

Holt Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126329
Local Authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	293525
Inspection date	19 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Stephen Lake

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	114
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Claire Lambert
Headteacher	Margaret Harnden
Date of previous school inspection	29 April 2002
School address	The Gravel Holt Trowbridge BA14 6RA
Telephone number	01225 782315
Fax number	012250782869

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors

Description of the school

This is a smaller-than-average school. It has fewer-than-average pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD). Fewer pupils than average are entitled to free school meals. No pupil has English as an additional language. The headteacher has been in post for less than two years and the deputy head for just over a year.

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 school where good leadership and management are clearly focused upon raising standards and improving the quality of education. The new senior management team have developed good quality systems for checking on the work of the school and use the information from this to put in place strategies to raise standards that are already proving effective. They are supported well by the governors, who have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.

Improvement since the last inspection is good, although much of this has taken place recently following the robust actions taken by the headteacher since her appointment. The improvement taking place is welcomed by parents, who believe that it is due to the hard work and vision of the headteacher and senior team. Many of them commented upon this but this is probably best summed up by one of them who wrote, 'We have watched the school change beyond all recognition with the present head and deputy... there is a feeling of partnership between home and school now'. The change is best seen in the good personal development and well-being of the pupils, who really enjoy school. The school really believes that 'every child matters'. The strong focus on promoting personal development within the good quality curriculum results in pupils' excellent behaviour and outstanding contribution to the community. Pupils are polite and friendly and extremely aware of how they can play their part in the school and local community. A particular strength of the curriculum is the new initiative on environmental issues that helps pupils become aware of the need to live a healthy lifestyle and to consider the impact of their actions on others.

By the end of Year 6, standards pupils reach are above the national average. Although, overall, pupils are achieving well because of improvements in the quality of teaching, this is not consistent throughout the school, with pupils in Reception and Years 3 and 4 not doing as well as others. This is because, although teaching is good overall, in Reception and Years 3 and 4, work is not always set that challenges all of the pupils to do their very best. Additionally, the school has correctly identified that information and communication technology (ICT) is not used well enough to support pupils' learning in many subjects.

The standards and provision in Reception (Foundation Stage) are satisfactory. This is an improvement since the last inspection and partly due to the high level of support currently in place from the headteacher and the Local Authority. Children start school with skill levels above those normally expected and make satisfactory progress; as a result, they start Year 1 with skill levels above those normally found. Nevertheless, the outdoor facilities and equipment for these children remain inadequate, limiting opportunities for pupils' physical and personal development.

The care, guidance and support of pupils are good. The high level of support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities enables them to be fully included in lessons. Although procedures for checking the progress of pupils are good, the quality of marking is inconsistent. Although the high quality marking in Years 1 and 2 and Years 5 and 6 gives pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work, children in Reception and in Years 3 and 4 do not always get enough guidance to enable them to understand how they can do better.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of facilities and equipment for outdoor play in the Foundation Stage.

- In Reception and Years 3 and 4. plan lessons that really challenge pupils to do their very best and improve the quality of the marking of these pupils' work.
- Make more use of ICT to support learning in the teaching of all subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils are achieving well. Standards pupils are achieving are rising steadily, especially in science. Pupils' reading skills are particularly well developed. Progress in Years 1 and 2 has improved a lot since the last inspection and standards attained at the end of Year 2 are now significantly above average. They are also above average overall at the end of Year 6 and very high in reading and mathematics. Overall achievement of pupils in Years 1 and 2 and Years 5 and 6 is good. Achievement in Years 3 and 4 is only satisfactory because teaching is less effective here. The progress of children in the Foundation Stage has improved to satisfactory as a result of the ongoing and intensive support provided. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make the same progress as other pupils because of the good support that they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They really enjoy coming to school and their behaviour is excellent in lessons and, most notably, when playing together, when they are polite and friendly, ensuring all are treated with consideration. Pupils are helpful around the school and are very aware of other pupils and how they might help them to overcome difficulties. This extends to children and people from other walks of life and in different countries. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe. Their road-safety awareness is demonstrated by the way they have played a major part in influencing the local council in their decision to provide a crossing for the main road. Pupils made good use of their mathematical skills to do a statistical analysis of how many pupils crossed the road, and then used their debating skills to put forward a well-balanced argument. They are effectively developing skills that will help them later in life and, as a result, the preparation for their economic well-being is good.

The strong school council is rightly proud of their successes so far and feel that their voice is heard and valued. The pupils understand what makes for a healthy lifestyle and really enjoy their sport. Many pupils now attend after-school sports clubs, although the school has identified the need to increase the attendance rate even further.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The school has worked hard to develop an engaging interactive style of teaching and learning that ensures pupils are encouraged to think for themselves, work in small groups, planning and problem solving. This is why achievement in Years 2 and 6 has improved. Lessons in those years are well planned and provide stimulating and challenging tasks for pupils, but in Reception and Years 3 and 4, too little use is made of assessment information to plan work that really challenges pupils to do their best. Additionally, in Years 3 and 4, assessment information is not used well enough to let parents know how well their children are doing. This is reflected in the concerns some parents expressed that the quality of information given during parents' evenings for

these pupils does not give them enough information to enable them to support their children's learning. Teachers manage behaviour effectively and this, together with the good attitudes of pupils and the greater variety of activities taught, contributes to good progress. The support of teaching assistants is well planned. Teaching assistants are particularly effective supporting pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the high quality work of teaching assistants in the Foundation Stage is one of the reasons why teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage have improved and are now satisfactory.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Recent improvements to the curriculum are providing pupils with good learning opportunities in developing their literacy and numeracy skills and their personal skills effectively. Very good use is made of the school environment to support learning. This is not as well advanced in the Foundation Stage, where inadequate provision for outdoor activities limits children's progress.

The school uses local support and resources well. They have good links with other schools, especially in science and sport. This has contributed to improvements in standards, especially in science. A large number of pupils take part in the good range of additional activities that are on offer, for example, in sport and music. They really enjoy the many visits off-site. The displays around the school are lively and informative and give a real flavour of what pupils have achieved. ICT is not well developed, but is highlighted in the school development plan.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school ensures that this is a safe place for pupils to be. All child protection requirements are fully met. The school quickly responds to concerns from both pupils and parents. Care, support and guidance is particularly strong in the support of the pupils' personal development and this guides them to be safe, healthy and enjoy school. Procedures to assess how well pupils are achieving have improved. Effective marking in Years 1, 2, 5 and 6 helps pupils know exactly what they need to do to improve. The marking of pupils' books in Years 1 and 2 is particularly good. The senior management has already identified that marking and guidance is not effective enough for pupils in Reception and Years 3 and 4 and limits progress in these years.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

A real strength of this school is the way in which the new senior team monitor and evaluate the work of the school. The good quality procedures for checking on how well the school is doing have enabled well-focused initiatives to improve the quality of teaching and learning in a very short time. Working with the Local Authority, the senior team have started to improve the management of the Foundation Stage but it is too early to see the full effect of this. Through the same programme, the way in which subject leaders check on their own areas has improved. This is one of the factors contributing to the improved achievement. The governing body provides very good support, having re-organised the way that it works to improve its own effectiveness in monitoring the work of the school. Budget management is good and supports school development well through well-targeted building projects such as the new library or

through funding the staffing re-organisation to enable the recent appointment of a deputy head to strengthen the management team.

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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?	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

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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	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?	2
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.

Annex A

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	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

19 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Holt Voluntary Controlled Primary School, The Gravel, Holt, Trowbridge BA14 6RA

Thank you for making us welcome and talking with us when we visited your school. You gave us a lot of helpful information that helped us find out what your school is like.

We think that you go to a good school that really helps you learn. Some of the things that we really liked about your school are:

- You are making good progress and by age eleven attain standards above those found in most other schools.
- The teaching is good in Years 1 and 2 and Years 5 and 6, which is why you do so well in your national assessments.
- You are given a lot of interesting and enjoyable things to do that help you learn.
- Your school has improved a lot recently because of the good leadership and management of the headteacher and other senior staff and the good support of the governors.
- Your personal development is good. In fact, your behaviour is excellent and you make an outstanding contribution to the community. Well done.
- The school looks after you well and teaches you how to be safe.

In order to make your school even better we have asked your teachers and governors to:

- Give the children in Reception better facilities for outdoor play.
- Make better use of the information that they have on you in Reception and Years 3 and 4 to plan lessons that really challenge you to do your very best. You can help by telling teachers when you think work isn't hard enough. The marking of your work in these groups is not as good as elsewhere in the school.
- Give you more chance to use ICT to support your learning across all subjects.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Lake Lead inspector