social disadvantage. More than three quarters of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and most of these do not speak English as a mother tongue when they start school. Throughout the school, many pupils are supported in their learning of English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is higher than average as is the proportion who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The number of pupils who join the school, other than at the normal time is above average.

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 that provides good value for money. The effective leadership and management of the headteacher and deputy, underpin the school's recent improvement and is personified by their determination to provide the best possible education for all pupils. This view is shared by the overwhelming majority of parents. The school's leadership team has introduced significant improvements to provision and systems for assessing pupils. As a result, these have halted the underachievement that has been evident for the past couple of years and produced a rise in standards. This positive direction has created an ethos in which staff work together and pupils demonstrate good attitudes to their learning. Holycroft's school vision is embodied in its motto, 'every child has the potential to achieve'. From exceptionally low starting points pupils make good progress. The most recent Year 6 test results reflect an improved picture of broadly average standards. However, the school recognises that pupils can do even better, particularly in English, and is working hard to this end.

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. Comprehensive assessment for these children ensures that work is well matched to their individual needs, allowing them to make good progress. Good leadership from the special educational needs coordinator ensures that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities progress well. This is in response to effective support through accurate identification of pupils' needs. The headteacher and deputy evaluate the quality of the school's work at all levels. Evaluations are accurate but occasionally too modest. New members of the senior leadership team advise and support colleagues, as do subject leaders, but are at the early stages of developing their monitoring role to further improve the quality of provision and pupils' achievement.

Teaching is good. Most lessons are well planned, stimulating and motivating. In response, pupils' learning progresses well. Data is used effectively to track pupils' progress and a good start has been made on providing pupils with opportunities to take responsibility for their learning. The curriculum is good. It is planned effectively to promote a broad range of skills and knowledge, with a strong focus on developing skills in literacy, speaking and listening. This is beginning to make a good impact on pupils whose first language is not English. There is a good enrichment programme, including visitors to school and educational visits, supported by after school activities that make a positive contribution to pupils' well-being. Care, support and guidance are good and contribute towards pupils' progress, enjoyment and well-being. Pupils' personal development is good. They like school, behave well and try hard. Pupils feel that they belong to a caring school family, which reflects the headteacher's view of the school being a 'Holycroft family'. The capacity to improve is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards further, particularly in English, so that more pupils attain the expected levels by Year 6.
- Ensure that all members of the new senior leadership team regularly check on teaching and learning to support their work in raising standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Most children enter the Foundation Stage with standards that are exceptionally low. Almost all cannot speak English. By the end of the Foundation Stage children have made good progress as a result of good teaching and early intervention to support speaking, listening and literacy. Although good progress continues in Key Stage 1, pupils do not attain average standards by the end of Year 2. The school has responded well to pupils' needs by introducing a number of effective corrective programmes, for example, to help overcome barriers to learning resulting from pupils being at various stages of learning in English. These are having a significant impact on progress. Consequently, this year, test results at the end of Year 6 are broadly average. Underlying the school's improving performance is a systematic approach to collecting and using data from tests to accurately analyse strengths and areas for improvement, including the progress of different groups. Strategies to address any weaknesses are then implemented and monitored for their effectiveness. The result has been a good boost to overall standards and achievement. However, the school is well aware that pupils can attain higher standards and has identified this as a priority.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, looked after children and those learning English as an additional language, make good progress because tasks are adapted well to suit their needs and they receive good support from teachers and teaching assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development of pupils is good. Pupils are encouraged to feel that they belong to the Holycroft 'family' and to have high hopes for their future. Pupils are eager learners and develop an appropriate range of basic skills, including information and communication technology (ICT) to support them in the next stages of their education. Pupils show respect for others, enjoy school and appreciate their teachers.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good because the school makes the most of being part of a richly diverse community. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong, deeply rooted from both their schooling and faith training. The school has achieved good success in relation to its strategies to improve attendance. Rates have improved and are now in line with national averages. Pupils play an active part in decision making and there have been some remarkable school fund-raising events. Developing pupils' understanding of a healthy lifestyle is a highly successful feature of provision and the school forum has actively communicated ideas to increase the prospect of healthy meals. Afternoon lessons begin with relaxation sessions to calm pupils and to focus them on their work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. In the Foundation Stage learning progresses well in response to teachers' good planning of work, which is matched to children's needs. Throughout the school teachers motivate pupils, exhibit good subject knowledge and have high expectations. They explain learning objectives clearly and provide opportunities for pupils to express themselves. As a result, from the moment pupils enter school, they rapidly gain confidence and develop the requisite skills to speak, listen and communicate. In most lessons the pace of learning is fast with pupils stimulated through effective questioning and the careful introduction of new ideas and concepts. Effective planning ensures that pupils are challenged and supported according to their needs. In less effective, though overall satisfactory, lessons, there was some lack of pace and too much direction from teachers. This slowed learning somewhat and restricted opportunities for pupils to work independently.

Teaching assistants work effectively alongside teachers and add significantly to the overall quality of lessons. Good visual displays around school create a stimulating environment and enable pupils to understand their work more completely. Resources are deployed well, for example, interactive white boards are skilfully used to support teaching and learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school has a good curriculum and literacy is at the heart of it. The curriculum is practical and responsive to pupils' interests and needs. Work is well supported by a visually stimulating learning environment. Clearly displayed words, pictures and symbols motivate pupils, and in particular boys, in their learning. Teachers make the most of local opportunities as well as visits to further afield. A range of visitors to school, for example, an artist in residence, enhances subject knowledge and stimulates pupils' interest. Changes to the school building have strengthened the provision since the last inspection, especially for physical education, reading and ICT.

Education for personal, social, health and citizenship is rightly given very high priority. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or who have English as an additional language are given help so that they benefit from the full curriculum. Pupils with special gifts or talents are identified well and programmes of special activities help them to develop their skills still further. Enrichment activities and clubs provide pupils with a wide variety of sports activities, with pupils benefiting from good quality coaching.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Pupils' personal safety and development are strongly promoted by all staff, ensuring that the needs of all, including the most vulnerable are met. Many pupils see the school as their 'haven'. The care given by adults creates a climate in which pupils flourish, have equal opportunities and are ready to improve academically. Parents strongly endorse this and one parent commented, 'my children really enjoy school and are always eager to come'.

The school has a good reputation for supporting pupils with learning difficulties and complex needs and liaises effectively with all local child support agencies in supporting their progress. Teachers and support staff work tirelessly to enable pupils new to the school and those who are learning English for the first time to explore language in a welcoming environment. Child protection arrangements are in place.

Academic guidance is good. The school has established a rigorous system to track pupils' progress. The result being; the implementation of programmes to boost attainment for identified groups, for example, improving boys' reading. The success of these programmes has resulted in a marked improvement in standards in Year 6. Pupils are given individual targets based on an 'I can' principle which enables them to recognise how well they are doing and where to further improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. Good self-evaluation and effective prioritising have helped the headteacher and deputy to recognise what needs to be improved and how to bring it about. They have high expectations of pupils and staff. Their vision and direction has improved the learning culture through new appointments and the restructuring of staff. Parents agree that leadership is good with one commenting that the school is, 'led by an excellent team of staff.who are very aware of children's and parents' needs'.

The senior management team has been extended to further improve the impact of leadership on raising standards and achievement. A good start has been made by the new members of the team in making checks on teachers' planning and assessment. However, their monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning to ensure consistency of practice across the school is at the early stages of development. Governors are supportive of the school. Their understanding of what happens in school relies on information provided by the headteacher and not enough on first hand evidence.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave to us when we visited your school this week. We enjoyed listening to you singing your school song in assembly. In particular, we enjoyed being in your lessons, seeing how hard you work, talking to you and finding out about all the interesting things that you do at school.

We have judged your school to be a good one and the way you work in lessons has helped us make that decision. We could see that you like your teachers and really enjoy coming to school.

We think that these are good things about your school:

- you help to make your school a happy and friendly place where everyone is welcome
- your behaviour is good and you work hard
- your headteacher and staff help you to make good progress in your learning
- your teachers and helpers care about you and want you to do well
- the school is bright with lots of your good work on display for everyone to see
- teachers plan work that interests you
- there are lots of activities for you to get involved in
- your headteacher and deputy headteacher are good school leaders.

Your headteacher and all the adults want you to do well so we have asked them to do a few things to help:

- adults need to help you to always do your best, particularly in English, so that you get better results in tests
- all school leaders need to watch lessons to help teachers ensure you become even better learners.