

# Holly Trees Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	132142
<b>Local Authority</b>	ESSEX LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	315936
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 January 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Norma Ball

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	331
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Sarah Hughes
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr David Garland
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 February 2003
<b>School address</b>	Vaughan Williams Way Warley Brentwood Essex CM14 5RY
<b>Telephone number</b>	01277212296
<b>Fax number</b>	01277213838

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a larger than average primary school. The school is located in a prosperous residential area but also draws pupils from less advantaged areas. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly average. About one fifth of all pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language and may require support in learning to speak English when they arrive at the school is also average. A significant number of pupils join or leave the school at different times. The school holds the Investors in People and Inclusion Quality Mark.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Holly Trees is a good school that provides a safe and very supportive environment in which pupils flourish. The special qualities of each pupil are recognised and valued. Most parents and pupils hold the school in high regard and parents are pleased that their children enjoy learning. One parent said, 'This is a good school with committed teachers who care about their pupils' and a pupil described it as 'a happy school where you learn a lot'. Achievement is good and standards are improving. At the end of Year 6, standards in English are above the national average and in mathematics and science, they are in line with the national picture. The school is now working to ensure that attainment in mathematics and science is improved by closer monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment in these subjects. Pupils make good progress in light of the below average levels they have on entry. Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage because of the good teaching, care and support they get from adults. Although there are a good range of activities planned in class, opportunities are missed in developing a full range of teacher-led and child-initiated activities in the outside play area.

Throughout the school, pupils' personal development is extremely good. Pupils behave very well and show great enjoyment in learning because they are happy in school and feel valued. They are clear on how to be safe and recognise that what they do affects others. Pupils have an outstanding understanding of healthy living and regularly help catering staff plan healthy meals, grow vegetables in the grounds and join in games and sports clubs enthusiastically. Their personal development is considerably extended by the excellent contribution that they make to the local community in a range of social, sporting, charitable and cultural events. Throughout the school pupils do equally well regardless of their background or ability and they are well equipped for the next stage in their education. All pupils receive an extremely high level of support and guidance, including the many pupils who enter the school throughout the year. The good quality teaching pupils receive is reflected in the enthusiastic approach most pupils have to learning. Teaching support assistants are used well to help pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those whose first language is not English. The work pupils do is carefully assessed and their progress monitored. This information is used well to keep pupils informed about how well they are doing and give them targets to help them improve their work.

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and management sharing with all staff a clear vision for the school which is leading to year-on-year improvement. The recent innovation in creating management teams promotes amongst all staff a shared responsibility for the monitoring and development of areas of the school's work. Management teams are still developing and exploring their roles and range of responsibilities. There is a clear focus on teaching and learning and providing a supportive learning environment in which the needs of all pupils are known and met effectively, which results in their growth in confidence. A culture of self-reflection and careful monitoring has led to improvement in pupils' progress. Areas for improvement identified in the last report have been successfully addressed. Governors know the school well, give it good support and are effective critical friends. The school recognises there is still more work to be done and has a good capacity to improve further.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children's learning and development are good in relation to their starting points. Due to the priority staff place on developing personal, social and emotional skills, children make particularly

good progress in these areas. This helps them to behave well and enjoy all areas of learning. Children settle well because routines are clear and they respond enthusiastically to the expectations of staff. They work well together, learn how to take turns and listen to others when they are speaking. Staff are also successful in developing children's learning in other areas so that by the time they enter Year 1, most are securely working within the expected early learning goals. New strategies have been introduced to help develop children's weaker areas of language, literacy and communication. Staff provide a good range of teacher-focussed activities and times when children can play without close direction. There are, however, insufficient opportunities and resources for children to work outside across all areas of learning.

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

- Ensure the effectiveness of the newly reorganised leadership teams to promote improved standards through rigorous monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment, particularly in mathematics and science in Years 3 to 6.
- Improve planning and resources in the Foundation Stage to extend the range of learning experiences for children outside.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils make good progress during their time in school and this includes pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those from minority ethnic backgrounds. The majority of pupils attain standards that are a little below average by the time they enter Year 1. At the end of Year 2 standards have improved and are broadly average. Pupils continue to make good progress through the junior classes and at the end of Year 6 standards are average when compared to those nationally in mathematics and science. As a result of the careful focus on improving writing, standards attained in English are above average. Overall, boys' attainment is lower than that of girls and the school is focusing with care on developing more confidence amongst boys to help them improve their work. The impact of this initiative is not yet known but early signs are positive. Careful support is provided for pupils who join the school after Reception to help them achieve as well as other pupils. Progress in lessons was judged to be good during the inspection.

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

### **Grade: 1**

The school is an extremely harmonious community. Relationships at every level are very positive. Pupils behave extremely sensibly and safely because they learn to respect and care for each other well. Any small instances of excitable behaviour are very well managed. Parents are especially pleased their children like school and are encouraged to develop very good personal and social skills. One parent said, "My children love going to school and it is a pure pleasure to see". There is a very strong emphasis on keeping healthy with good opportunities for physical activity. Responsibilities are accepted with pride and pupils undertake important roles such as school councillors with dignity. All aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. They have a good understanding of their own culture, and enjoy learning about other faiths and life styles around the world. The vast majority of pupils attend school punctually and regularly and attendance is well monitored. Overall attendance is good.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teachers' good relationships with pupils and their use of a range of effective teaching methods promote enjoyment and good learning. Planning is generally good. Through careful assessment of pupils' abilities and progress, teachers have a clear understanding of what they want pupils to learn and share this with them. Consequently, pupils are clear about what they are doing and learning. This helps them to gain confidence to attempt new activities and also ask for help if necessary. Teaching assistants give good support to individuals or groups of pupils that enhances their progress but in some lessons insufficient use is made of the adult expertise during whole class sessions. Strong features of the good teaching also include opportunities for pupils to discuss in pairs or groups. This develops their speaking and listening skills well and ensures that they are all fully involved. Pupils' work is regularly marked; the quality and effectiveness of this is variable but is improving.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is well planned, has good coverage of all subjects and so provides pupils with a good range of interesting work. The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is good because mobile sets of laptops are used very effectively in all classes to provide pupils with good opportunities to carry out research as well as develop their ICT skills. Links between subjects are well developed in literacy but need to be expanded in other subject areas, particularly in mathematics and science. Planning ensures that blocks of work lead towards special events adding greatly to the interest and motivation pupils feel. A good example of this was the history presentation for parents by Year 6 on their work on Britain since 1930 which took place during the inspection. Personal, social and health education has a high profile in the school and its effectiveness can be seen in the pupils' growing confidence. A strong feature of the curriculum is the rich and varied programme of visits and visitors to the school who enrich the learning experiences of pupils.

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

#### **Grade: 1**

Staff assess pupils' needs very well and assign a high priority to their care. Procedures to safeguard pupils are rigorous. Pupils' personal development is very well monitored so that all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, as well as those for whom English is an additional language, make good progress. New pupils, including those who join at different times in the year, are sensitively integrated into the school. The school provides a wide range of support to the whole family including guiding parents on how to support their children's learning at home. Guidance in their learning is very good. Pupil's progress is monitored regularly and effectively and this is reflected in targets helping pupils to identify the next steps in their learning and help them make better progress.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The headteacher shows excellent leadership by setting out a clear vision for the school and giving strong direction. He is particularly effective in developing a staff team who share his keen sense of purpose and want to do the best for the children in their care. This results in pupils' excellent care and personal development. Pupils make good progress because clear, challenging targets are set and effective teaching promotes good learning. A new leadership and management structure provides opportunities for all staff to be fully involved in school improvement and the raising of standards. Too little time has passed for the impact of this to be seen, but early signs are promising, for example, in the improvement of teaching and learning. Good systems are in place to check how well the school is doing and identify what it could do better. These have been instrumental in the good improvement since the last inspection. Governors support the school well through their visits and work in committees. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and have the confidence and knowledge to enquire about standards and how these could be improved. The majority of parents support the school and are happy about the range of opportunities provided.

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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?	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	3
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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
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?	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>	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

26 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Holly Trees Primary School, Brentwood, Essex CM14 5RY

Thank you for giving us such a warm welcome when we came to your school. We really enjoyed our time with you. You and your parents told us that your school was good and we agree with you.

We really liked the very happy family atmosphere we found and we saw that you all get on very well together and are polite and kind to one another. Everyone works hard to make sure that you are well cared for and safe in school. You all understand about keeping safe and what you need to do to be healthy and have a good diet. We thought you enjoyed your lessons a lot and wanted to do as well as you could.

We also found that most of your lessons were well planned and gave you the chance to work in pairs and groups. We were especially pleased to learn that you have good opportunities outside the school. You take part in lots of clubs, go on really interesting trips and join in lots of activities in your local community. You enjoy these activities, and at the same time, you are extending your learning outside of the classrooms.

Even though your school is good, we think the staff in school, your parents and you would like it to be even better and there are two things we have asked the staff to improve.

- Make sure that the teams of teachers who look after different areas of the work of the school continue to improve and that you do as well in mathematics and science as you do in English.
- Improve the outside play area for Reception children by providing more play equipment and organising lots of exciting activities to improve their learning.

Thank you again for making our time in your school so enjoyable.

Yours sincerely

Norma Ball

Lead inspector