

Holbrook Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 126269 |
| Local Authority | Wiltshire |
| Inspection number | 301252 |
| Inspection dates | 10–11 July 2007 |
| Reporting inspector | Tom Winskill HMI |

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 228 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Margaret Hunt |
| Headteacher | Linda Simmonds |
| Date of previous school inspection | 2 March 2006 |
| School address | Holbrook Lane Trowbridge BA14 0PS |
| Telephone number | 01225 753708 |
| Fax number | 01225 350034 |

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|--------------------------|-----------------|
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is an average sized primary school serving an urban residential area in Trowbridge, Wiltshire. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is lower than the national average as is the percentage of pupils whose first language is not English. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the national average. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The current headteacher has been in post since January 2007. The school will be led by a new headteacher from September 2007. When Holbrook Primary School was inspected in March 2006 it was judged to require special measures.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. Holbrook Primary School is a satisfactory and improving school. It has successfully renewed its focus on raising standards whilst retaining its traditional strengths in care and support for pupils. This greater focus on achievement is recognised and welcomed by parents. The school, with effective support from the local authority, has successfully tackled the key areas identified for improvement identified in the March 2006 inspection. Leadership and management have improved, particularly in developing effective arrangements for monitoring and evaluation. This has enabled school leaders to identify areas of weakness and tackle them effectively. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning has improved as have the curriculum and care, guidance and support. Consequently, standards have improved since the last inspection.

Children enter the school with exceptionally low levels of attainment. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1, although standards here are still below average. There is a particular weakness in writing, and too few pupils achieve the middle and higher levels of attainment in reading and mathematics, even though standards have improved since the last inspection. Standards are now average in Key Stage 2 and pupils are making satisfactory progress from Key Stage 1. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress as do those whose first language is not English as a result of good support.

Teaching and learning are good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory in Years 1 to 6. Although teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve have improved, they are sometimes not high enough. As a result, pupils, especially the more able, are not consistently challenged to do well. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They have good attitudes to learning, but not enough have the skills in writing to enable them to work independently of the teacher and other adult support. Care, guidance and support are now good because the guidance provided for pupils to improve their work is much improved. The support provided for vulnerable pupils is good. The curriculum has improved and is now satisfactory. There are some good examples linking literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) with different subjects in individual classes. However, pupils do not fully apply and develop their basic skills, especially writing, in different subjects as they move through the school.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. In her short tenure, the headteacher's good leadership has helped other school leaders improve their effectiveness. The roles of senior and subject leaders are much clearer. This enables school leaders to operate with increasing confidence and a real sense of purpose. The work of subject leaders is not effectively coordinated across the whole school. The school's self-evaluation is good, particularly in monitoring and tracking pupils' achievement. As a result, the school is acutely aware of its remaining weaknesses and is taking appropriate action to tackle them. The school is well placed to make further improvements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards of writing, especially in Key Stage 1.
- Increase the percentage of pupils gaining middle and higher levels of attainment, particularly in Key Stage 1, by improving the quality of teaching.

- Coordinate the work of subject leaders so that pupils consistently develop their skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT across the curriculum.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

In English, mathematics and science, national test results in 2007 show that standards are broadly average in each subject. The percentage of pupils gaining the higher Level 5 in mathematics, however, was below average. These results represent satisfactory progress from Key Stage 1 in all three subjects. In Key Stage 1 the percentage of pupils gaining Level 2 in reading and mathematics was in line with national averages but was below average for pupils gaining Levels 2b and 3. Too few pupils gained Level 2 in writing. Progress in Key Stage 1, however, is satisfactory as pupils began with low levels of attainment, particularly in writing. Pupils whose first language is not English make good progress, as do those pupils in the infants who are summer born. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress. This is a result of effective support in lessons and a range of targeted support to meet the particular needs of small groups and individuals outside lessons. In the Foundation Stage, children enter with levels of attainment that are particularly low in communication, language and literacy. They reach standards which, although still below average, represent good progress as a result of effective teaching.

There are signs that writing is beginning to improve, but this is not yet fully reflected in the end of key stage test results. Standards in writing in Key Stage 2 are broadly average as a result of some increased opportunities for more extended writing in different subjects. Children in the Foundation Stage and in Year 1 are beginning to benefit from recent improvements in the teaching of reading, spelling and writing. Pupils are beginning to make good progress in lessons. This has not yet been sustained consistently to bring about good progress throughout the year. As a result, achievement is satisfactory.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils get on well with each other and with their teachers and other adults. Some pupils still rely too much on adult support, which limits their ability to make good progress. Pupils behave well in lessons and are keen to learn. In the playground and around school they play energetically but respond well to routines. This ensures an orderly approach to lessons and other activities. They enjoy school, as shown by their enthusiasm in lessons, especially when asked to carry out interesting, imaginative and practical activities. Pupils feel safe in school and are confident that any bullying is dealt with effectively. The school council has a strong voice. For example, pupils from the school council were involved in the appointment process for their new headteacher. Pupils regularly raise funds for a range of charities. The school encourages pupils to have a healthy lifestyle through good provision for physical education and healthy school meals. The pupils' preparation for the next stage of their education is satisfactory as standards in literacy, numeracy, and ICT are average. Attendance is above average.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is well organised and teaching assistants are effectively deployed. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is a particular strength. Planning is increasingly influenced by assessment of what pupils have learned so that activities are better matched to pupils' needs. Where this is not the case, challenge and expectation are not sharp enough and the pace of the lesson is a little slow. This results in satisfactory rather than good progress. Where teaching and learning are good, activities are well matched to the needs of pupils, enabling most to make good progress. In addition, effective techniques, such as open questioning, are used regularly to develop and check pupils' knowledge and understanding. In a good Year 3/4 numeracy lesson, for example, questioning was used effectively to encourage pupils to explain the reasoning behind their solution to a problem. This helped them, and others in the class, to consolidate their knowledge and understanding. An important improvement in teaching is the greater use of imaginative and engaging teaching and learning strategies. For example, in a good Year 5/6 literacy lesson pupils really enjoyed piecing together some cryptic evidence to defend a character in a murder plot and make effective links with recently studied text.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

In Years 1 to 6, planned opportunities for pupils to develop their writing, mathematical and ICT skills across the curriculum have improved. However, they are not yet coordinated so that pupils consistently build up their skills and understanding in each subject as they move up through the school. Work is underway by senior and subject leaders to develop a more exciting and responsive curriculum. This is at the planning stage and has yet to be implemented. In the Foundation Stage, there are already creative approaches to linking activities in different areas of learning. This makes the curriculum interesting and relevant to children and helps them make good progress. The much improved science curriculum has resulted in raising standards and achievement at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. There is a good programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education which makes a good contribution to pupils' personal and social development. A good range of visits and visitors is used to enrich pupils' learning and raise awareness of other faiths and cultures represented in Britain. Many pupils participate in, and benefit from, the variety of sporting and other extra-curricular activities provided.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Detailed arrangements for pastoral care ensure all children are well supported. Any problems are quickly identified and dealt with. Staff work closely with parents and make good use of outside agencies to provide additional support when necessary. The system for checking pupils' progress is thorough and comprehensive. Where underachievement is identified, action is taken to tackle the problem. Test results are used to set individual targets for pupils and these are reviewed regularly to ensure they remain both challenging and realistic. Parental links are good and parents are confident that their children are safe and well cared for. They appreciate being kept informed about the academic targets of their children. Robust procedures are in place to ensure the safety of all working within the school community. Legal safeguarding requirements are met. A variety of effective systems for reward and celebration encourage and motivate

pupils. Relationships are good as staff really get to know their pupils and successfully ensure that they feel happy and secure at school. Arrangements for supporting pupils when they join the school in Reception are well planned and ensure speedy integration.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has quickly developed good relationships with staff. This enables her to be supportive whilst ensuring that the drive to raise standards and improve provision continues. As a result of her calm, strong leadership, the momentum for improvement is being maintained. Effective arrangements are in place to ensure a smooth transfer of responsibilities to the incoming headteacher. Changes in the way senior and senior and middle leaders operate are bringing about further improvements in provision and achievement. The organisation of monitoring and evaluation of pupils' performance, led by senior staff, is highly effective. This underpins many of the improvements taking place. Arrangements for the leadership and management of provision for vulnerable pupils are also good. As a result, the progress and well-being of most vulnerable groups and individuals are tracked closely and support is targeted effectively. Subject leaders are clear about standards and improvement required in their own areas of responsibility. Their work is not effectively coordinated, so that opportunities to link subjects and plan for pupils' progression through the school are underdeveloped. Following a period of uncertainty, governance is now satisfactory. Governors have a good understanding of the general strengths and weaknesses of the school. Their arrangements for self-evaluation are increasingly robust and they have the capacity to hold the school to account.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| <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

| | |
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| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 3 |
| 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 | 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? | 3 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 3 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 3 |
| 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 | 2 |
| The attendance of learners | 2 |
| 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 | 3 |

The quality of provision

| | |
|---|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 3 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 3 |
| 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

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 3 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 3 |
| 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 | 3 |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 3 |
| 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

12 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Holbrook Primary School, Trowbridge BA140PS

I visited your school with another inspector recently. As usual, you made us very welcome. The school has improved a lot. It is now providing you with a satisfactory education. This means I don't need come back again to check on how well you are doing.

When your school was inspected in March 2006 it had quite a few problems. Your headteacher and teachers have successfully tackled most of these problems. Teaching is much better. Your teachers provide you with interesting things to do which you enjoy. One thing which needs to improve is your writing, particularly in Years 1 and 2. I have asked the school to make sure you have plenty of opportunities to show how well you can write in different subjects. I've also asked the school to help you improve your numeracy and ICT skills in different subjects. I am pleased that you are doing much better in science and mathematics now. I have asked your teachers to help you to do even better, especially in Years 1 and 2.

Your behaviour is good. You get on well with your teachers and other adults. The school is able to check how well you are doing and set targets for you. I'm sure you will all do your best to reach your targets.

I have enjoyed my visits to your school. I wish you all well for the future. You can help the school by always working hard and doing your best. I am sure you will want to show your new headteacher how well you can work when he arrives in September.

Yours sincerely Tom Winskill Her Majesty's Inspector