

Holly Park Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101286
Local Authority	Barnet
Inspection number	323439
Inspection dates	18–19 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Steven Hill

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	491
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ian Kibblewhite
Headteacher	Mr John Maxwell
Date of previous school inspection	11 January 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Bellevue Road Friern Barnet London N11 3HG
Telephone number	020 8368 1434
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large primary school makes part-time provision for younger children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in a Nursery unit. Full-time provision for older Early Years Foundation Stage children is made in an integrated two-class Reception unit. The school has a multicultural intake, with about two-thirds of pupils coming from a wide range of different minority ethnic heritages. A high proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is rising, and is above average. These difficulties are varied, with moderate learning needs the most common. The school has a high proportion of pupils who have statements of special educational needs, and their problems are more complex and wide-ranging. The school provides a breakfast club onsite which is managed by the governing body. There is also an after school club which is privately run. This was inspected separately and is reported upon elsewhere.

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. Pupils achieve well because of good teaching and very good academic guidance and support. The excellent pastoral care provided results in pupils' personal development being outstanding. Excellent relationships between pupils of widely different backgrounds, and their extremely good behaviour, are the most notable features of this harmonious, multicultural community. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school, work hard and take delight in the social opportunities available.

Children start in the Nursery with a wide range of attainment but, for the majority, their skills are below those expected. Major improvements to the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage since the last inspection mean children now get off to a flying start. This year, most children nearing the end of the Reception Year are attaining national expectations in the different areas of learning. This has not been the case in previous years when most pupils started Year 1 with skills that were below average. Pupils make good progress through the rest of the school. Standards vary year on year because of the different abilities of different year groups, but have usually been slightly below average at the end of Year 2, and above average by the end of Year 6. This represents good achievement in the light of pupils' starting points. Increasingly sophisticated and detailed systems have been put into place to track pupils' progress. This means that any individuals or groups in danger of falling behind are quickly identified. The school then uses a wide range of carefully tailored programmes to provide extra help, so that all pupils, regardless of background, make similarly good progress. This very good practice, combined with the adults' very good knowledge of each pupil's personal and emotional needs, ensures equal opportunities are provided for all.

The majority of lessons in the school are good, with a sprinkling of outstanding teaching, and some that is satisfactory. All lessons benefit from the teachers' good relationships with their pupils, who consequently are keen to please them and work hard. Teachers use a variety of interesting and exciting approaches, leading one pupil to report that, '... all teachers make lessons fun'. Teachers explain tasks clearly and often 'model' them well so that pupils understand what they are to do. The better lessons make very good use of the assessment of pupils' progress to match work carefully to their needs. Conversely, in a minority of lessons, some pupils are given work that is either too hard or too easy for them, and do not make all the progress they should.

The school provides a good curriculum with a number of very strong features. For example, exceptionally good provision in music, including specialist teaching, leads to high standards, particularly in singing. The school has greatly improved its provision for information and communication technology (ICT) since the last inspection, and pupils now develop appropriate skills across the various strands of the subject. However, as the school has correctly identified, it does not have enough equipment for pupils to practise and use their skills on a regular basis in different subjects. Plans are in hand to address this.

The school is well led and managed, and self-evaluation is good. This is because the regular monitoring of provision and the assessment of pupils' progress give leaders a very clear view of strengths and weaknesses. The new management structure is effective in enabling all staff to work as a cohesive team in addressing any issues that arise. The school has consolidated its strengths from the last inspection and addressed its weaknesses well. The better organisation of subject management means that these leaders play a much improved part in driving

improvements. The trend in achievement is upwards, and the school is well placed to improve further. An increasing strength, based on careful audit of provision, has been the school's promotion of community cohesion, which is now outstanding. Very close links with many facets of the local community, extend the exemplary way in which the component parts of the school community are involved in the life of the school. This work now extends in a variety of ways to contrasting communities across the United Kingdom and abroad. The school's long standing support for the Yala Wildlife Museum in Sri Lanka, stemming originally from a tragedy to one of the school's own families, is a prime example of this.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage has successfully developed a skilled, cohesive team, fully committed to giving all children the very best start to their time in school. Provision and consequent achievement have improved considerably since the last inspection. Children thrive in a safe, secure environment. Staff work closely with parents and carers to promote learning and meet children's individual needs extremely well. Throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make outstanding progress. By the end of the Reception Year, most are now working securely within or beyond nationally expected levels.

Adults are highly sensitive to individual needs and provide a wide range of interesting, imaginative activities, which children thoroughly enjoy and which help them to make rapid progress across all areas of the curriculum. For example, children developed their speech and language skills as they described what it was like to move toy dinosaurs through trays of different flavoured jelly. Others improved their hand-eye coordination by squirting water at slowly moving targets. As one parent said, 'My child has benefited enormously from the consistent support, guidance and creative curriculum provided by the early years' team'.

Relationships are warm and friendly and children become confident, independent learners who play and work happily together. Adults keep detailed records of children's achievements and take every opportunity to reinforce basic skills. For example, children had to concentrate really hard to negotiate an obstacle course and then count to five before they were allowed to jump off the bench.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that work in lessons is more consistently matched to different pupils' needs, and provides the right level of challenge.
- Increase the provision of resources for ICT, so that pupils have more opportunities to practise and use their skills in different subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Good achievement results in standards that are above average by the end of the school, despite pupils' relatively weak starting points. Pupils make excellent progress in the Nursery and Reception units, and good progress across the rest of the school. Any disparities in the progress of different groups have been eliminated through the school's improved identification of any such trends, and concerted action to address them. Boys now achieve similarly well to girls. Pupils speaking a variety of home languages learn English quickly and make the same good progress as their classmates. A relative weakness in progress in writing compared to reading

was addressed well and this is no longer significant. Progress in ICT has also improved since the last inspection. Pupils who have a wide range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress in relation to their needs. This is because they are fully included in the life of the school, and very well supported in lessons.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Inspectors agree with most parents who say that behaviour is excellent. Pupils have very positive attitudes to school work and try hard in class. They take their learning very seriously, while enjoying their lessons immensely. They like many aspects of school, and their attendance is good. As one parent wrote, 'My child loves going to school which can be put down to the great atmosphere/teaching environment and her fantastic teachers and other staff'. Pupils know how to keep safe both in and outside school. They know a lot about healthy living, taking part enthusiastically in a variety of exercise opportunities. Lunchtimes are a pleasant social experience and pupils take advantage of the good quality healthy meals on offer. The school council members know they have a real voice in school and are proud to have raised money from their 'Busking Day', 'Best Dressed Teddy' and other fundraising initiatives. Pupils get on very well together, and are very caring of each other. They have very good collaborative skills, and get on independently when needed. Pupils' positive attitudes and outstanding social skills, linked to their good achievement, mean that they are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Despite some variations in teaching, pupils make good progress in the majority of lessons. Teaching is particularly strong in the early years, and in music, where progress is excellent. Teachers manage their classes well, and plan activities thoroughly, so that pupils are engaged and interested. They use a good range of strategies to make sure that all pupils are involved in what is going on, and concentrate well. For example, a Year 2 class threw themselves enthusiastically into speaking Spanish, while performing lively actions, when learning about jungle animals. Pupils respond extremely well to their teachers' high expectations of hard work and behaviour. Pupils work very well in teams, discussing their work sensibly and thoughtfully, because teachers provide them with extensive opportunities for this. Teaching assistants are very skilled and make a major contribution to pupils' learning, particularly those who might otherwise struggle without the extra help they are given. In a few lessons, pupils' progress is only satisfactory. This most often occurs when all pupils are given the same work to do, so that it is too hard for some, or too difficult for others.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Across the school there is a good emphasis on developing skills in English and mathematics. These skills are also developed well through other subjects, and support learning across the curriculum. Lack of equipment means that this is not yet the case for pupils' ICT skills, an issue the school is addressing. The provision for music is an outstanding feature of the curriculum. Pupils have the opportunity to play a wide range of instruments and the quality of singing is

exceptional. The school has a number of theme days that enliven learning and increase enjoyment. During a recent science week, pupils were engrossed in a range of practical activities which they thoroughly enjoyed. A broad range of clubs and a well-planned programme of educational visits and visitors, enhance learning. Year 5 and 6 pupils have the opportunity to go on residential visits that give them an understanding of contrasting communities and ways of life. The school's leaders, having consulted the school council, are working on an innovative plan to improve the links made between subjects to make learning more meaningful and enjoyable.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The pastoral support for pupils is outstanding. Typical of parents' comments was, 'Staff are friendly and take a real interest in the children'. Health and safety, and child protection procedures meet government requirements and promote pupils' welfare very effectively. The breakfast club contributes well to the well-being and happiness of pupils who attend. The school has forged extensive links with outside agencies such as Barnet House, Coppetts Wood Children's Centre and local secondary schools. Together, these support pupils' learning very well and excellent systems are in place to facilitate smooth transition between Holly Park and other schools. The kindness and sensitivity of staff to pupils contribute to their outstanding attitudes and behaviour. Very strong links with parents support pupils' progress, and there are regular meetings with them in a variety of formal and informal settings. Arrangements for assessing and tracking pupils are very good, with the information gained used well to set challenging targets. Pupils know their individual targets, and consistent and thorough marking gives them clear guidance on how to improve. The support staff are very skilled and the help they provide to individuals is much appreciated by children and parents. The school is very committed to community activities; for example regular coffee mornings are held for Somali families.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher gives very clear educational direction to the school, and is well respected by the whole school community. He has forged an effective team who work together very well for the benefit of the pupils. The governors have greatly expanded their role since the last inspection and provide good support, tempered by rigorous challenge, to the headteacher and the school. The school has made a number of significant improvements, notably in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and in promoting community cohesion. The standard of teaching has remained good despite a number of staffing difficulties. Several inexperienced staff who have started at the school have benefited from rigorous monitoring of their lessons, which gives them clear feedback on how to improve their practice. Parents are generally very supportive of the school's work and positive about what it provides, although several expressed concerns about staff absence in recent years. Inspection evidence shows that problems with staff absence have been handled well by managers, with the support of the local authority. The school has worked well to ensure that the impact on pupils' progress has been minimised. The school's better tracking systems have been a key factor in the upward trend in achievement, and the elimination of any inequalities in progress. The school is not complacent and has a clear programme for improvement that identifies appropriate priorities for further developments.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which 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 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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

02 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Holly Park Primary School, London, N11 3HG

Thank you for all your help when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and watching you working in your lessons. You told us that you really enjoy school, and we could see why.

Holly Park is a good school, where everyone makes good progress. This is because the teachers are good at helping you to learn. The Nursery and Reception classes are particularly good, and the children there do really well. All through the school, the adults keep a careful eye on how you are getting on, and make sure that anyone who needs extra help gets it. The teachers give you interesting things to do, and are good at making lessons fun. Occasionally, some of you get work that is a bit too easy or too hard for you. We have agreed with the teachers that they will try to make sure you get work that is just right for you in future.

By the time you leave, standards in English, mathematics and science are better than those in most schools. The music in the school is very good, and your singing is brilliant. Standards have gone up in ICT since the last inspection, but you still don't get enough time to practise, because the school is short of computers. The adults are planning to buy more equipment soon, and we have agreed with them that this is an important improvement that is needed.

We were especially impressed by how well you all get along together, and by your excellent behaviour. The adults take very good care of you, so you are safe, happy and can enjoy all the exciting things that are happening in school.

The adults are very good at organising the school, and are keen to make it better. You can help by carrying on with your hard work and your extremely good behaviour. We hope that you continue to really enjoy your school.

Yours faithfully

Steven Hill

Lead Inspector