

# Holywell Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118549
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	312986
<b>Inspection date</b>	21 May 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Helen Hutchings

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>	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	200
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Deborah Martin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lynne Pearson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 March 2005
<b>School address</b>	Forge Lane Upchurch Sittingbourne ME9 7AE
<b>Telephone number</b>	01634 388416
<b>Fax number</b>	01634 363235

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

standards and pupils' achievements

the effectiveness of the school's data tracking and target-setting systems

the impact of leadership and management in contributing to school improvement.

Evidence was gathered from visits to lessons, analysis of the school's own and nationally published data, pupils' work, teachers' planning and the views of parents, and discussions with pupils, staff and the chair of the governing body. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

This is an average sized school, serving the local semi-rural community. A growing number of pupils come from beyond the immediate area. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. There have been significant changes in leadership since the last inspection. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have joined the school within the last two academic years. The school has Eco School and Activemark awards.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school where pupils are well cared for, guided and supported. The school places itself at the centre of the local community and pupils' well-being is at the heart of its work. This provides a solid foundation for academic achievement. Parents and carers value the school's efforts and the impact these have on their children, making comments such as, 'Holywell offers a safe and caring environment; staff are highly dedicated' and how children 'have developed, matured and learnt so much since joining the school'.

From levels slightly below those expected, children get off to a good start in the Reception class. Good teaching and learning ensure that the firm basis established for learning in Reception is built on effectively throughout the school. Pupils achieve standards in line with national averages in the Year 2 assessments. At this stage, pupils' writing skills are not as high as their reading and numeracy skills. As pupils continue through the school, they gain momentum in their learning and achieve well. Their writing skills improve and are similar to those in reading and mathematics by Year 6. The results in the Year 6 tests are generally just above national averages, although there is some variation from year to year reflecting the different capabilities and needs of each group. For example, standards in the tests fell to below average in 2007 but the school's tracking data show that standards are now above average again. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well in relation to their earlier attainment because of the good provision made for them. Science results have not been quite as high as those in English and mathematics because pupils did not have enough opportunities for practical and investigative work, but this has been addressed and attainment in science is now in line with other subjects.

The school's emphasis on removing barriers to pupils' learning and focusing on their well-being results in good personal development. Pupils' behaviour is excellent, helping them to enjoy school and their work a great deal. This is shown, for example, in the pride pupils take in presenting their work and in above average attendance. Pupils' enjoyment of learning is stimulated by the way teachers plan activities which engage pupils. The successful use of specialist teaching in music, sport and modern foreign languages offers variety for pupils across the week. The good curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils feel safe and say that any inconsiderate behaviour or bullying are dealt with quickly and effectively. They know exactly what to do if anything untoward occurs, for example when using the Internet. Pupils say that their friendships and the kindness shown by fellow pupils and adults are among the most important things about school. The programme of extra-curricular activities provides good opportunities for pupils to pursue a wide range of interests appropriate to their ages. These make a significant contribution to pupils' good understanding of the importance of keeping fit and healthy. In addition, they help pupils to develop good teamwork skills which, together with their good academic achievement, equip them well for secondary school and their future lives.

Many parents comment on the 'several changes for the better' since the headteacher took up her post. A sense of teamwork pervades the school and leadership and management are good. Staff are fully consulted and enthusiastic about driving change forward to bring about improvement in pupils' achievements. Subject leaders are keen and provide good support for their colleagues by monitoring and evaluating their subjects well. The school has good capacity for further improvement. It has focused effectively on making changes, which will have the greatest impact on pupils' achievements. The curriculum has been planned more rigorously this year to make sure that pupils' skills are developed consistently through the school, for example

by extending the phonics and 'Sounds Write' programmes introduced in the Reception class into Years 1 to 3. Further development is currently taking place to give pupils better opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. The new system to track pupils' progress is giving teachers better information, which they are using well to match work closely to pupils' needs and to provide special programmes to boost pupils' progress when this has slowed. Teachers' sharper understanding of the rates at which pupils are making progress is giving them confidence to set even more challenging targets for individuals, but this is not consistent across the school. Consequently, some pupils are not clear enough about the quality of their work or exactly what they have to do next to improve further. Teachers give good encouragement for pupils' efforts and achievements in their marking but do not always identify how work could be better or give time for pupils to correct mistakes or clear up misunderstandings before moving on to the next piece of work.

Pupils benefit from the school's outward looking approach, for example in involving local residents in computer training or in developing the school's Disability Equality Scheme. The school's 'soft federation' with other local schools is used well to give pupils additional opportunities, such as sports coaching and extra classes for pupils identified as gifted or talented, and these help pupils to develop independence. This is also seen in the attention given to ensuring a smooth transition for pupils at every stage of their education. The governing body supports the school well. It is knowledgeable about its work and uses this to inform its strategic decision making and improve provision, such as the planned new accommodation for younger children. This is a school where pupils' views are listened to, giving them confidence to express their views and developing their skills by taking initiative for themselves. Pupils are keen to take on responsibility, for example as librarians or school councillors, and are rightly proud of the contribution they make to their school community and in representing the school further afield, such as in competitions or on the cluster student council. They understand the responsibilities of living in a democracy, for example through the elections to the school council and the role played by some senior pupils attending the district school council.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children make good progress in their learning and develop positive attitudes to school in the Reception class. Their starting points vary considerably from year to year. Staff assess children's needs carefully at an early stage and use the information well to plan activities which give children effective opportunities to develop their skills. A current focus to improve children's speaking and listening skills is proving successful. There is a good balance of teacher-led and child-initiated activities, including role play and early writing games. Children make particularly good progress in their social and emotional development. Most children reach the nationally expected levels across all the areas of their learning by the end of Reception, although some children join Year 1 with lower than average levels in literacy and numeracy. The school values a close liaison with parents and involves them well in a comprehensive induction programme before children start school. As a result, children quickly benefit from a well-balanced curriculum. The imminent changes to be made to accommodation for this class and for Year 1 pupils will address the current limitations in outdoor access in all weather, and should enhance opportunities for children's physical and creative development.

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

- Make the marking of pupils' work and the setting of their targets more consistent so that pupils have a clearer idea of how to improve their work.
- Implement the plan to develop the curriculum and provide more opportunities for pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects.

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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?	2
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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	2

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
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

<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>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

22 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Holywell Primary School, Sittingbourne, ME9 7AE

- Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when I visited your school recently. I enjoyed talking to you and hearing about the things that happen in Holywell. You know that you get a good education and these are just some of the school's strengths.
- Children get off to a good start in the Reception class.
- You enjoy good relationships with one another and with adults and this makes you feel comfortable and safe in school.
- Your behaviour is excellent.
- You know that adults listen to you and you know exactly what to do if you have a problem.
- You enjoy the activities your teachers plan for you and work hard to do well.
- Many of you help others and the school to run smoothly by taking on a variety of responsibilities.
- You know how to stay fit and healthy and are lucky to have special coaching for sport.
- I agree with your teachers about the most important things that need to be done to help you make even faster progress and reach higher standards.
- They should make sure that when they mark your work they tell you how to improve it further, and that you all have personal targets.
- They should give you more opportunities to practise your literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects such as history and geography.

You can help by continuing to do your best and not giving up when the work is hard.

Please thank your parents or carers for returning the questionnaires. It was helpful to hear what they think about the school. I wish everyone at Holywell all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Helen Hutchings Lead inspector