

# Holbrook Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	125965
<b>Local Authority</b>	West Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	315373
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 June 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Michael Burghart

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	409
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sean Hannan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Deborah Moss
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 June 2004
<b>School address</b>	Holbrook School Lane Horsham RH12 5PP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01403 272500
<b>Fax number</b>	01403 272600

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a large primary school. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Children's attainment on entry to Reception is broadly what is expected of this age group. The school was managed by an acting headteacher for the two years prior to the current headteacher's appointment in September 2007.

## 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 happy pupils do well to reach standards that, apart from in writing, are above average. It has some outstanding features. Unsurprisingly, it is popular with parents as well as pupils. 'My son absolutely adores school – that says it all!' one parent wrote and this reflects the overwhelming support. Outstanding highlights include pupils' excellent personal development and behaviour, extremely effective pastoral and physical care and excellent relationships. Pupils and staff get on extremely well together. Social development is a particular strength of the school. Young children are given a good start in Reception where provision is effective in helping them to make good progress. By the end of Foundation Stage, children achieve, and many exceed, the goals expected of the age group with the exception of some aspects of communication, language and literacy. The school is well run. Its educational direction is securely established. Incisive self-evaluation ensures that the school knows its strengths and relative weaknesses. The school makes excellent use of this awareness as a basis for its very good quality school development planning. As a result, Holbrook is improving fast. With planning and procedures already in place, high expectations and a robust commitment to continual improvements, the school has a good capacity for further development. Improvements are being driven by the headteacher's outstanding leadership and management and by effective teamwork. The decline in standards in 2007, particularly in mathematics, has been addressed and middle ability pupils, who previously underachieved, now make the same usually good progress as other pupils. Those with learning difficulties and the few with disabilities are well supported and helped to do their best. Pupils of all abilities are well prepared for the future. Teaching is good, some aspects are outstanding, and this makes sure that pupils' learning is successful. The curriculum on offer is well planned, stimulating and relevant to pupils' needs and is under constant review. It is augmented by an excellent range of well attended extra-curricular activities.

One of the most influential factors in recent improvements is the development of an assessment and tracking process which makes it possible for staff to gauge progress. So far, this has been most effective in setting targets, both for individual pupils and for the school in general, and has raised standards in reading and mathematics. The school continues to work on embedding its approaches to assessment for learning where pupils themselves use success criteria to evaluate their own progress and compare their judgements with teachers' views. The process is now being focused on writing where standards are average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory rather than good. The use of assessment and monitoring in general in other subjects is less well developed and middle managers do not have as clear a picture of how well pupils are performing as in English and mathematics.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

'We couldn't have asked for a better start for our child,' was a typical comment from parents about the Foundation Stage. Children clearly enjoy the many opportunities to learn through play as well as some more formal activities. Provision is good. There are some outstanding elements. Staff take excellent care of children. There are some limitations with regard to outdoor space, but the area is well resourced and used effectively to support learning. The Reception is well led and managed. Children enter school with skills that are broadly in line with those expected for their age overall. There are weaknesses when children start school in

communication, language and literacy, particularly affecting boys. Outstanding relationships, good teaching and the bright and interesting learning environment are really successful in helping children settle in well and make good progress. Sensitive support is given to children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities so that they too make good progress. Standards are broadly average by the time children enter Year 1 with many children exceeding the goals expected of this age group. Some elements of weaker language skills persist, despite having been improved by good teaching, and these are areas for development already known to the school. Personal, social and emotional development is a strength with children learning to be considerate, share and take turns. Behaviour and children's attitudes are outstanding. There is a good range of opportunities to encourage independence, for example children starting each day with activities they choose for themselves.

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

- 
- Raise standards and improve progress rates in writing, ensuring that pupils achieve as well as they do in reading and mathematics.
- Strengthen the monitoring roles of middle managers, especially in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Embed procedures to make more use of assessment and target setting across the curriculum, building on good practice already established in literacy and numeracy.

### **Achievement and standards**

#### **Grade: 2**

Although there was a decline in 2007, due to the underachievement of some middle ability pupils, standards have been consistently at least average, and frequently above average, over a period of years. Inspection evidence and school data indicate that the decline has been overcome this year and that pupils of all abilities are making good progress overall. Standards are currently above average in reading and mathematics at the end of Year 2 and in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6. There are strengths in progress rates in reading, where pupils do consistently well and, in a big improvement this year, in mathematics. Standards in writing are average throughout the school with pupils' achievement being satisfactory rather than good. Pupils do less well in writing than in other aspects of literacy, partly because of lower starting points in terms of communication and language skills and partly because the school has maintained a long standing successful focus on reading. Plans are in hand to improve performance in writing, but it is as yet too soon to see the full impact on pupils' progress.

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

#### **Grade: 1**

Outstanding personal development makes an important contribution to learning at this school. Pupils greatly enjoy school and have excellent attitudes to their work. These positives are reflected in outstanding attendance. Pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is outstanding. Excellent relationships and well established social skills underpin the school's very positive ethos. Consideration and courtesy are the orders of the day. Behaviour is exemplary. Pupils are friendly, polite and show a great deal of respect for the feelings and beliefs of other people. They have a good understanding of healthy eating and enjoy the regular opportunities they have to take exercise. Pupils are particularly enthusiastic about the new playground activities, which the school council has initiated in response to their requests. Older pupils willingly take on responsibilities within this caring community, such as playground helpers and

house captains. Pupils feel very safe in school and even the youngest children know that there is always an adult they can turn to with worries or concerns. Pupils work constructively with each other and are confident, active learners who are very well prepared for their future lives.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching is effective because teachers know their pupils well and provide work that usually matches their individual needs and capabilities. There are some outstanding elements, most notably (but not exclusively) in Year 2 and Year 6 teaching. Relationships are excellent and, as a result, pupils behave extremely well and are not afraid to make mistakes and learn from them. Teachers use questioning very effectively, as seen for example in a Year 5 reading activity in order to draw out from pupils the characteristics of figurative writing. Planning is detailed and underpinned by teachers' good subject knowledge. Pupils learn effectively as a result of the wide range of styles and techniques used by teachers. Staff use interactive whiteboards well to motivate pupils and retain their interest. In a small minority of lessons, the pace of learning is too slow, with pupils insufficiently challenged, but the school is aware of this and improvements are in hand.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit from good support and frequently being taught in small groups. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning. In a recent initiative, pupils are being introduced to ways of gauging their own performance through targets and success criteria. This has not been applied to all subject areas.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The school provides an interesting and stimulating curriculum. All required subjects are covered, with extension activities such as French supported by a local secondary school. Pupils are excited by, and clearly enjoy, the excellent range of out of class activities. Good provision for literacy and numeracy has positive effects on pupils' learning. The curriculum is planned effectively for the needs of all pupils. In a new initiative, the school is seeking to develop links between subjects and teach skills in a relevant way through various topics. Excellent use is made of visits and visitors. Events such as 'Greek day', a residential visit, and a visit from an archaeologist bring the curriculum to life. Provision for personal, social and health education makes a good contribution to pupils' understanding of how to stay safe and keep fit. Although its development is planned for, information and communication technology is currently underused to support other areas of the curriculum.

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

#### **Grade: 2**

Pastoral and physical care are outstanding. All staff go out of their way to enhance pupils' self-esteem and promote personal development. Pupils' health and well-being are securely safeguarded by robust systems and child protection procedures meet government requirements. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified early and are given effective support. Academic guidance is good, and improving, with better assessment and tracking. This is most obviously the case in English and mathematics. Developing this system to clarify pupils' own personal learning targets is still at an early stage in other subjects. There are examples of

good marking which provide pupils with effective guidance. This is not used consistently to show pupils how to improve their work.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Overall leadership and management are good. These are driven by the headteacher whose leadership and management are outstanding. She is well supported by senior teachers, governors and staff who make a strong team. As a result, the school has clear educational direction based on accurate self-evaluation and there is a growing use of data to set challenging targets. Development planning takes into account contributions from teachers, governors, parents and pupils and expectations are high. There are strengths in the way the Foundation Stage, literacy and numeracy are managed. These present good models of monitoring and the use of data for development in other curriculum areas that are currently not so effectively led. In science, for example, leaders do not have a clear enough picture of how well pupils are doing or how improvements can be made. A recent initiative to create teams to support subject and phase coordinators and involve all teachers in strategic planning and evaluation is proving effective, but has yet to have full impact.

Governance is good. Governors are supportive and suitably informed. They are well organised and show that they are prepared to challenge where necessary as critical friends. Their monitoring has improved since the school found itself with a substantial financial deficit last year. Although it will take time to balance the budget, arrangements are in hand.

The school and the headteacher, in particular, have the overwhelming confidence of parents who have nothing but praise for the way the school is run and has been developed over the past year. The newly formed 'Parents Forum' is very popular and well supported. Links with parents are outstanding.

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## 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?	1
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
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	1
The behaviour of learners	1
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	1

### 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

13 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Holbrook Primary School, Horsham, RH12 5PP

It was a treat to visit your school. We were very impressed by your excellent behaviour and the way you are growing into sensible young people. A special thank you to all the children who talked to us about what goes on. It was good to hear how happy you are at school and that you enjoy your work.

We found that Holbrook is a good school where improvements are always being made.

Here are some of the highlights.

- You make good progress and reach standards above those in most schools.
- You get off to a good start in Reception.
- You are well taught; teachers plan work for you which is interesting.
- Staff take excellent care of you and see that you are safe.
- The headteacher's outstanding leadership and management make sure the school is well run; staff make a good team.

In order to make even more improvements the school should:

- raise standards in writing, helping you to make even better progress
- improve the way subject coordinators find out what is happening in their subjects
- make more use of the kind of targets you have in English and maths to help you make progress in other subjects.

You can help by continuing to work hard.

Best wishes for the future.

Mike Burghart Lead inspector