



Hollybrook Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116129
Local Authority Southampton
Inspection number 290427
Inspection date 12 January 2007
Reporting inspector Michael Pye

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Seagarth Close
School category	Community		Southampton
Age range of pupils	4-7		SO16 6RN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	02380 771528
Number on roll (school)	174	Fax number	02380 512020
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Dr Mark Hastings
		Headteacher	Mrs Julia Preston
Date of previous school inspection	21 October 2002		

Age group	Inspection date	Inspection number
4-7	12 January 2007	290427

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Situated on the outskirts of the city, Hollybrook is smaller than most primary schools nationally. The pupils come from a variety of backgrounds and the number of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. The school population is predominantly White British, although the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well above average. There are average numbers of pupils whose first language is not English. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is well below average and there are no pupils with a statement of special educational need. There has been considerable staff turbulence and there was no permanent deputy head at the time of the inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Parents are correct in judging that the school provides a good standard of education for its pupils. It has consistently maintained above average test results but also ensures outstanding personal development and well-being for its pupils and high quality care.

Pupils enter Reception with skills and knowledge expected for children of their age. They progress well and at the end of Year 2 their standards are above the national average. This reflects the positive attitudes of pupils as well as the good teaching in the school. More able pupils are particularly well challenged with more of them achieving the higher levels than is expected nationally. The pupils get a good start in the well-managed Reception area, which has benefited from recent improvements to the internal and external areas. The children are consequently better able to make more choices from a wider range of learning activities.

Teaching and learning in the school are good. In particular teachers plan work well for pupils of different abilities. There are inconsistencies in the way targets are set in literacy and numeracy and not all pupils know how to use them to improve their work. The school has developed an outstanding curriculum which meets the needs of all pupils. It does this through offering practical experience in science weeks for example, and by using interactive white boards in lessons to motivate pupils to learn. The very good improvement in the provision of information and communication technology (ICT) since the last inspection also makes a positive contribution to pupils' achievement across all subjects. The pupils benefit from the curriculum which reinforces very well the school's messages about healthy lifestyles and keeping safe. Pupil's self esteem is very well promoted through the recognition of their achievement in all aspects of school life. Pupils enjoy school and their views are sought in a number of ways, such as circle time and questionnaires. The care given to pupils is of a high quality, reflecting how well the adults know the pupils.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, her acting deputy and other senior managers have an effective shared vision for the school: where there are consistently high academic standards but where pupils' personal development is well nurtured. There is no complacency and the school is committed to further improvement. This can be seen in their attention to detail, for example the establishment of a more-able readers section in the library as part of their continued aim of providing further challenge.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that there is a consistent approach to setting targets for pupils and that they know how to use them to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well as a consequence of positive attitudes and consistently good teaching. Children enter the Reception classes with skills and knowledge that generally meet those expected for their age. They make good progress, particularly in calculation, and have a good knowledge and understanding of the world.

Pupils achieve well across the school and at the end of Year 2 they reach high standards in writing, reading and mathematics. The school identified that some boys had difficulties with writing and responded by introducing a programme designed to improve their handwriting. They have also ensured the provision of a wider range of reading books to motivate boys. The more able, both boys and girls, are well challenged and achieve higher levels than are expected nationally.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) make good progress towards their personal targets, as do those pupils whose first language is not English. This is partly the result of early identification of their specific needs and some good targeted work conducted by the learning support assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. This is as a consequence of a number of factors. The high quality curriculum provides ample opportunities for pupils to progress and develop as independent learners, whilst adults know and respect the pupils well and identify their particular needs. Consequently, pupils thrive in a challenging but caring environment. They enjoy school and have a very secure knowledge of healthy lifestyles and how to stay safe. Pupils' fitness and skill levels are well developed during regular sports' lessons which are often conducted by specialist secondary school teachers. Pupils participate well in the local community, particularly with regard to senior citizens, but also around school they maximise the very good opportunities they have to exercise responsibility. Spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is excellent. Behaviour is extremely good. Relationships are very positive; the pupils really identify with achievers during the celebration assembly. Pupils' basic skills are good and the improved provision for ICT has also contributed to the pupils being well prepared for the next stage of their education. Attendance is average, but is hindered by parents taking holidays during school term time.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Leadership helps to maintain this through a comprehensive programme of monitoring and teachers benefit from good feedback.

Teachers' planning, in Reception, is detailed and meets the needs of pupils. Consequently, pupils including those with learning difficulties make good progress. The good achievement levels, particularly for the more able, reflects the good subject knowledge of teachers and how well they plan work for pupils of different abilities. One parent wrote, 'we are very pleased with the school and impressed with the variety of teaching methods used'.

Pupils progress well because, as they said, 'lessons are fun, I like working hard, and there are lots of different things to do'. Such challenge and variety is seen when pupils participate in role play and make great progress in their speaking and listening skills. Pupils respond well to the high quality relationships in class and are consequently unafraid to get involved and answer questions. In particular, the pupils from Reception are expertly encouraged to become independent learners. In some classes pupils know their targets but this is inconsistent in others.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. Its strength lies in the way in which it is planned to meet the needs of all pupils. More able mathematicians have extra teaching whilst the school has a number of different strategies for those pupils who prefer more practical learning experiences. Theme Days and Weeks enable pupils to actively participate in learning about science, woodwork and art, for example. A significant improvement in the provision for ICT has resulted in pupils gaining a more balanced experience and good use is made of it in subjects such as history; when pupils explore the Great Fire of London. Learning is made more relevant to pupils because, links are increasingly being made between subjects. These also include reinforcing the healthy living and keeping safe messages. The personal, social and health education programme is well established and pupils talk of how they value the time they have to discuss matters of importance during circle time. In addition, pupils benefit from clubs such as sports in Team Elite and karate, and enjoy a wide range of visits and visitors which support their learning. Reception children visit a farm to reinforce their learning about growth, and a windmill gives a very good illustration to Year 1 pupils about forces in science.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Overall the care, guidance and the support given to pupils are good. A particular strength however is the very good quality of care provided. Adults spoke of the pupils feeling safe and secure within the school environment. The pupils develop well, both personally and academically. The school has positive relationships with a very wide range of outside agencies that support vulnerable pupils and families. Pupils are clear about who they can approach if they need help. Reception children settle quickly, partly because the transition arrangements are very good and include a programme of home visits. Support for pupils with LDD is very good and their achievement is particularly well tracked to ensure that they receive prompt and appropriate support.

Health and safety arrangements and child protection procedures are secure. Rigorous checks ensure that all adults are cleared to work with children.

Whilst systems are in place for pupils to have targets in literacy and numeracy, they differ across the school. Consequently not all pupils know their targets and how they can help them to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The very experienced headteacher has sought successfully to give more staff the opportunity to monitor and manage their areas of responsibility. The work of the 'Teaching and Learning Manager' has impacted positively already on the standards of reading, writing and mathematics. For example, the school has taken action to further challenge boys by emphasising a programme of improving handwriting. The more open style of management has been well tested during the headteacher's recent absence; high levels of pupils' personal development, care and good standards and achievement levels were maintained. The school recognises that there is still some way to go before all co-ordinators have a secure overview of the whole school picture. However they are now involved in lesson monitoring, work scrutiny and the development of action plans. The school makes very effective use of its resources and has been particularly successful in extending the outdoor facilities in Reception. Staff, through the learning partners' scheme, are able to share good practice and develop their professional competence.

Monitoring and evaluation systems are very well established. Governors are fully involved in the monitoring of the school, they visit regularly and this enables them to have a good understanding of the strengths and areas of improvement within the school. One parent wrote that the governors are 'easily accessible, approachable and helpful'. Teamwork is very strong and all staff share a clear vision for improvement.

Their school self-evaluation is accurate, realistic, and identifies relevant areas for improvement. This accuracy reflects the judgement that the school has a very strong capacity to improve further.

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	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
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	2
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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?	1
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	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
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	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

You will remember my visit to your school. I really enjoyed talking to you, and listening to what you had to say. Thank you. I agree with many of you that your school is good.

There are some things that your school does very well.

- You receive good teaching and make better progress than many pupils in other schools. Most of you are better at mathematics, reading and writing than many other pupils.
- Adults know you and care for you very well.
- You are encouraged to behave well and you do! You are aware of the needs of others.
- You told me that you feel safe in school and that you are reminded about how to keep healthy and safe.
- You get a good start to your schooling in Reception. Children settle well because the school takes care to ensure that they know you well.
- You told me that the school gives you lots of very good and different opportunities to learn. You particularly like the special days and weeks when you study science for example.
- The headteacher and her staff manage the school very well and know what to do to further improve things.

I have asked the school to ensure that in all classes you know your targets and how to use them to improve your work.

You can help your school get even better by turning up on time in the mornings and not taking holidays during term time.

I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Michael PyeLead Inspector