

# The Honywood Community Science School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	115226
<b>Local Authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	326153
<b>Inspection date</b>	4 March 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Alan Alder HMI

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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	1011
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	19
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	40
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Jill Ward
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Simon Mason
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 March 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Westfield Drive Coggeshall Colchester Essex CO6 1PZ

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<b>Age group</b>	11–16
<b>Inspection date</b>	4 March 2009
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors.

Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following: achievement and standards, teaching and learning, care, guidance and support, and leadership and management, as well as some aspects of pupils' personal development and well-being. Evidence was gathered from school documentation, discussions with pupils, members of staff and the chair of governors and first-hand observations of lessons. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors 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 within this report.

## Description of the school

The school is a specialist science school and has Leading Edge status and so provides support to other schools. It serves a relatively prosperous area and this is reflected in the low proportion of pupils who are eligible for a free school meal. Most students are from a White British background. About the same proportion as nationally have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, or a statement of special educational needs.

The governing body is responsible for Early Years Foundation Stage provision, which is accommodated on the school site.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

The headteacher has very high ambitions for the school. His clear vision of how the school should be is fundamental to its success. The organisation of the school is derived from a fundamental consideration of what will work best, so there are some unusual features. This includes an emphasis on research teams finding out about good practice and disseminating what is best to the rest of the teaching staff. The joint leadership of departments enables both leadership as well as management functions to be carried out very effectively. The school's capacity to improve is outstanding.

The school's outstanding effectiveness is reflected in the comments made by parents. Of the 300 inspection questionnaires which were returned, the overwhelming majority were full of praise for the school. One parent wrote that the school goes beyond expectations in all it does. The school is greatly oversubscribed for places in Year 7.

The quality of care, guidance and support that pupils receive is excellent and contribute extremely well to their outstanding personal development. The quality of teaching is generally good, with a high proportion that is outstanding. When pupils join the school in Year 7 the standards they have reached are broadly average. By the time they leave, the proportion who gain five or more high grade GCSE passes, including English and mathematics, is higher than the national average. Since the last inspection, the school has gone on to achieve its best ever results, in 2007, when the standards pupils reached, taking all their subjects into account, were exceptionally high. There was a dip in 2008 when the school suffered some staffing disruption. However, the evidence seen during the inspection in lessons and in pupils' books shows that they are making good and often outstanding progress, and achieving standards which are above average. This is confirmed by the school's own assessment data. Standards in science, the school's specialist subject, are significantly above average, and targets have been achieved.

The very good progress which pupils make is the result of the good teaching they receive and their own outstanding commitment to learning. Teachers show good knowledge of their subjects. They convey enthusiasm and the pace of lessons is good. There are some excellent examples of pupils being challenged through good questioning, although this is variable. In some classes questions are not used to assess pupils' understanding, which would enable teaching to be modified where necessary. There is also some inconsistency in the marking of pupils' work. In some classes marking is done well but teachers do not always give sufficient advice on how pupils' work can be improved. However, pupils know their examination targets well.

Attendance is good, and pupils' enjoyment of school is outstanding. Pupils are thoughtful, polite, confident and articulate. The skills of group working and collaboration are well developed. This is partly a result of 'focus days' in which there is a particular emphasis on the development of particular skills. These skills, together with the above average standards they achieve in English and mathematics, their impressive commitment to work and their very well developed powers of concentration give them an outstanding preparation for their future economic well-being. Pupils contribute extremely well to the community. A high proportion, 40%, have achieved an award from an external body in recognition of their community contribution. Many have responsibilities in school. Some, as part of the science specialism, work with primary school children who visit for a science club and others visit pupils in primary schools who are expecting to move to Honywood. Some pupils from Years 10 and 11 visit the pre-school to undertake reading and art activities. Two groups visit communities in Morocco and Namibia and contribute

to those communities. The school council is active and identifies what is needed to improve pupils' lives in school further. They have brought about the construction of three covered areas, and been active in improving the choices of food available at break and lunchtime. Behaviour is outstanding; pupils' attitudes to their work are unusually positive. They say that while there are a few isolated incidents of bullying, these are dealt with quickly and effectively and that bullying by means of mobile telephone or computer messages is rare.

The school complies with statutory requirements for safeguarding and the appropriate policies are in place. Assessments of pupil progress are made regularly, leaders use the information to identify underachievement and this is followed up well. Year 7 pupils say that the transition from primary to secondary school is well handled. On arrival at the school the new Year 7 pupils are given a 'buddy' from Year 10 or 11 to ease their start.

The curriculum is good. There is a broad range of options for those in Years 10 and 11, and these include some vocational courses as well as work-based learning and a wide range of science courses. The curriculum provides challenge, for example, for those who excel at mathematics in which an opportunity to take the subject early and follow it up with a GCSE course in statistics is being piloted. In addition all take a modern foreign language in Years 10 and 11 and a good number study two. Some pupils study French in primary school and for some of these the work they do in Year 7 is insufficiently challenging. While the government's recommended time for physical education is adhered to in Years 7 to 9, this is not the case in Years 10 and 11. Nevertheless, there is a good range of extra-curricular activities, including sports, and these are well attended. The school uses an externally organised and confidential questionnaire to find out about pupils' well-being. This is used effectively to identify ways in which pupils' well-being can be improved. For example the data on alcohol use led to further teaching about the dangers associated with overindulgence. The school's leaders recognise that though this is very good practice there is scope for it to be developed further and for more data to be collected to evaluate the impact of the school's follow-up work. The process also revealed that a small number of pupils are cigarette smokers. The result is that there is now a support group to assist any pupil who wants help to give up smoking.

The leadership of departments is increasingly shared, to very good effect. This ensures that middle leaders are effective in developing teaching quality, implementing new approaches, and maintaining administrative functions. Areas of the school evaluate their own work and their analysis of examination performance is thorough, detailed and accurate. This use of performance data demonstrates leaders' powerful commitment to improvement and is used very well by staff to identify areas of work which pupils find difficult. This in turn leads to improvements in teaching and learning. The analysis is also used to identify any teaching groups which are not progressing well enough with support provided where there are concerns. For example, the English department identified a relative weakness in pupils' understanding of poetry. This has led to more of this work being covered in Years 7 to 9 than was previously the case. However, plans for improvement rarely have measurable targets or arrangements for monitoring progress towards them. This makes it difficult for the school's leaders and the governors to check on progress and intervene if necessary.

The school's contribution to community cohesion is good. Information about other faith groups living in Britain is well covered in the curriculum. There are good links with Morocco and Namibia and pupils visit those countries, taking part in international community projects. They give information about them to other pupils through the school's weekly newspaper. In addition there are good links between pupils and those in local primary schools.

The governing body is well involved in the work of the school. It keeps the school's progress properly scrutinised and holds the school's leaders to account well.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

The staff are well trained and effective. Stability in staffing allows them to have an excellent knowledge of the children in their care and enables them to meet children's individual needs. Hence children settle quickly into the environment and develop positive relationships with both the key workers and other children. This enables them to make good progress. They behave very well and there is evidence that the children are confident and self assured in this safe environment. The high quality support given by the staff encourages children to share sensibly and make choices. Key workers record the achievements and comments made by children throughout the session and record these formally in the child's individual 'Learning Journey' folder along with photographs and samples of work as evidence. Their next steps in learning are identified from this information.

Children show initiative in choosing from the activities on offer but these are sometimes limited by the indoor space available. The lack of indoor space is recognised and so full use is made of the outdoor area, trips to town, to their future school and the school swimming pool, as well as the Forest School initiative which allows children to learn in a forest. Children also have opportunities to be involved in the wider school community through activities such as fundraising and school plays. The pre-school leader now has regular strategic meetings with the deputy headteacher to ensure systems are matched to the main school and long term development is planned effectively. The recommendations from the last inspection have been fully addressed.

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

- Raise standards further by ensuring that more teaching is of outstanding quality.

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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?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
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?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	2
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?	2
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**

5 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Honywood Community Science School, Coggeshall, CO6 1PZ

Thank you for your help when we recently inspected your school and the preschool. We spoke with quite a number of you in lessons or in the meetings we held and you were very helpful.

Both you and your parents speak very positively about your school. We are not surprised. Our view is that it is outstanding. One very impressive feature is your development as mature, thoughtful and confident young people. You also told us that you enjoy school a lot. We were impressed by the number of opportunities you have to contribute to the community, including in the preschool, with pupils in primary school and with communities in Morocco and Namibia.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is also successful. Children are well cared for and make good progress.

We were also impressed by your attitude to work. In the lessons we observed, you were very attentive and worked hard. The good quality of teaching you receive helps in this. Your teachers are knowledgeable and they move the lessons on at a good pace. This is why you make good progress in your work and reach good standards.

Your school takes excellent care of you, both in your work and in your health and safety. We were pleased to hear that if there is any bullying it is usually sorted out very quickly. Perhaps you can help to make sure that this becomes even less of an issue.

There is one thing we are suggesting that your school does to improve further. The school should increase the proportion of outstanding lessons which will help you reach even higher standards.

Best wishes for your future

Alan Alder

Her Majesty's Inspector