



# Holmeswood Methodist School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 119403  
**Local Authority** Lancashire  
**Inspection number** 291409  
**Inspection date** 14 September 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Kathleen McArthur

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>	Chapel Lane
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled		Holmeswood, Ormskirk
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4-11		Lancashire, L40 1UD
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01704 821360
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	22	<b>Fax number</b>	01704 821360
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Rev M Tinsley
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr M R Higson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected		

<b>Age group</b> 4-11	<b>Inspection date</b> 14 September 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 291409
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## **Description of the school**

This very small school stands in a pleasant semi-rural location. It has strong links with the church and the local village community. Many families have traditional associations with the school. Many parents or grandparents attended as pupils in the past. There are two classes and all pupils are of White British origin. None of the pupils receives a free school meal and the proportion with learning difficulties or disabilities is lower than average. The attainment of children when they start school is lower than is typical for their age.

## **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 and rapidly improving school. Every child clearly matters. Typical of parents' very positive views was the comment, 'We are more than happy with all aspects of our child's enjoyable school life'. Parents are valued partners in their children's education and are very supportive of the work of the school, as is the local community. The headteacher has been in post for just twelve months. His good leadership has quickly established a culture of school improvement to raise standards, develop provision and eradicate a legacy of underachievement. Good governance through shrewd decision making and financial management has actively supported the headteacher and resulted in rapid improvements in all aspects of school life. This is further supported by good working links with other schools and the local authority.

Standards are broadly average. They had regularly been a little below average until 2005 when they showed improvement. This accelerated dramatically last year when all Year 6 pupils attained, and many exceeded, the nationally expected Level 4. This was a direct result of the headteacher's prompt actions to raise standards. Good assessment systems are in place to monitor each individual pupil's academic progress and show just where extra help is needed. Achievement and progress are good. Children enter the school below average and last year many left above average. Children in the Foundation Stage are not always challenged enough but make satisfactory progress to reach the goals expected at the end of their Reception year.

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers respond well to the demanding task of providing for the different age groups in each class, and pupils enjoy their lessons. They feel secure and are well cared for in the warm, family atmosphere of the school. Personal development is good. Pupils behave very well and have good attitudes to their work, which in turn helps them progress well. All age groups mix happily and show good levels of concern for each other. This prepares them well for future life in the wider community. They willingly take on responsibilities and the school councillors are proud of their work. Attendance is below average.

The curriculum is good. Pupils appreciate the changes the headteacher has made and say that lessons are 'much better now'. Consequently, they enjoy school, find the practical investigations interesting, try hard and progress well. They value their clubs and parents say children now have 'many, many more activities than they have ever had'. The lack of a school hall limits many activities and the Key Stage 2 classroom serves as a dining room, office, library and main entrance. This frequently interrupts learning. The outside area for the Foundation Stage is not sufficiently developed to provide continuous access to learning outdoors.

Self-evaluation is rigorous, honest and accurate. Improved results show that the school has a clear view of its strengths and weaknesses. Weaknesses identified at the previous inspection have been tackled thoroughly by the headteacher. The school has implemented good plans to improve provision and continue to raise standards. It gives good value for money. The teamwork of staff, governors, parents and pupils means there is good capacity for further improvement.

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

- Improve progress in the Foundation Stage by increasing the level of challenge in lessons and improving opportunities for outdoor learning.
- Enlist the help of parents to improve attendance.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Standards are broadly average. Last year they were above average at the end of Key Stage 2 and average at the end of Key Stage 1. Taking into account their abilities when they start school, pupils make good progress overall, particularly in Key Stage 2. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls or those with learning difficulties or disabilities.

Children enter the Foundation Stage at an earlier stage of learning and development than is typical for their age. They make satisfactory progress and reach the expected learning goals at the end of Reception class. Lack of challenge in some lessons prevents them from making better progress.

Test results in Year 6 had been below average for several years but improved in 2005 when they were average. There has been a big improvement since and, in the 2006 tests, all pupils reached the expected levels in English, mathematics and science and half attained a higher level in mathematics and science. Most pupils in Key Stage 1 reach expected standards. Good, much improved teaching and well-targeted support have successfully overcome the underachievement of previous years.

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

### **Grade: 2**

The personal development and well-being of all pupils are good, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is reflected in the respectful, secure, family atmosphere. Pupils care about their environment and are eager to cultivate the garden area. Studies of different religions and cultures prepare them well for life in multicultural Britain. Pupils raise funds for charity and contribute eagerly to the school and local community. Their enjoyment of school ensures that behaviour is good and they try hard in lessons. All ages play and work well together, and lunchtime is a pleasant social occasion. Older pupils regularly help younger ones so they feel secure and settled. Pupils know how to stay healthy and the tuck shop does not sell sweets 'because they aren't healthy'. Pupils feel safe in school, say there is no bullying and are happy to approach any member of staff for help. Attendance is below average, largely due to family holidays taken during term time.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall. They are best in the Key Stage 2 class. Good lesson planning, well deployed teaching assistants and lively delivery of interesting activities that grab pupils' attention mean they work hard and are keen to learn. Pupils know what they will be expected to learn in each lesson but writing out lengthy learning objectives often cuts into the time available to complete tasks. Resources including computers are used well. Very good relationships between staff and pupils support learning well. Previous underachievement has been tackled through effective use of assessment systems that show staff where to direct extra help. Staff usually use assessment information well to plan suitable activities for the different ages and abilities in each class but occasionally all pupils, regardless of their ability, are given the same task and this means they cannot all work with a similar degree of independence. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. It is weakened by a lack of suitable challenge in some lessons.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It has been adapted well to meet the needs of all pupils including those with learning difficulties or disabilities. The headteacher has skilfully revised the curriculum to ensure that learning activities are made interesting, practical and meaningful. Consequently, pupils say lessons are much better, they enjoy their learning more and learning has improved. Computers are used well in many lessons to reinforce learning. Indoor physical education lessons are held at another school because there is no hall. The Key Stage 2 classroom is the main entrance, the library, office and dining room. This results in frequent interruptions which can distract pupils and interfere with their learning. Regular outdoor activities are planned for Foundation Stage children but the area set aside for these activities does not provide continuous access to the outdoor learning experiences that young children enjoy and need. Visits, visitors and an annual residential trip successfully enrich the curriculum. The introduction of French, science and sports clubs by the new headteacher has proved very popular.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support of pupils are good. Child protection procedures are fully in place, regularly reviewed and understood by all staff. Health and safety issues and risk assessments are very well managed, as are systems for safeguarding pupils through careful recruitment of staff. Good procedures ensure that the youngest children start school happily and older pupils transfer confidently to the next stage of their education. Assessment systems provide good information to help academic guidance.

Staff check pupils' progress closely and use assessment information to plan the next steps in learning and set targets for individual pupils. These are shared with parents so that they can support their children at home. Pupils are becoming more effectively involved in checking their own progress and enjoy using their 'learning journals' to record targets, spellings and times tables. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities have well-written individual education plans and are often withdrawn for short, focused support sessions. Able, gifted and talented pupils are identified and provided with good plans to develop their individual skills.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides good, purposeful leadership. He has quickly and accurately identified areas for improvement, particularly in standards, gained the support of staff, parents and governors and set a very clear direction for the future of the school. This has rapidly shown results in higher standards and changes to the curriculum that ensure pupils enjoy learning more. Performance management procedures have improved the quality of teaching and learning. Equal opportunities are promoted satisfactorily. Finances and resources are directed well to support improvement plans such as those relating, to professional development and proposals for the building of a new school hall. Governance is good. The school has benefited from the governors' confident and shrewd decisions in making good staffing appointments and in reducing the headteacher's teaching load to enable him to concentrate on raising standards. Parents are pleased with the way the school has improved and see it a valuable asset to the local community. The school provides good value for money and is well placed for further improvement.

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## 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?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
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	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

<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	3
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**

15 September 2006

Holmeswood Methodist School

Chapel Lane

Holmeswood

Ormskirk

Lancashire

L40 1UD

Dear Pupils

I spent a very enjoyable day at your school yesterday. Thank you all for making me so welcome and helping me to find out many good things about Holmeswood School. The members of the school council told me you are all very happy at school and look after each other well. Everyone told me how much you like using your new learning journals.

I will tell you about some of the things I found.

You belong to a good school. You enjoy your lessons and work hard, try to reach your targets and behave well. Your lessons are interesting and you enjoy science investigations, going on visits and listening to exciting stories. I know you are looking forward to using the school hall when it is built, and to growing different plants in the garden.

Your headteacher has quickly made some very good changes and works hard with the staff and the governors to make sure you have many interesting things to do at school. The staff help you to improve your work. They all care for you and look after you well.

I have asked them to improve the outdoor space so the younger children can learn outside more easily. I have also asked some of them to make you work a bit harder. You can help by making sure you come to school everyday and by continuing to work hard and helping each other.

I hope you will always be very happy and enjoy your time at Holmeswood School!

Yours sincerely

Kathleen McArthur

Lead inspector