

# Holne Chase Primary School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	110290
<b>Local Authority</b>	Milton Keynes
<b>Inspection number</b>	310250
<b>Inspection dates</b>	16–17 September 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Peter Sudworth

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	282
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	34
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Lisa Lever
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Jim Balmbra
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 November 2004
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Buckingham Road Bletchley MK3 5HP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01908 373640
<b>Fax number</b>	01908 645573

---

<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	16–17 September 2008
<b>Inspection number</b>	310250

---

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Most children when they enter at age four have attended pre-school provision in a variety of settings. All children begin the Reception class at the start of the academic year. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below the national average. The proportions of pupils who have difficulties in learning basic skills and/ or with disabilities and those whose first language is other than English are below those usually found. The percentage of pupils from ethnic minorities is about the same as in most schools.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Holne Chase provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. It is an improving school shown by the overall rise in standards in the past two years at Year 6. Considerable staff turnover, particularly in Key Stage 2, has nevertheless affected Year 6 results over time. Consequently, they have been less consistent than lower down the school. The staffing situation is now more stable and the school is again moving forward. The headteacher has worked hard to appoint staff who will support further development. This is seen in the on-going work to make the curriculum more interesting for the pupils who are responding well to the changing programme of work. The school has made sound progress since the last inspection.

The care that the staff take of the pupils is a particular strength and helps to promote good all round relationships. Parents like and attend the meetings arranged for them to find out about the teaching methods and work content and to discuss their children's progress. They support the home-school partnership. Most parents are very supportive of the school. As one parent puts it, 'Holne Chase is a lovely school and my daughter is very happy there. The teaching staff are very approachable and helpful and the school is friendly.' They speak of improvements made and staff's swift action if there are any concerns.

Pupils' personal development is strongly developed. Pupils enjoy school, reflected in their above average attendance. They demonstrate good attitudes and interest in their work. They make good friends and play harmoniously together. They know how to live safely and healthily. They are soundly prepared for their future schooling. They make a good contribution to the school and wider community through various activities and have a good awareness of others' cultures and lifestyles. They help others practically through raising money for good causes.

The children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and attain well. Rates of progress, however, level out thereafter and pupils make satisfactory progress overall by Year 6. Pupils' speaking, listening and reading skills are strengths. Their skills in mathematics and writing show more variability. A lack of rigour in assessment has not enabled staff to identify pupils' difficulties and needs quickly enough. As a result, pupils have not always been making enough progress, especially boys who generally attain less well than the girls. The school recognises these flaws in progress and is now taking steps to improve attainment further by Year 6. The school has begun to track pupils' progress more effectively over the past year but the systems are not yet fully developed. There is still scope for greater rigour in analysing results and pupils' work to improve rates of learning for individual pupils.

As with the staff, the governing body has also undergone several changes in its composition in recent times, including a new chair. The governing body has rightly identified that it needs more training in order to challenge the school more effectively and to be more searching of the school's practice. Currently, whole-school and subject development planning is not sufficiently precise to assist the school in tracking initiatives and to analyse the success of them. The school demonstrates a satisfactory capacity to make further improvements.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children's knowledge and skills on entry to the EYFS are broadly typical of those found nationally. They make good progress. Most reach, and several exceed, the expectations for the end of the Reception class in all areas of their learning. This has been a consistent pattern for

several years. The children are well prepared for Year 1. Induction arrangements to the Foundation Stage are good with effective parental links, which support the way children quickly settle to school. High expectations for pupils' progress arise from good use of assessments in moving children on in their learning. Teaching is good and the EYFS leader leads the provision very effectively.

The children are well cared for. Nevertheless, there is limited planning between the teachers and the assistants so that teaching assistants are not as well prepared as they might be. This limits their involvement in assessment. The staff choose interesting activities for the children. For example, they went on a listening walk and recorded their experiences in pictures and mark making. Good use is made of the outside as an extension to the classrooms and the activities promote a range of learning. These contribute to good social interaction and children's developing confidence and independence.

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

- Ensure that the pupils, especially boys, make better progress in mathematics and writing.
- Improve the use of tracking and other assessments to accelerate pupils' progress and intervene more robustly when pupils do not make expected gains in learning.
- Improve whole-school and subject development planning so that it is clearer what is to be accomplished, how it will be done and how the impact will be measured.

A small proportion of 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**

Pupils achieve satisfactorily from the end of Reception. Although pupils have consistently reached above average standards at the end of Key Stage 1, standards hover between above average and average at Key Stage 2 in different aspects of work because writing and mathematics results have been too variable. For example, while Year 6 pupils did very well in reading and science in 2008, their weaker performance in writing meant that they missed the challenging English target. They also missed the challenging mathematics target. Girls have often attained more highly than the boys in both key stages and by more than national differences. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are good. Pupils who have difficulties in basic skills make satisfactory progress. The few pupils whose first language is not English make good progress because they integrate well with other pupils. Staff also adopt techniques, for example pairing them up with other children, which helps their progress in English. Staff make good efforts to ensure that they understand the lesson, such as using bilingual texts.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' behaviour is good. As one said, 'We get along well together.' They adopt a positive attitude in lessons and enjoy school. They have a good understanding of right and wrong and sing 'the school rule song' enthusiastically. They appreciate the opportunities in class 'when everyone can express their feelings'. They show a good appreciation of how others live and the difficulties that some world communities face. They respond by raising money for less fortunate people. The school council is developing well and its suggestions have been instrumental in

equipping part of the play area. Pupils practise safe and healthy living and eat lots of fruit and vegetables as part of the school's scheme. They know how to avoid potential difficulty, such as avoiding chat sites on the internet. They develop satisfactory skills to equip them for their future. They participate well in the wide range of extra-curricular activities and develop a good interest in music.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Staff have positive relationships with pupils and manage them well. This ensures that lessons proceed smoothly and encourages pupils' good working attitudes. Teachers share the learning intentions well with pupils in language that they can understand. They also share the success criteria with pupils in broad terms, but they do not often break this down into further detail. Consequently, pupils do not always know if they have included the important elements in their learning and in the presentation of the work. Some good use is made of mathematics in science to record results and to draw conclusions. The overuse of worksheets in some subjects, such as history and geography, limit the use of literacy and the challenge of work for pupils, particularly able pupils and affect writing standards. Satisfactory use is made of teaching assistants, but often not so well during lesson introductions.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The school plans thoughtfully for the mixed-age classes through a two-year cycle of work, although teaching time is currently below minimum recommendations. The curriculum is currently going through a period of renewal to make it more exciting and practical for the pupils. The school is part way through this process and the new approaches are experimental. Nevertheless, such trial themes as 'Pirates' in Year 1/2 are clearly engaging pupils' interest. On this theme, pupils opened a treasure chest to investigate objects and this contributed to their interest in a calculation activity. Music and foreign languages are particular strengths and pupils engage well in these activities. The school gives good attention to physical education and extra-curricular provision is particularly strong in music and sport. Writing and mathematics have been weaker curriculum areas and the school is working to improve them. There have been weaknesses in pupils' skills in data handling in mathematics. An overuse of worksheets limits pupils' opportunities to write in different styles.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

Pastoral care is a strength. The school's good attention to pupils' welfare, and health and safety matters secures a safe and emotionally supportive place of learning. Child protection procedures are known and understood well. Effective monitoring of behaviour and attendance provides for timely intervention and keeps these standards high.

Academic guidance and support are satisfactory. Tracking procedures of pupils' progress are quite new. Past assessment has not been used effectively enough to identify underachieving pupils. Consequently, there is some underachievement in mathematics and writing. While pupils' group targets give them a sense of how they can assess aspects of their current learning for themselves, they are not familiar with the steps they need to take to move to the next National

Curriculum level. Marking varies in quality. It is up to date, but staff do not always ensure that pupils learn from their mistakes. Teachers' written comments, although often praiseworthy of pupils' efforts, do not always identify sufficiently well how pupils can improve their work.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The headteacher sets a good tone, resulting in good relationships with parents. The school recognises the need to take a more rigorous approach to monitoring and evaluating pupils' work and assessing the impact of different school initiatives. Currently the school development initiatives and subject plans are insufficiently precise. Consequently, it is difficult to interpret clearly what the intended outcomes will look like, how they will be achieved and how the impact will be measured.

The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities. Community cohesion is a strong feature. Good local community links are supported well with global links and charitable work. The new chair recognises that the governing body does not yet have sufficient insight to challenge effectively and independently so that it can pronounce on and evaluate the school's needs.

Subject leaders' monitoring has been satisfactory but mainly limited to core subjects. They are beginning to pick up why some areas of work are not as good as they could be. The mathematics leader, for example, has identified a lack of cross-curricular application of mathematics as an area for development. Discussions with pupils have been a good development and so they have gained from the learners' views about the developing curriculum.

**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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**



**Annex A**

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------

### Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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/or disabilities make progress	3

---

<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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?	3

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

30 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Holne Chase Primary School, Bletchley, MK3 5HP

Thank you for your warm welcome when we inspected your school. We enjoyed talking to you and seeing what you do. Your school provides a satisfactory education for you and it is beginning to make further improvements. One of the main strengths of your school is the way that you are developing so well as young people, making good friends with one another and with a concern for others. You clearly enjoy school. We were impressed with your good behaviour and politeness. The staff take very good care of you.

The children in the Reception class do particularly well and make good progress. Elsewhere in the school, you make satisfactory progress but your work in writing and mathematics has generally not been as good as it is in reading and science. We have asked the staff to help you to make better progress in these aspects of work. In particular, the boys have not been reaching the same standards as the girls and so the boys need to do even better.

There are two other areas that the school could improve on. The school's system to track your progress is quite new. In the past, the staff have not used the information they have about your progress well enough to help your future learning. We want the staff to use this kind of information better to help you. We also want the school to plan the school's development more effectively so that the quality of the school's work improves even more.

Thank you once again for your help. We wish you well in your futures and hope that you will continue to work hard so that the ambitions you have for yourselves can come true.

All good wishes.

Yours sincerely

Peter Sudworth

Lead Inspector