

Holmgate Primary School and Nursery

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112530
Local Authority	DERBYSHIRE LA
Inspection number	310916
Inspection dates	16–17 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Sue Hall

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	213
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Linda Spiteri
Headteacher	Mr Charles Rice
Date of previous school inspection	6 October 2003
School address	Holmgate Road Clay Cross Chesterfield Derbyshire S45 9QD
Telephone number	01246 862270
Fax number	01246 862270

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized school serves a former mining area in North East Derbyshire. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average. The number from minority ethnic groups is low and none speaks English as an additional language. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The school holds the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. There are several good features. The large majority of parents are pleased with what the school provides and as one notes, 'The school is a warm, friendly and very welcoming place to be.' It provides satisfactory value for money and has satisfactory capacity to continue to improve.

Children enter the Foundation Stage with skills that are slightly below expectations. They make satisfactory progress and when they move to Year 1, while achieving some of the targets expected for their age, many have skills in communication language and literacy that are below expectations. In Key Stage 1, pupils make good and sometimes very good progress and many catch up with what those of a similar age achieve nationally. In assessments at the age of seven, standards are at least average and in recent years have been above expectations especially in mathematics. In Key Stage 2, pupils make satisfactory overall progress and this is good in Year 6, leading to standards being largely average when the pupils leave the school. However, until recently all pupils and particularly those of higher ability have not always maintained the rate of progress in Key Stage 2 that they made when they were younger. With a tighter focus on planning, especially in writing, pupils are beginning to make more consistent progress. Overall, all groups of pupils now achieve at least satisfactorily, although standards in English do not yet match those in other subjects.

Pupils' personal development is good. They behave well and have positive attitudes to their work. Many particularly enjoy sport and there are strengths in what the school does to help them develop a healthy lifestyle. Pupils know how to stay safe. There are satisfactory opportunities to be involved in the school and local community. However, with no school council, pupils do not have a direct voice into some aspects of school life and for some; inconsistent academic progress limits their preparation for the future.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. This is strongest in Years 2 and 6 where staff have consistently high expectations of pupils. This has boosted attainment in tests and assessments at the end of both key stages. However, while all staff plan conscientiously to meet the needs of different groups, planning does not always ensure a tight focus to learning and provide the highest level of challenge particularly for the more able. The curriculum is good with a strong programme of activities that enrich learning. The care, guidance and support for pupils is good. Pastoral care is a strength. Staff know and care for the pupils well, recognising quickly when they need support.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The long-serving headteacher is widely respected by parents and staff. The school environment has been improved considerably in recent years with a full refurbishment programme. Members of the senior leadership team provide good teaching and work well as subject leaders to support colleagues. Governance is broadly satisfactory, but not all governors are well enough informed. While the monitoring of the work of the school is satisfactory, evaluations are sometimes over-generous and lack the rigour to identify where improvements are necessary. Inspection findings are generally lower than the school's self-evaluation.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The quality of provision for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory with some good elements. Children enter the school with very different early experiences. Several have limited previous experience of education and are initially very quiet. Staff provide a calm and well ordered environment where children are cared for and supported well. The attractive outdoor area is used well. Children make at least satisfactory overall progress and this is good in their personal, social and emotional development. This enables them to grow in confidence and develop a positive attitude to learning. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. However, staff miss opportunities to help children to develop a wider vocabulary by emphasising key words in and around the classroom. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Staff work well together as a team and are keen to develop provision further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils in Key Stage 2 make consistent progress, especially in English.
- Provide the highest appropriate level of challenge for all pupils and particularly for those who are most able.
- Ensure that the monitoring of the work of the school by senior staff and governors is rigorous and evaluative in identifying areas for improvement.

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

When children start school, their speaking skills are often limited, as is their early reading and writing skills. Data from assessments and inspection observations confirm that pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1, particularly in mathematics and often in writing. Overall standards are generally slightly above average at the age of seven. At the age of 11, standards are now close to national averages but data shows that in recent years, pupils have not maintained the rate of progress they made in Key Stage 1. The school has identified that while pupils make broadly satisfactory overall progress in Key Stage 2, this has often been considerably better in Year 6 than in other years. Staff have now put in place changes especially in planning literacy activities, but some are at an early stage and have not yet begun to show impact. Overall, pupils of all abilities achieve at least satisfactorily although this is not yet consistent enough in English.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy coming to school and their attitudes to work are good. The school makes a positive contribution to their spiritual, moral and social development. Through personal, social and health education and a range of other activities, pupils are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles. They particularly value the many opportunities they have to take part in a wide range of physical and sporting activity. Pupils willingly support the new 'playground pals' scheme and the many fund-raising events, often pupil-initiated, that support good causes in the wider community. Pupils say they feel safe in school and know that there is always an adult they can talk to if they have a problem. Behaviour is generally good, both in classrooms and around the

school. Only when lessons are not interesting or challenging does attention wander and pupils become restless. Pupils are confident that when occasional minor instances of bullying occur, they are dealt with well. Satisfactory standards in basic skills and improving use of new technologies contribute to pupils' sound preparation for their future economic well-being. Attendance is average.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Teaching in Years 2 and 6 is good because the staff expect more and plan challenging activities focused on pupils' differing needs. They also use questioning well not only to check what pupils know but also to promote further thinking. In Year 6, very effective use is made of targets for improvement, which are then followed up in the high quality marking of pupils' work. In other classes staff usually manage pupils well although this is not always effective. This is partly because, while some staff encourage pupils to discuss their ideas with a partner or use resources to record their ideas, this is not consistent and at times pupils are not fully involved in all parts of lessons. The planning of activities is satisfactory although sometimes brief and other than in Years 2 and 6, does not always identify exactly what the pupils are to learn or the specific level of challenge for different groups. Assessment of pupils' progress is satisfactory but at times more use could be made of the information available to challenge the more able.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Within the school's curriculum, a good balance of time is given to each subject. A strong emphasis is placed on developing the core skills of literacy and mathematics and on personal, social and health education so that the curriculum is appropriate to pupils' needs, although some of the recent improvements are still at a relatively early stage. Curriculum enrichment is good. A regular programme of activity days helps forge strong links between different aspects of the curriculum. Good use is made of visits, including residential experiences, to support work in a range of subjects and to boost pupils' confidence and independence. Many visitors to the school further enhance pupils' learning. These include teachers from the partner secondary school, members of the community who provide, for instance, oral histories, and visiting teachers of subjects such as Spanish and Tai Chi. A broad programme of extra-curricular activities is very popular with pupils and participation rates are high.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral care and support are strengths, contributing to pupils' confidence and good personal development. Parents believe that their children are safe and well cared-for. Whilst provision for guiding pupils' spiritual and moral development is good overall, some assembly arrangements during the inspection were informal and not used effectively to enhance aspects of pupils' personal development. Procedures for safeguarding pupils, for child protection, health and safety and risk assessments are secure. Pupils are given good guidance on how well they are doing and how they can improve. Recent developments to the systems being used to track and monitor pupils' progress are enabling teachers to identify needs and this is already helping

raise standards, particularly in Years 2 and 6. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are helped to make sound progress towards the targets set for them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher is very committed to the school, the children and their families. He has served the community well and clearly encourages the school to keep moving forward. Senior staff now have a good grasp of standards and are beginning to check and track the progress made more systematically. However, the school has not always tackled the issue of inconsistent progress well enough, particularly in English at Key Stage 2. Senior staff monitor the quality of teaching and learning in areas for which they hold responsibility. However, evaluations are often over-generous and have not always ensured that subsequent planning and teaching provides a high enough level of challenge. Governance is broadly satisfactory. Governors are supportive of the school but do not have a good enough focus on achievement or grasp of the information available to them to measure the value the school adds to pupils' learning.

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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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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	3

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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?	3
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?	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 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

18 October 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Holmgate Primary School, Chesterfield, S45 9QD

Thank you very much for the way you looked after and helped us when we visited your school. You told us that you enjoy school and that staff take good care of you when you need a bit of help.

These are some of the best things about your school:

- You really enjoy all the sporting activities the staff organise for you and know how to lead a healthy life.
- You behave well and get on together well.
- There are a lot of exciting activities that enrich your learning.
- Staff look after you and make sure you are safe and happy.
- In Years 2 and 6, you make good progress.

These are areas that we think could be improved:

- We would like those of you in Key Stage 2 need to make more progress in English.
- The work you do could be a bit harder especially for those of you who find learning easy.
- The headteacher, staff and the governors need to check more carefully to see what else needs to be improved.

To help, you could all try even harder in lessons. We would like to wish you every success in your future education and continue to enjoy your sport.

Yours sincerely

Sue Hall

Lead inspector