

Holt House Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107026
Local Authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	324510
Inspection dates	26–27 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Andrew Swallow

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	5–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	180
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 S Wade
Headteacher	Mrs J Clay
Date of previous school inspection	8 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Bannerdale Road Sheffield South Yorkshire S7 2EW
Telephone number	0114 255 3717
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Age group	5–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average-sized school. Approximately half of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups, predominantly Pakistani, with many in the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. An above average number have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school makes extended services available to the community, including a Nursery (as part of the overall school's Early Years Foundation Stage), breakfast and after-school clubs. These were also inspected. The school has Investors in People status, the Basic Skills Quality Mark, the Artsmark Gold, Activemark and the Healthy Schools Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

High quality leadership, at all levels, is sustaining excellent achievement and above average standards. As a result, Holt House Infants is an outstanding school. Pupils are developing the skills to be excellent learners because of the consistently high quality teaching, exciting curriculum and stimulating learning environment. Outstanding care and guidance enable all pupils to thrive in this happy and inclusive multicultural community. The extended services provided by the school, including a Nursery, breakfast and after-school clubs, are of an outstanding quality and make an excellent contribution to the school's overall effectiveness.

All children get off to a flying start in the outstanding Early Years Foundation Stage. This is because all adults have very high expectations and ensure that support is very closely matched to pupils' needs, particularly those at an early stage of English language acquisition. Children start the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills below those typically expected for their age, and with well below communication and personal skills. By the time they leave Reception, pupils' language and mathematical skills, as well as their personal development, are in line with expectations and, in some cases, beyond.

Pupils' achievement is outstanding and they reach standards that are above average by the time they leave the school. All the different groups of pupils continue to make excellent progress across Years 1 and 2, reaching standards that are above average in writing and mathematics, and well above average in reading. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make excellent progress to attain higher outcomes than seen nationally. Pupils who are at an early stage of English language acquisition make rapid progress because of the excellent bilingual support they receive.

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are outstanding. Pupils behave extremely well and show very high levels of tolerance, respect and care for others. They make an excellent contribution to the school and wider community through the school council, by being playground leaders and by organising charitable activities. Attendance is good and has improved since the last inspection.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding and promotes consistently high outcomes. Relationships are excellent. The indoor and outdoor environments for learning are of a high quality. The curriculum is equally outstanding. Highly effective links between subjects support very well the development of literacy and numeracy skills, and incorporate interesting aspects of the local community, which makes learning meaningful. Care, guidance and support are outstanding. All adults are very supportive and enjoy excellent relationships with parents. The school has rigorous systems to track pupils' achievement and these are used effectively to provide targeted support for vulnerable pupils, as well as to sustain high achievement.

Leadership and management are excellent. The headteacher has created a team approach to ensuring the very best provision for all pupils. Governors are equally committed to building on the school's excellent track record. Rigorous self-evaluation and strong development planning underpin the school's excellent capacity to improve. Other than priorities already in hand, inspectors can find no additional areas for improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children make outstanding progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. From their starting point, which is below expectations, they are working comfortably within the early learning goals by the end of Reception and some are working beyond this level. This is the direct outcome of a very well planned and stimulating learning environment, and the close attention given to children's individual personal learning needs. Staff quickly establish excellent relations with new parents and their children, welcoming them into the school community with home visits and special activities. Teaching is excellent and stems from detailed observation and assessment of children's achievement in all areas of learning, and careful planning for their next steps. Children's independence is very well developed because they are taught to listen and make decisions right from the beginning. All activities have a very clear purpose. There is an excellent balance between those led by adults, such as finding out how the brain helps us learn, and the wide range of tasks children choose. Children's welfare is paramount. They learn how to live healthily, taking regular physical activity and keeping themselves clean and tidy. There is excellent support for children with learning and emotional difficulties, and for those who speak English as an additional language. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is excellent. Staff are reflective, self-critical, and work as a highly effective team. They have an outstanding knowledge of the stages of children's development.

What the school should do to improve further

Other than priorities already in hand, there no additional areas for improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

The school meets the challenging targets that it sets for its pupils. By the end of Year 2 standards are well above average in reading and above average in writing and mathematics. This represents outstanding progress for all pupils, given their starting points. Pakistani pupils achieve very well, reaching higher outcomes than seen nationally for this group of children. In particular, those at an early stage of learning English make rapid progress because of the excellent and well-targeted bilingual support they receive. High-attaining pupils achieve well, especially in reading, which is a strength of the school. Those with individual learning difficulties and/or disabilities make excellent progress, attaining much higher than nationally, and especially so in reading and writing. These outstanding rates of progress are largely due to the excellent tracking procedures which ensure frequent and accurate checking of pupils' progress by teachers and teaching assistants. As a result, any pupils at risk of underachieving are pinpointed early and provided with additional one-to-one or small-group support and work carefully matched to their needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils say they really enjoy coming to school because their lessons are exciting and a typical comment is, 'Teachers are fun to be with.' Pupils thrive in the wonderfully stimulating learning spaces, both indoors and outdoors. Within this truly harmonious school community, they learn to respect each other's different heritages, so that they are well placed to play their part in a multicultural society. Pupils are proud to attend a school where all cultures are openly celebrated.

From an early age, they develop high levels of tolerance and patience, working and playing safely alongside each other. The vast majority have an excellent understanding of why it is important to lead a healthy lifestyle. Assemblies, visits and visitors to school enrich pupils' experiences and promote excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Behaviour, at all times, is outstanding. Members of the school council take their work seriously and others relish opportunities to raise funds for charities, especially for their partner school in Ghana. Most pupils attend well. Through the many projects they undertake to design and make products, including those for profit, pupils have an excellent understanding of the world of work and develop literacy and numeracy skills which prepare them outstandingly well for life beyond Holt House.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are of a consistently high quality and underpin pupils' outstanding progress. Lessons are well planned to incorporate motivating and practical activities, with many opportunities for pupils to experiment, find out things for themselves and share ideas with others. Relationships are very positive and classrooms, as well as outdoor spaces, are stimulating places in which to learn. Skilful questioning enables teachers to determine how well pupils are learning and whether they require further help to make even better progress. Excellent use of computers and digital cameras supports the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, as well as enhancing their confidence in using information and communication technology. The marking of pupils' work is thorough and every effort is made to help pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do next. Work is very well matched to pupils' needs, and teaching and bilingual support assistants are extremely well deployed, so that no pupil is left behind.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school has continued to develop dynamic and innovative experiences since the last inspection. Learning is brought to life by practical, first-hand experiences such as map-making work based walks in the locality, or intricate craftwork stimulated by studies of life in India. Exciting projects introduce pupils to modern foreign languages and give them experiences of the world of enterprise and finance. Excellent use is made of computers, especially in digital photography and film making, to encourage pupils to work independently and record their achievements. Sharply focused literacy and numeracy activities are carefully woven into all subjects, and complement basic skills lessons. Excellent provision is made to enhance pupils' personal, social, health and emotional development. Experiences are further enriched through a wide range of visits and visitors to school, and from work carried out in the local environment. Arrangements to extend the school day through the popular breakfast club, before- and after-school activities, are carefully planned and well attended.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Parents understandably hold in high regard the quality of care and support provided by the school. Rigorous procedures which meet current requirements are in place to ensure the

safeguarding of pupils and promote their safety and well-being. Pupils say that there is no bullying and that they always feel safe and well looked after. Arrangements to support pupils on entry, and on transfer to junior school, are highly effective. Bilingual support for pupils at an early stage of English language acquisition is excellent. Highly effective provision is also made for high-attaining pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities through grouping arrangements and well-targeted activities. Supervision of the before- and after-school activities is thorough. Relationships during these times between pupils and adults are warm and caring. Pupils say it is 'home from home.' The school does all it can to promote good attendance and encourage families to ensure that their children attend regularly. Procedures to ensure that all pupils know what they are aiming for, and what they need to do next to improve their work, are outstanding. Staff make excellent use of regular observations, information from parents and rigorous assessment to guide pupils successfully in their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher's vision for providing enriched and stimulating learning experiences, and for developing close partnerships with parents and the local community, is sustaining excellence in all aspects of the school's work. She has built a strong culture where all adults feel they have an essential role to support all pupils to achieve their potential. The senior leadership team is equally committed to maximising every pupil's life chances and is instrumental in maintaining high achievement and standards. Self-evaluation is accurate. Systems to track pupils' progress promote consistently high expectations. Leaders and managers at all levels contribute to rigorous procedures for evaluating standards of teaching and learning. Arrangements to enhance community cohesion and promote equality are excellent. Parents talk positively about how the school reaches out into the local community. Excellent links with local schools and community services, assemblies, themed days and the partnership with a school in Ghana enable pupils to appreciate the importance of belonging to a society which embraces different cultures and values. Governors are highly supportive and ambitious for the school. Although the composition of the governing body is in a period of change, many governors are, nonetheless, confident in understanding the school's strengths and checking areas that require improvement.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

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?	1
The standards ¹ 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/or disabilities make progress	1

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?	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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 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	1
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**

Inspection of Holt House Infant School, Sheffield, S7 2EW

Thank you very much for the welcome and help you gave to the inspectors when we came to your school recently. We were very pleased to be received in such a friendly way and extremely impressed by how well you all get on with each other.

We were particularly impressed with the work you carry out as school councillors or playground leaders, as well as how often you get involved in enterprise activities and charity work. The school in Ghana must be really grateful for all the money you raised for its pupils.

We were pleased to hear how much you enjoy your lessons. You get off to an excellent start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and most of you reach standards by the time you leave school that are above average. We think you are making outstanding progress in your work. This is because the teaching in your school is excellent and all the adults support your work so effectively. The activities at the beginning of the school day, including the breakfast club, and those after school, are of a really high quality. We know that you enjoy them, as well as enjoying the many visitors who come to Holt House and the many visits you go on. They all help to make your learning really exciting.

Overall, your school takes excellent care of you and provides you with an outstanding standard of education. This was the case when your school was last inspected, so it is very impressive that such high outcomes have been maintained. However, your headteacher, teachers and governors are not complacent. They have plans to ensure that the school goes from strength to strength, and we believe it will do so. Because of the work that is already taking place, we are not suggesting any other specific areas for improvement.

I am sure you will continue to work hard and always do your very best.