

# Holmesdale Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112680
<b>Local Authority</b>	DERBYSHIRE LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	310980
<b>Inspection date</b>	11 October 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Speakman

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4-7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	114
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Richard Spooner
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Gillie Oldfield
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 May 2003
<b>School address</b>	The Avenue Dronfield Derbyshire S18 2LR
<b>Telephone number</b>	01246 413284
<b>Fax number</b>	01246 413284

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and focused mainly on the following issues:

- pupils' achievement in different stages of the school;
- the impact of personal, social and health education and the thematic approach to learning on pupils' personal development;
- how teachers and school leaders use assessment data to make sure all pupils achieve as best they can;
- the impact of new leadership and management on the school's performance.

Evidence was gathered from observations of lessons and pupils' work, discussions with the headteacher, senior staff, governors and pupils, the parent questionnaires and school self-evaluation documents.

## Description of the school

This small school primarily serves pupils from the local area, but a number of parents choose to bring their children from further a field for support for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or because of the school's good reputation. The vast majority of pupils are from White British families, but a few represent a small number of minority ethnic backgrounds and have English as an additional language. Attainment on entry to Reception is below that typical for children of this age. A smaller than usual number has learning difficulties and/or disabilities, but an above average percentage has a statement of special educational need. The proportion claiming a free school meal is below average. The school has earned a number of external awards, mainly relating to its approach to promoting healthy lifestyles, its work on supporting environmental issues and the creative quality of its curriculum. A new headteacher joined the school in January 2007.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

The headteacher joined the school and set her self the challenge of 'making a very good school even better'. This has happened in a very short time and the school is now outstanding and provides a high quality education in which pupil's achievement is excellent. The headteacher, working closely with staff and governors has made significant improvements in a short time. There is a refreshed vision for the future development of the school. The learning environment has been improved to support the school's focus on developing pupils as independent learners. The improved curriculum is even more varied, interesting and meaningful through excellent links between subjects and use of the environment as a highly effective learning resource.

The excellent quality of learning opportunities, in terms of the planned curriculum and the provision for high quality enrichment, supports both pupils' personal development and academic achievement extremely well. Teachers are very careful to ensure that pupils build skills and knowledge progressively as they move through the school. The whole school follows the same topic or theme at the same time, but teachers quite clearly identify the different learning outcomes for pupils of different ages and abilities. Limited information and communication technology (ICT) resources inhibit opportunities for pupils to use computers and for teachers to illustrate teaching points.

Pupils are adamant that they really enjoy coming to school and their attendance is above average. Their enthusiastic approach in lessons and their highly positive attitudes to learning reflect and confirm this. They believe that lessons are interesting, teachers are nice to them and pupils behave themselves. They say the school is a calm and safe place. All adults show extremely high levels of care for pupils' health, safety and welfare and robust procedures are in place to ensure this. Pupils contribute very well by becoming playground monitors or looking after children who visit the 'friendship stop'. The ECO committee helps the school take a considerate approach to the environment, instilling in pupils positive 'global' views. Consequently, their personal development including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.

Because the school promotes independence from a very early age, pupils soon learn to think for themselves. In lessons, they show initiative when working alone or with other pupils in groups. Outside of lessons, they take part in many extremely valuable learning experiences. For example, they cultivate salads and vegetables in the school gardens, harvest and cook them to prepare meals they sell to parents as their guests. The pupils call this 'our restaurant'. They cook biscuits and small cakes for sale in the school tuck shop, having costed and priced them so that they do not make a financial loss. As well as preparing them extremely well for their futures, these experiences give them a deep understanding of how to eat healthily. This helps them make wise choices about what they eat. They take part enthusiastically in the wide range of opportunities to stay physically fit.

The quality of teaching and learning is excellent and makes sure pupils at all ages and levels of attainment, achieve as well as they can. From a below average start pupils achieve extremely well and by the end of Year 2, standards are above average. There has been a steady trend of improvement in recent years and in 2006, attainment was well above average. In 2007, it fell slightly, but was still above average in reading, writing and in mathematics. Rigorous and accurate school tracking data confirms the progress these pupils made was just as outstanding as in other years.

Teachers use assessment information very well to meet the individual learning needs of all pupils in mixed-age classes. The school has very rigorous assessment data, which tracks each individual's progress from the moment they start school. Staff monitor progress very carefully to ensure that all pupils are on course to meet the challenging academic targets set for them and achieve extremely well. Pupils who are not making the required progress are identified and effective support is provided. Those who are progressing better than expected, have their learning extended. Highly skilled teaching assistants support both aspects of this work very well and contribute significantly to pupils' excellent achievement. Consequently, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make just as outstanding progress as other pupils. Those few pupils with English as an additional language are fully included in activities that help them to build a good vocabulary very quickly enabling them to communicate effectively, and make excellent academic and personal progress.

Staff work extremely well together and the headteacher has very quickly established strong and highly effective teamwork, with a shared vision of excellence. The school's self-evaluation is highly effective in identifying where the school needs to improve and what the next steps are to achieve even further improvement. Targets are very challenging: teachers and governors set challenging targets for pupils, staff are challenged in their annual performance management and the headteacher has very high expectations of her self for achieving school improvement. This combination contributes significantly to the school's success. In view of the level of sustained excellent achievement, the improvement made in the short time since the headteacher joined the school and the challenging plans for further development, the school has an excellent capacity to secure further improvement.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

Provision in the Foundation Stage is excellent and pupils make rapid progress, achieving extremely well in each of the areas of learning. As soon as they start, pupils are encouraged to be independent learners and their personal, social and emotional development is rapid. They settle in very quickly because of the high level of support and care shown for them. The curriculum provides an excellent range of teacher led activities and others that pupils can choose for themselves, in zoned areas in the classrooms, such as the writing, role-play or construction areas. Teachers and teaching assistants make sure that each pupil experiences a balanced curriculum each day through careful monitoring and guidance. Reception pupils are taught alongside Year 1 so benefit from directly experiencing the high expectations of the older ones. Because of all this pupils in Reception show high levels of enjoyment and parents report that they are delighted with the excellent start to education their children experience at Holmesdale Infants School.

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

- Make sure that all staff and pupils benefit fully from the new information and communication technology resources to enrich both teaching and learning further.

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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?	1
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	1

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

<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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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 October 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Holmesdale Infant School, Dronfield, S18 2LR

I really enjoyed the short time I spent in your school and I was very impressed by what I saw. I liked visiting your classes, meeting you and your teachers and most of all the chances I had to talk to you about your school. The result is that you have an excellent school.

All the adults working with you, and especially your headteacher and deputy head, work very hard to provide you with a very good education. You really play your part by behaving extremely well, taking these opportunities very seriously and trying really hard to do your best. I was very impressed that you are as sensible as you are in the way in which you go about learning, being friends with others, caring about the environment and the way in which you include parents in your school activities. This means that you all make excellent progress both in your lessons and in becoming sensible young people, ready to go on to the next school and into the future. It is clear that you all get on well together and look after each other.

There is very little that needs improving that your teachers have not already recognised and done something about. This is one of the main reasons your school is as good as it is. I am asking the staff and governors to make sure that you become more familiar with using computers and that your teachers use them well to make teaching and learning even more exciting

I wish you all the best in the future.

David Speakman

Lead inspector