

Holmesdale Community Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124988
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	293159
Inspection date	19 July 2007
Reporting inspector	David Marshall

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	317
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs J Clark
Headteacher	Mr J Brown
Date of previous school inspection	13 May 2002
School address	Alma Road Reigate RH2 0BY
Telephone number	01737 243678
Fax number	01737 249251

Age group	3-7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Holmesdale is a larger than average infant school, with a 52 place nursery where pupils attend for either a morning or afternoon session. The pupils come from the local area, which is predominantly private housing. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The vast majority of pupils are of white European origin and a small proportion is learning English as an additional language. Pupil mobility is low. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average and one child has a statement of special educational needs. The school has recently received the Healthy Schools Award, the ECO Schools Green Flag Award, the Basic Skills Quality Mark and the Investor in People's award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Holmesdale is an outstanding school because it enables pupils to make excellent progress both academically and in their personal development. Exceptional leadership and teaching, and a vibrant curriculum, are at the heart of the school's success. The school sets out to make a real difference to pupils' lives and succeeds handsomely by preparing pupils very well for their future education. Parents think highly of the school and what it offers their children. One spoke on behalf of many when she wrote, 'As parents, we feel privileged that our children have attended Holmesdale. It has been an excellent introduction to their education; the leadership has been inspirational and there is a very strong team of teachers and support staff.'

Throughout the school, pupils achieve extremely well. Children enter the school with skills and understanding that vary but are usually above those expected for their age. By the time they leave standards are consistently exceptionally high because the teaching and curriculum are excellent. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 is consistently very high in reading, writing and mathematics.

There is outstanding provision in the Foundation Stage, where teachers plan stimulating and challenging activities for the children. The use of the outstanding, outdoor areas is exemplary and enables children to thoroughly enjoy all their days in school and provides them with an excellent start to their education. Throughout the rest of the school, teaching and learning are often outstanding. Lessons are very well planned, making sure that all pupils enjoy learning. The information collected about pupils is used particularly well to ensure that the least able and most vulnerable pupils make outstanding progress. The support provided by the very experienced teaching assistants is excellent and very much appreciated by parents and staff alike.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Staff are vigilant to pupils' needs, caring for, and valuing them all, as individuals. The atmosphere for learning created by the whole staff is supportive and exciting. As one parent said, 'The school is friendly - a real little community and it really does feel as though the best interest of the pupils is always the main priority.' Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils show very caring attitudes to each other and the environment. They learn to respect children from different backgrounds and have an excellent understanding of healthy living and keeping safe.

The rich curriculum, based on the International Primary Curriculum, covers all subjects very well and is enhanced by a very good range of outdoor activities. Although the staff provide countless opportunities for individual pupils to shine, the school is continuing to refine the curriculum to ensure their lessons continue to be as exciting and relevant as they can make them. As a result the leadership team have identified providing further problem-solving tasks as a priority for improvement.

The excellent leadership team ensures that complacency is not tolerated. The plans in place to accommodate the additional class for next year are highly detailed and should go a long way to allay parents' fears that the excellent provision they appreciate may be impaired. Staff share their vision of continued improvement and they work tirelessly to identify and tackle areas for development. Given their track record, they are outstandingly well placed to continue to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

Although there are no major issues for improvement, the inspector agrees with the school that it should:

- further refine the mathematics curriculum to make sure that all pupils are given the opportunity to have at least two problem solving activities per week.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

When children start school their standards are generally just above those expected for their age. By the time they enter Year 1, they have made excellent progress and achieved very well and standards are well above those expected for children of their age. Progress is especially good in personal development as children learn to get along very well together and develop a thirst for learning. National assessments for pupils at the end of Year 2 show that standards are consistently very high. This year, the proportion of pupils who reached the higher levels in writing, reading, mathematics and science continues to be very high. All pupils, whatever their ability, achieve outstandingly well. The provision for those pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities is exceptional, and as a result they make excellent progress. Since the last inspection all pupils have been enabled to make exceptional progress in the use of information and communication technology (ICT).

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Pupils flourish in the secure and supportive environment and enjoy all that the school offers. From their earliest days in the Nursery, relationships are very positive and, across the school, their outstanding moral and social development means that pupils' behaviour in-and-out of lessons is excellent. Attendance is above the national average because everything possible is done to make school an enjoyable place to be, to reward good attendance and to follow up absences systematically. Pupils make a very strong contribution to their school and the wider community. The highly effective school council, for example, helps to raise considerable funds for charities, provides guidance to the outstanding Parent/Staff Association and represents all pupils' interests very well. As one parent pointed out, and;quot;Girls can now wear trousers as requested by the school counciland;quot; Pupils have a very good understanding of how to lead safe and healthy lives. The pupils' high standards in reading, writing and mathematics, excellent relationships and skills in working together prepare them excellently for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The quality of teaching is outstanding and this ensures that all pupils make excellent progress. Teachers assess pupils' progress exceptionally well and make very good use of this information when planning future work. This helps them to ensure that lessons are pitched at the right levels and that all pupils can succeed. Tasks engage pupils' interest and motivate them to learn. Relationships are strong and pupils work productively as a result. The support staff make a

strong contribution to this high quality of learning, whether working with individuals or small groups. They form excellent relationships, keep pupils on task and, in particular, help pupils who have concentration difficulties. In lessons, expectations are high, the pace is brisk and pupils know what they are expected to learn. The exceptional planning means that the goals of developing pupils' personal qualities of enquiry, adaptability and thoughtfulness are paramount in every lesson.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding and covers a very wide range of learning activities and experiences. It is planned in great detail, based on the International Primary Curriculum, to meet the pupils' needs and offers them many opportunities to make choices and decisions with confidence and flexibility. The Foundation Stage benefits from a stimulating environment. Both indoor and outdoor activities promote all aspects of their learning exceptionally well. Excellent attention is paid to developing basic skills and teachers are refining their planning further to consistently offer pupils opportunities for practical problem-solving activities. The school has successfully provided a curriculum based on building on pupils' skills and interests across different subjects. Parents are involved at all points. One of them observed, 'I am amazed at the progress my son has made this year in all subjects. The topics and practical work planned for Year 1 sound fantastic.' Pupils enjoy, and parents value, the excellent range of well-attended lunchtime and after school activities. The good number of educational visits and visitors further enliven the pupils' learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school rightly claims to be highly inclusive and outstanding care, support and guidance have a significant impact on pupils' all-round development and their high levels of achievement. The school has very thorough procedures in place for safeguarding pupils and making them happy. One parent summed up the views of many others by writing, 'My son associates learning with enjoyment and enrichment; and he associates school with happiness.' The school provides excellent support for vulnerable pupils and pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Staff deal well with any bullying that arises in a very caring and professional manner. Pupils say that they are safe in school, and know who to go to if in need of help. Academic guidance is excellent. The progress of pupils is tracked closely using efficient ICT based systems. Pupils are set challenging learning targets and there are very good systems to check their on-going progress towards these.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management at all levels are outstanding and this has a considerable impact on pupils' excellent progress. Teamwork is of the highest quality and everyone plays a valuable part in moving the school forward. The very experienced headteacher's leadership is outstanding. All staff follow his exceptional lead and are excellent role models in their own right. The administrative team and site manager are considerable assets to the school and are very much appreciated by all concerned. Through the whole staff, the school provides a warm, caring

environment where the excellent welfare for each pupil ensures the outstanding development of both their academic and personal qualities.

Governors have an excellent understanding of their strategic role in the school's development and have very good systems for checking on its effectiveness and holding the leaders to account. As a result, although the leaders have a modest view of their effectiveness, they have very clear understanding of what is working well, what can improve and how it can be achieved. Most parents appreciate the high quality of the school's leadership and confirm that the school takes good account of their views. Data analysis, high quality monitoring of pupils' work and lesson observations also provide staff with evidence of where support is needed. These rigorous systems illustrate the school's excellent capacity to continue improving provision despite the school's expansion, and to raise standards even further.

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Annex A

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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
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?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

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	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
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	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
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?	1

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
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	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

3 September 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Holmesdale Community Infant School, Reigate, RH2 0BY

Thank you so much for welcoming me into your school. I enjoyed my time with you and would now like to tell you what I found out about your school. I agree with what many of you told me - Holmesdale is an excellent school.

I think you all do very well and really try hard at all times. You are especially lucky to have so many different activities, both during and after school. I also saw how keen you are to take part and how well you behave. Many of you told me how much you enjoy being at school, and how proud you are of what you can do. The Year 2 concert I watched was wonderful. I am sure that you will continue to try hard so your school can be the fun place that you like, and where you can all learn.

Your teachers are always trying to help you do even better in lessons. I have agreed that as they carry on making things even better, you should be given the opportunity to use what you know to solve practical problems in as many exciting ways as possible. You must continue to listen carefully and take note of what they say. Then you will all continue to make really good progress in your learning.

Finally, I would like to thank you once again for all your help. I wish you well in the future.

With kind regards

David Marshall Lead Inspector