

Holywell CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110817
Local Authority	CAMBRIDGESHIRE
Inspection number	288786
Inspection dates	17–18 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Keith Sadler

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	186
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Mark Butler
Headteacher	Mrs Sue Vickery
Date of previous school inspection	8 July 2002
School address	Mill Way Needingworth St Ives PE27 4TF
Telephone number	01480 462007
Fax number	01480 460704

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Holywell is an average-sized primary school that serves the villages of Holywell and Needingworth. Almost all pupils are from a White British background, with a small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. There are no pupils who speak English as an additional language and are at an early stage of English acquisition. Overall, the pupils' socio-economic circumstances are advantaged and almost all pupils come from owner-occupier homes. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is average. Children's attainment on entry to the Reception class is above expected levels.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Holywell is a satisfactory school with some good features and is on an upward trend. It provides satisfactory value for money. Pupils make good progress in their personal development and make a flying start in the Foundation Stage. Due to the outstanding provision they make rapid progress such that, by the time that they enter Year 1, almost all attain the expected learning goals. Behaviour throughout the school is good and pupils have positive relationships with staff and other pupils.

Pupils' academic achievement is satisfactory overall, because relative to their above average attainment on entry to the school, the current Year 6 pupils are on course to reach above average standards. Pupils are therefore making satisfactory progress by the time they leave the school. Results in the Year 6 national tests for English have been at the national average, those for mathematics have been above average and those for science have been significantly above average for the past two years. In order to raise attainment further, the school has successfully implemented a range of strategies to improve attainment and quicken progress. These have focused on boosting pupils' learning by making targets clear, improving standards in writing and increasing the number of pupils that attain the higher level. Each of these is impacting positively on pupils' achievement. Preliminary results for the 2007 national tests for Year 2 pupils show that high standards have been attained in reading, writing and mathematics. In addition, the current Year 6 pupils are on track to reach standards that are above average in English, mathematics and science with a much bigger number of pupils gaining the higher level in mathematics and science.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and improving. Teachers are demanding more of the pupils, and are also involving them much more in their learning by helping them to understand what they need to do to meet lesson objectives and to improve. The curriculum is of good quality, the recent move to link subjects together and to ensure that pupils' literacy, numeracy and information, communication and technology (ICT) skills are incorporated into teachers' plans is strengthening this provision.

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Almost all say that their children enjoy school, are safe and the school takes account of their children's views. The inspection confirms these findings. The level of pastoral care is good. Although there are good arrangements in place for tracking pupils' progress and setting challenging targets in English and mathematics, these arrangements do not extend to science and ICT. As a result, teachers are not able to check pupils' progress or provide them with targets for improvement in these subjects.

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. The headteacher is supported by an able deputy head and has brought more rigour and accountability to the school's provision. This has helped to boost standards. The school now has suitable systems in place for checking the quality of provision and pupils' progress and has an accurate view of its current position. There is a positive atmosphere and the headteacher provides good pastoral leadership. She has built a strong team and all are committed to the continuing improvement in pupils' achievement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English and mathematics by making teaching more challenging and increasing the proportion of pupils who attain the higher level.

- Embed the improvements in the quality of learning across all classes in the school in order to quicken progress.
- Extend the arrangements for setting challenging targets and checking pupils' progress in English and mathematics to science and ICT.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement and standards are currently satisfactory overall taking account of the starting point of pupils when they enter the school, but are improving each year. Progress is rapid in the Foundation Stage because the quality of provision is outstanding. Achievement is strengthening in Key Stage 1 from barely satisfactory levels in the past. There has been a positive impact on attainment as a result of improvement projects that have focused on developing writing skills and pupils' learning. Current standards at the end of Year 2 are now high, and the proportion of pupils gaining the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics has increased. Pupils make steady progress in Key Stage 2 and it is quickening. Until 2006, results in national tests for pupils at the end of year 6 have been average with only a small proportion gaining the higher level in English and mathematics. There is now a much higher proportion of pupils on course to gain the higher level in mathematics and science. This demonstrates that standards are improving from a broadly satisfactory picture. Although it is too early to show in national test results for the current Year 6 pupils in English, tracking information and work in books confirms that the achievement of higher-attaining pupils is improving.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. Many enjoy school, as shown by their good attendance. They respond to teachers' expectations by behaving well and relating very well to adults and to each other. Pupils show genuine care, support and consideration for each other because, from the time that they start school, teachers model respect for others. Pupils have a keen sense of right and wrong. The opportunities for them to show responsibility and to act as leaders are seized upon and ensure that pupils develop important skills and qualities to help them in adult life. Pupils' social, moral and spiritual development is good because appropriate learning opportunities are planned in all aspects of the school's work and in the school's daily life. Their knowledge and understanding of the lifestyles and beliefs of other cultures is developing well. They have good ideas about maintaining healthy lifestyles and respond positively to the school's initiatives to stay fit, for example, by cycling to school. Pupils are appropriately prepared for transfer to secondary school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and has good elements. The high proportion of good teaching seen during the inspection is beginning to impact positively on pupils'

attainment across the school. In the Foundation Stage, the quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Here, teachers help the children to feel secure and consistently provide challenging activities, which enable the children to thrive in their learning.

Staff have worked hard to improve aspects of teaching and learning and this is having a positive impact on pupils' achievement. Lessons have clarity of purpose and pupils are helped to know what is expected of them. Work set is generally well matched to pupils' abilities although sometimes too little is expected of higher-attaining pupils. Teachers ensure that pupils behave well and that relationships in the classrooms are good. This contributes to a good atmosphere which is conducive to effective learning. In the best lessons, teachers question pupils particularly skilfully. This enables the teachers to develop a clear understanding of how well pupils have grasped lesson objectives. It also provides good opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking skills. Elsewhere in the school, questioning is not as skilful and there are occasions when teachers take too long explaining activities. This slows the pace of the lesson.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good because it provides a wide range of learning experiences for pupils of all abilities. This includes the Foundation Stage where learning through play and a wide variety of activities results in children who are focused and excited about learning. The school's emphasis on literacy and numeracy is strengthened by increasing opportunities for pupils to learn across subjects. This makes learning more relevant and broad and is resulting in more opportunities for creativity. The programme for personal, social and health education enables good involvement of pupils in their learning and promotes safe, healthy and happy lifestyles. Learning is extended by popular, after-school activities and visits which cater for a wide variety of interests. These include theatre groups and a visit by an astronomer. The sporting partnership which the school has with other primary schools is leading to a very varied programme of learning and is enabling teachers to strengthen their expertise in teaching physical education.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The care, guidance and support provided by the school are satisfactory. The pastoral support provided is good, with staff looking after pupils well so that they feel safe and secure. All relevant procedures are in place to ensure their health, safety and protection. Preparation by the staff for children starting in the Foundation Stage is outstanding, helping them to be ready to start learning from their very first day. Parents agree with this, citing it as one of the reasons their children are happy here. Pupils with particular worries or difficulties benefit from the school's close partnerships with specialist agencies. Academic support is still in the process of developing because, whilst pupils know the levels at which they are working in English and mathematics, they do not have this information in other subjects. Support and guidance for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities enable them to make satisfactory progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The quality of leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher's leadership is based on a firm commitment to improving the quality of provision and pupils' progress. As a

result, she has ensured that more rigour has been introduced into the monitoring and evaluation of the school's provision and this is starting to pay dividends in pupils' achievement. She has developed a strong sense of teamwork amongst all the staff and provides strong pastoral leadership. Her commitment to improvement is shared by other staff. The school has re-organised the way that subjects are led and managed since the previous inspection when there were weaknesses in these areas. The two teams of staff that have these responsibilities are impacting positively on pupils' achievement. This is particularly the case with the team that has responsibility for English, mathematics and science, working under the effective leadership of the deputy headteacher. There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection because the school has successfully tackled the issues raised at that time. There is good capacity for further improvement.

Governance is good. Governors have a clear understanding of the strengths of the school and are now adept in raising searching questions that enable their strategic role to be met.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

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	2
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
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?	3

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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
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	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

25 May 2007

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Holywell C of E Primary School, Needingworth, PE27 4TF

I am writing to let you know how much we enjoyed our visit to your school. We would like to share with you what we thought about it. Yours is a satisfactory school and it is getting better. Here are some of the good things that we found:

- your behaviour is good. Most of you enjoy your lessons and you play and work together well
- your teachers provide a wide range of things for you to do, both in school time and in the clubs after school
- children in the Reception class make rapid progress.

We have asked your headteacher and staff to work on three things to help improve the school further:

- help more of you to work at higher levels in writing and mathematics by getting the teachers to make work harder for you
- make sure that all lessons are equally good and challenging for you so that you make even quicker progress
- for your teachers to check your progress in science and ICT like they do in literacy and numeracy.

You can all help by continuing to work hard, keeping your targets constantly in mind so you that can achieve them as quickly as possible.

With best wishes

Keith Sadler

Lead Inspector