



# Holmer CofE Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 116820  
**Local Authority** Herefordshire  
**Inspection number** 290646  
**Inspection dates** 23–24 January 2007  
**Reporting inspector** John Lilly

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Holmer Road
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled		Hereford
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11		HR4 9RX
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01432 273301
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	260	<b>Fax number</b>	01432 342614
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Diana Clinkett
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Judith Cecil
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 January 2003		

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection dates</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
4–11	23–24 January 2007	290646

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is larger than average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is average. Pupils are mainly White British, although there is a small but increasing number of pupils from other heritages. Most of these are learning English as an additional language.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

Holmer is a good school. Provision has improved considerably during the last three years. The levels of achievement in the school are good and standards are improving at above the national rate. Good provision in Reception gives the children a very good start and from this secure foundation pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 to 6. Pupils attain above average standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This improvement stems from the outstanding leadership of the headteacher. Staff share her passion and commitment and have risen to the challenge of meeting her very high expectations. Leadership and management are good, creating a very efficient, effective and purposeful school. The governors provide strong support. The teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. The good curriculum is broad and balanced and grabs the interest of pupils. Pupils are keen to learn and, therefore, they work hard. Their personal development and well-being are good. They enjoy school greatly and show this in their good behaviour. They are extremely caring towards others. They manage their own safety and health, treating what they learn seriously, and they have the confidence to involve themselves in helping others and playing their full part in improving the school. Pupils gain the skills and maturity that they will need for the next stage in their education and for future employment. Above all, the spiritual development of the pupils is outstanding, and their very good moral and social development is backed by a natural willingness to reflect deeply on the wonder and responsibilities of life. Care, guidance and support are good, providing a strong framework for everything else. Parents value the school highly and the majority are very supportive of it. The school does not, however, involve parents enough in helping their children do even better. Attendance is satisfactory, although too many parents take their children on holiday during term-time. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is good. Very able pupils, however, find some of the work too easy. The school wants to be outstanding and has good capacity to become so. Monitoring and self-evaluation are rigorous and accurate. However, these processes have become very complicated. This hinders the school from acting quickly when improvement is necessary, because monitoring and review are not frequent enough. The time has now come to bring all the many strengths of the school into an even stronger whole.

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

- Simplify review procedures so that the school can act more quickly to further improve the pupils' learning.
- Better involve parents in the education of their children.
- Provide the most able pupils with more challenging work.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Children join Reception with the attainment expected at that age, settle quickly and make good progress. By the time they move into Year 1, their attainment is above the standard expected. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2. Their attainment by the end of Year 2 in English, mathematics and science is above average. This positive picture continues in Years 3 to 6 because teaching is good and pupils know how to learn. Their good speaking and listening skills aid their learning considerably. By the end of Year 6, attainment in English, mathematics and science is above average. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress because they are well supported. Those learning English as an additional language make good progress because they receive specialised support. Some more able pupils make only satisfactory progress because they find some of the work too easy.

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

### **Grade: 2**

The pupils become perceptive and mature young people and their spiritual development is outstanding. In a superb assembly, they showed their considerable wonder at and respect for the first signs of the marvels of spring. Strong moral awareness and very good social skills underpin this spiritual development. Pupils appreciate and value their own culture and those of others, although their knowledge of these cultures is not as broad as it could be. Pupils enjoy school greatly, and this shows in their good behaviour, good relationships and positive attitudes. Attendance is satisfactory rather than good because too many parents take their children on holiday during term-time. Pupils' confidence and self-esteem is high and they play their full part in lessons. They willingly contribute to making Holmer a better school. 'I like being a prefect because we can help the teachers out. It's good to be looked up to – because it makes you feel responsible'. Pupils feel safe and know how to remain safe, for example, by not talking to strangers. They know and then apply to their own lives how to be healthy, for example, trying to cut down on sweets. Their good social skills, alongside secure literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills form a secure foundation for the next stage in their education and for future employment.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning have improved greatly. Teachers plan carefully so that lessons have clear objectives, with activities that are generally matched well to pupils' different abilities. Teachers help pupils to build on what they are learning as the lesson progresses. Even so, sometimes, the more able children are not set sufficiently challenging work and teachers do not make sufficiently clear to them the higher levels

they need to achieve. At the end of lessons, teachers and pupils check scrupulously how well everyone has done. Teachers use discussion very well to involve the pupils, developing their already good speaking and listening skills, and therefore their thinking. Teachers use interactive whiteboards very effectively. The vast majority of teaching is at least good. The difference between the good and the increasing number of outstanding lessons is that, in the latter, teachers demand very pacy learning, set very challenging objectives, and make crystal clear what pupils of all abilities must show they have learned by the end of the lesson. They drive the learning forward with passion, enthusiasm and excitement. The pupils enjoy these lessons hugely.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum grabs the interest of the pupils, because it is made very relevant to their present and future lives, and helps them learn how to learn. In Reception, however, children do not have enough opportunities for outdoor play. The school has given a high priority to literacy, making productive links with other subjects. Mathematics now has similar priority because the school identified that pupils were not making quite as good progress in this subject. Identifying key learning objectives helps pupils to access the curriculum at the right level. Opportunities for sport are good, for example, through links with the local leisure centre. There is other good provision, for example, for art and design, music, dance and French. Themed weeks, such as the 'healthy eating week,' deepen the pupils' understanding and there is a good range of extracurricular activities. Information and communication technology is a strength of the curriculum. Personal and social education makes a significant contribution to the pupils' learning, personal development and well-being because topics are taught in ways that help pupils to apply what they learn to their own lives.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Support for pupils is very effective throughout the school and good systems ensure pupils' health, safety and welfare. Procedures for safeguarding children are secure. Good use of external specialist staff helps to identify those pupils with learning difficulties and appropriate help is provided. The school is especially good at helping pupils with challenging behaviour who join the school from elsewhere. Pupils learning English as an additional language are supported well. Procedures for assessment and tracking of pupils' progress are good. Pupils have appropriate targets, but individual progress towards them is not always reviewed frequently enough. This allows some pupils who are at risk of coasting or underachieving to have to wait too long before extra attention is paid to their needs. The school has good systems for identifying any dip in performance and staff take effective action across the school to rectify them, for example, giving greater priority this year to mathematics. Above all, this is a very caring school and pupils feel very safe and secure.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The outstanding leadership of the headteacher has created an ambitious staff who work closely together as a team. Each member knows where the school is going and why. Leadership and management are good. Rigorous, accurate and systematic self-evaluation has looked at everything the school does and has led to a wide range of initiatives which have been very effective at driving school improvement. The extent of these initiatives has, however, become slightly unwieldy. For example, the school improvement plan is extremely detailed but it does not make clear what the top priorities are. The planned cycles for monitoring subjects are spread over too long a period. As a result, staff do not all have a sufficiently clear grasp of how initiatives contribute to each other. The initiatives which made up this first stage in the improvement of the school were necessary and carried out very well. The time has now come, however, to simplify and to ensure that the school is able to identify issues more quickly and respond to them. A strong governing body supports the school well. Parents value the school highly. They give considerable support to school events but are insufficiently involved in helping their children do better.





## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### 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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
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

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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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

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

<sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	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	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**

- Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed our two days with you very much, especially talking to you and being with you in your lessons. Your contribution in assemblies is marvellous. You go to a good school and you are very much a part of what makes it good. You told us how much you enjoy school and that you feel very safe. Your headteacher, staff and governors run the school well. They are determined to provide you with only the best, working very hard to make the school better and better each day. Your families value your school highly but the school and your parents need to work more closely together. You are working well in lessons and make good progress because you have good teachers. The good curriculum gives you many interesting and important things to learn that you will need for your future lives. You say that you find what you learn interesting and fun. We think you are very well cared for and get the help you need. You told us that you thought the best thing about the school was your friends and your teachers, and that you enjoy your lessons. You get on with others and care for them very well. You behave well and are very polite. Your attendance is satisfactory, although some of you could try harder to attend everyday. You become thoughtful and mature young people, and enjoy taking responsibilities, for example, as prefects. To become an even better school, we have asked your teachers to:
  - Review your progress in simpler ways so that you get the feedback you need more quickly.
  - Work more closely with your parents to help you do better.
  - Make sure that some of you are not doing work that is too easy for you.