

Holtspur School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110398
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	310286
Inspection dates	30 September –1 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Nina Bee

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	198
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	30
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Giles Scott
Headteacher	Mrs Bronwen Zeun
Date of previous school inspection	10 January 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Cherry Tree Road Holtspur Beaconsfield Buckinghamshire HP9 1BH
Telephone number	01494 674325
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Holtspur is smaller than most primary schools. The large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. A number of minority ethnic groups are represented. Few pupils speak English as an additional language. There is additional resource provision for ten pupils who have speech and language difficulties. The proportion of pupils who have difficulty acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills or who have disabilities is below average overall but high in some year groups. Staff turnover, in particular the posts of the headteacher and deputy headteacher, has been high since the previous inspection. The newly appointed headteacher has been in post for just over one year. The school provides for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in a Reception class.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This happy, welcoming school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of all that the school does. They are particularly pleased with how well their children are looked after and cared for whilst at school. Parents are right. The care and pastoral support that pupils receive is good. Attendance figures are above average and reflect pupils' enjoyment of school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are especially enthusiastic about the extra responsibilities they are given, as they get older, such as becoming prefects and looking after younger members of the school community. One pupil said, 'It's also very important that we look after our environment and that is why the school council has introduced recycling'. Others spoke enthusiastically of how they enjoy singing at a local home for senior citizens. Pupils in this school really care about others. They proudly talk of the money they have raised for the school, which they link with in Kenya. Pupils speak maturely and sensitively of how, in some places, people are not as fortunate as they are. Despite their good social skills, their average attainment means they are just satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education.

Children in the EYFS get off to a good start because they are taught well and given activities that are accurately planned to suit their ages and abilities. Teaching is satisfactory in the rest of the school, where classes are generally well managed. However, teachers do not always cater effectively for the wide range of abilities within their classes. This, at times, affects all pupils but particularly those who have difficulty acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills. The academic guidance that pupils receive is good in many respects. Progress is tracked very carefully in reading, writing and mathematics to make sure that pupils are on course to reach their predicted National Curriculum levels. Personal and group targets have recently been introduced but have not yet had time to improve achievement. Although most pupils know their targets, they are not consistently referred to in lessons or when teachers mark pupils' work. Most marking is supportive. In some subjects, in some classes, marking is good and informs pupils what they need to do to improve. However, not all pupils receive such good advice, in particular those who have difficulty acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills.

Standards are average at the ends of Year 2 and Year 6. Achievement is satisfactory. The school acknowledges that, since the last inspection, staffing issues and a lack of secure leadership and management have had a detrimental affect on pupils' achievement. As a result, some pupils have not done as well as they should have. The satisfactory curriculum is effectively enriched by a good range of out of school clubs, many of which promote the need to exercise regularly. Pupils much appreciate these and the fact that they, too, are given the responsibility to organise and run their own clubs if they wish. Parents, staff and governors agree that the headteacher has led and managed the school well through its recent period of turbulence. Since her appointment, achievement has improved, in particular that of girls. Pupils' behaviour and parents' views of the school have also been turned around. However, the monitoring of teaching, in Years 1 to 6, is not rigorous enough to help teachers improve their practice, and raise achievement further. Subject coordinators and the coordinator for special educational needs are not yet effectively monitoring how well pupils are doing in their areas of responsibility.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Induction procedures are thorough and enable children to settle into the routines of school quickly and easily. Parents are pleased about this. As one parent wrote, 'My son declared that every school day of his Reception year was the best day of his life'. From their starting points, achievement is good and the majority of children at least reach the expected levels by the time they start in Year 1. Behaviour is good and most children behave sensibly and develop good personal and social skills. However, a few children very occasionally misbehave or are unkind to each other, and sometimes adults do not address this issue adequately. A well-organised curriculum makes sure that children experience a good balance between activities which they choose themselves and those that are adult-focused. Learning in all aspects of the curriculum is well promoted in both the classroom and the outdoor area. Teaching is good. Children were seen thoroughly enjoying themselves printing using shapes and a number of colours. They then confidently took themselves off to the cloakroom to wash their hands, showing good independence. Others showed good independent learning as they handled books carefully and decided what the stories were about by looking carefully at the pictures. There are good arrangements to ensure health and safety and children's personal development. Children generally work and play in a safe and secure environment. Well-organised records are kept on how well each child is progressing. Their individual needs are catered for well and, as a result, children gain much confidence and develop positive attitudes to learning. The EYFS is well led and managed. Sessions run smoothly because they are well thought out and effectively organised.

What the school should do to improve further

- Monitor and analyse teaching and learning more rigorously, so that practice can be improved and achievement raised.
- Develop the role of the subject coordinators and that of the special needs coordinator so that their monitoring role is focused more sharply on raising achievement.
- Ensure that marking informs all pupils what they need to do to improve, especially, those who have difficulty acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills.

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

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are average at the end of Years 2 and 6. Achievement is satisfactory. In a small minority of classes, progress is good because pupils are taught well. The school has focused on raising the achievement of girls because, in the past, boys have been doing better, especially in Years 3 to 6. School data indicates that the picture is improving and girls in the current Year 6 are on course to do better than in previous years. Pupils who have difficulty acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills and those who have speech and language difficulties achieve as well as their classmates. The few pupils who speak English as an additional language also do as well as the other pupils because adults are well aware of their individual needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils have a good awareness of the importance of living a healthy lifestyle. They talk confidently about the importance of eating breakfast and say, 'If you don't eat breakfast you can't concentrate'. They have learned much about the need to keep themselves safe, and talk maturely about road safety, how important seat belts are when riding in cars, and the dangers of electricity. Pupils know they are safe and secure in school. Behaviour is good. There is little or no bullying and pupils say that it is quickly dealt with if it occurs. Good relationships are developed between pupils and with the adults who help them. Pupils know that if they have a problem an adult will help them. They know they are listened to in school and that their opinions matter.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Relationships in classrooms are generally good and as a result, pupils develop positive attitudes to learning. A wealth of assessment information is collected on individual pupils but this is not always used effectively to plan activities to meet pupils' different needs. Activities are then too hard for some and not challenging enough for others. Interactive white boards are often used well to reinforce, develop and make learning more interesting. In many lessons, talking partners are used successfully to promote speaking and listening and develop good social skills. Occasionally lessons are dull and activities do not motivate or stimulate the pupils. As a result, pupils find it difficult to concentrate properly. Pupils' work shows that not all teachers pay enough attention to improving basic sentence construction and the presentation of their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum promotes personal, social and health education effectively in all subjects and, as a result, pupils are polite, respectful and get on well with each other. Provision for literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) is satisfactory but the curriculum is not always adapted effectively to suit the different needs and abilities of all pupils. Higher attaining pupils and those with particular talents are given additional support to extend their thinking skills. A strength in the curriculum is the specialist music teaching that takes place each week in Key Stage 2. Pupils greatly enjoy these lessons, which effectively promote a love of music. A good range of visits, including a residential one, are arranged which reinforce and develop learning in many subjects. Pupils and parents really appreciate these. Art, music and physical education are promoted particularly well in activities that enrich the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils' safety and well-being are given high importance in this caring school. Health and safety arrangements are good. Well-established links with many agencies support pupils with specific needs. In addition, good links with the local pre-school and local secondary schools enable pupils to transfer into and out of the school easily and confidently. Pupils' progress is tracked

very effectively in reading, writing and mathematics. It ensures that if pupils are not on course to reach their targets, additional support is given to get them back on track. Although much marking is good, pupils are not always given clear information showing them what they need to do to improve and meet their personal and group targets. Marking does not always focus enough on improving presentation.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher, staff and governors are committed to improving the school further. Governors have supported the school well during its troubled times and have clear plans to show how they can help in the coming year. Senior leaders and managers have a satisfactory idea of what is happening within their areas of responsibility but their monitoring role, with regard to how well pupils are doing, is underdeveloped. This has been identified by the school as a priority for development. The school's evaluation of its performance is satisfactory but its overall judgement of the quality of teaching and learning is over-generous. Teaching, although monitored satisfactorily, is not rigorous enough. The quality of teaching varies considerably throughout the school. Over the last year, the school has demonstrated that it has the capacity to improve further, as seen in measures put in place to raise girls' achievement, and to develop a system to track progress so that pupils do not underachieve.

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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?	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 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/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 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

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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

Leadership and management

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 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	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

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

13 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Holtspur School, Buckinghamshire, HP9 1BH

I am writing to let you know what we found out about your school when we recently came to visit you. Thank you for making us so welcome. We especially enjoyed talking to you about how you are getting on. It was nice to see so many of you enjoying music when the experts came in on Wednesday afternoon. We think you behave well and know you enjoy coming to school because so many of you told us.

These are the main things we found out about your school.

- You are all well looked after at school and those who look after you at home agree.
- You learn well in Reception because you are taught well.
- You are lucky to have so many out of school activities to take part in.
- Teachers plan many exciting visits that make learning even more fun.
- You know lots about eating healthily, the need to exercise regularly and how to keep yourselves safe.
- You do many jobs around the school and we are impressed how you raise money for people who are not as fortunate as you are.
- The headteacher and the staff are all keen to make the school even better.
- By the time you leave school you reach standards expected for your age and make satisfactory progress.

We have asked the school to do three things to improve the education you receive.

- Keep a more careful eye on teaching and learning in the classroom, so that staff can show each other how to help you make more progress.
- Make sure that the leaders and managers check that when activities are planned they meet your needs..
- Check that when teachers mark your work, they clearly show you what you need to do to improve and reach your targets.

Keep smiling and working hard.

Yours sincerely

Nina Bee

Lead Inspector