

Holland Park Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115255
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	326163
Inspection dates	22–23 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Alison Pangbourne

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	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	429
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	Mrs Marina Lee
Headteacher	Mrs Veronica Farrelly
Date of previous school inspection	7 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Holland Road Clacton-on-sea Essex CO15 6NG
Telephone number	01255422942
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a large primary school. Most pupils come from White British backgrounds and very few speak English as an additional language. Almost half the pupils live outside the immediate area. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average but the proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs is above average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties or autism. When children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), their attainment is low compared with what is expected for their age, although this is not the case for all children. A significant number of pupils join the school during Key Stage 2. The school is a member of the Tendring and Colchester Consortium (TACC) and the COAST-ed partnership of schools. This aids financial planning and supports school development. The school is an FA Charter School and it has recently gained National Healthy School status and the Active Mark, recognising its provision for physical activity.

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. It is an extremely harmonious community with a friendly feel where care for others permeates all activities. Parents cannot praise it highly enough. Typical of many, one wrote 'This is a school to feel proud of. I am delighted to have it on my doorstep.' The pupils agree saying 'Learning is fun here and the teachers are brilliant.'

Fundamental to the school's success is the strong leadership of the headteacher, well supported by her deputy. She has built a staff team highly committed to the school who willingly take on new initiatives. The school has recognised that higher attaining pupils should do better and has taken on and adapted commercial programmes of work to meet their needs. These are beginning to have a positive impact on standards, particularly in writing. In 2008, teacher assessments show that standards for pupils in Year 2 were average in reading, writing and mathematics. Unvalidated test results for pupils in Year 6 were above average in English, mathematics and science. A below average proportion exceeded the expected level in mathematics in both Year 2 and Year 6. All pupils, including those who find it harder to develop literacy and numeracy skills and those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress from what for many, is a low starting point.

There are several reasons why pupils achieve well. The quality of teaching is good, although there are some inconsistencies. Most lessons are exciting and fully engage and challenge pupils, while some lessons have less sparkle and lack pace. The good curriculum motivates pupils who thoroughly enjoy the exciting practical opportunities offered, such as keeping chickens and growing vegetables. Consequently, they have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy and safe. Every pupil is important to the school and receives outstanding pastoral support and guidance. This contributes positively to pupils' excellent personal development. The progress of individual pupils is assessed regularly to make sure that extra help is provided for any who are falling behind and additional challenge is increasingly provided for those who are shooting ahead. Pupils show a maturity beyond their years in their good manners and their behaviour is exemplary. They make an outstanding contribution to the community, through their buddy groups, their links with the local community and from their well developed links with a school in Ghana.

The outstanding partnership with local sports clubs and the local secondary school means that the pupils take part in a very wide range of sports. They are proud of the many trophies and awards they have won. The excellent partnerships with parents mean that many help in school and support their children at home.

Leadership and management are good. Staff and governors work effectively as a team. Subject leaders fulfil their roles well and have a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses in their subjects. Everything the school does is closely monitored to ensure that it meets the needs of all pupils. Its self-evaluation is accurate, but a little modest, particularly with regard to personal development and the care, guidance and support it offers. The progress since the previous inspection shows that the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Parents praise the start to their education their children experience. One wrote, 'I cannot express how pleased I am at how well my daughter has settled and how well she is learning.' The children

are accommodated in three Reception classes and good leadership and management ensure that children enjoy the same interesting, well planned curriculum and good quality of teaching in all the classes. Staff ask for the children's ideas when they are planning topics and this contributes much to their enjoyment. Children make good progress through the Reception year, from what for many is a low starting point. By the time they transfer to Year 1, most have not quite reached the goals set for them nationally. This is because they have so much ground to make up.

Children achieve well because the quality of teaching is good and teachers make learning fun. For example, children were learning about the Chinese New Year and developing their basic skills through measuring with noodles, learning Chinese numerals and cooking Chinese food. Opportunities for children to learn out of doors are developed well. The 'Woodland Fun' sessions give them the opportunity to follow up their own interests and explore their surroundings. The children are expected to dress appropriately for the weather and to take responsibility for their clothes and boots when using the outdoor areas. Staff make best use of the outdoor area adjacent to the classrooms but this is too small for the number of children to use effectively and plans are being made to improve it. It is particularly difficult for the children who are taught in the demountable classroom as there are steps to negotiate. The children behave extremely well because adults make their expectations clear. Children are cared for exceptionally well and all welfare requirements are met.

What the school should do to improve further

- Help the more able pupils to do better in mathematics by embedding the new initiatives already in place.
- Raise the quality of teaching by using the existing good practice to ensure that all lessons come up to the best in order to raise standards still further.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils, including those who need extra help to learn and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress and achieve well. Assessments at the end of Year 2 show that standards in recent years, including 2008, have been broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion that gained the higher levels was below average. Standards at Year 6 have been a little above average in recent years, particularly in writing. Unvalidated test results for 2008, show that attainment was above average in English, mathematics and science. The proportion that gained the higher level 5 was above average in English and science and just below in mathematics. Standards look likely to be similar this year, but a higher proportion is on course to reach above the expected levels.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Caring for others is central to the ethos of the school. Consequently pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils are extremely well mannered while at the same time being friendly and relaxed. Their behaviour is excellent in lessons and playtimes and particularly in assembly where they have to be very sensible in a small space. They willingly take on a wide range of responsibilities and school councillors take their role very seriously. The buddy group system, where pupils from across the classes befriend one another and discuss social and moral issues together makes a positive contribution to their outstanding personal

development. Many pupils use the 'walking bus' to come to school and this, together with their many sporting activities, vegetable growing and caring for chickens, contributes to their excellent understanding of keeping healthy and safe. They say they thoroughly enjoy all their lessons. They make a significant contribution to helping others by taking part in a range of projects that focus on the needs of others both locally, nationally and globally. Attendance is good, encouraged by a wide range of incentives to promote good attendance. The 'Purple Penny Savings Club' encourages pupils to save for the future and develop useful life skills. They are building a good foundation for later life and the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

There are real strengths in teaching but practice is inconsistent across the classes. In most lessons, relationships are very good and this promotes enthusiasm for learning. High standards of behaviour are expected and achieved. Work is matched well to pupils' differing learning needs. Teachers explain carefully exactly what they want pupils to learn and pupils are thoroughly challenged. Teaching is concise and clear and the pupils enjoy the challenges they face. Teachers make lessons fun and the use of interactive white boards motivates the pupils and has a positive impact on learning. Pupils enjoy their lessons and benefit from sharing ideas with 'learning partners'. On occasions, the pace of learning slows and some pupils lose concentration when the teaching is dull. Marking is regular and thorough. There are very good systems for tracking the progress pupils make so that any who are falling behind receive extra support.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is being successfully developed to provide more stimulating and creative approaches to teaching and learning. Good links are beginning to be made across subjects and these help pupils to see how skills learned in one subject can be transferred to another. The curriculum has several outstanding features. There is a high take-up for an exceptionally good range of sporting activities, including sailing and wall climbing. The extra-curricular programme provides many opportunities for personal success, which contribute to high levels of enjoyment and outstanding personal development. Many visits and visitors enhance the curriculum. Pupils talk enthusiastically about a forthcoming residential visit and the day being organised to raise money for their link school in Ghana. The school promotes community cohesion extremely well and consequently pupils' knowledge about life in Ghana is impressive. Information and communication technology is used very well to motivate pupils and to develop independence in learning. The curriculum supports the needs of pupils well, including those who find it harder to learn. Around the school there are high quality displays celebrating pupils' work including some amazing ceramic panels depicting the history of the school. Pupils benefit from good facilities outdoors encouraging them to participate in physical and environmental activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Parents and pupils value the extremely caring and nurturing ethos of the school. The school is a safe environment and all the required safeguarding procedures are in place. Policies, including how to keep safe when using the internet, are kept up to date and they are supported strongly

on a day-to-day basis. The school fosters a high level of self-esteem in the pupils and this contributes very positively to their excellent attitudes to learning. The school works exceptionally closely with outside agencies to support the needs of those who find it hard to learn so that they receive the help they need. The school uses a wide range of support programmes to help these pupils and it is constantly seeking and trialling new strategies. Support staff are very well deployed to best effect. This contributes very positively to the progress of pupils who need extra help with their learning. Very good tracking systems allow staff to match work closely to pupils' needs. Pupils have their own challenging targets in English and mathematics and know what they need to do to improve. They have a clear understanding of how they are doing and are very keen to accomplish the goals that teachers set.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has a clear vision for the improvement of the school. She is passionate in her wish to provide a rich range of good quality experiences for the pupils. The well-being of the pupils is at the heart of all she does. Her deputy, the chair of governors and senior staff support her in this. All staff, including subject leaders fulfil their leadership and management roles well. Thorough monitoring and evaluation enables swift identification of priorities for development. The governors are committed to the school and are developing an improved understanding of their monitoring roles. They know that their decision to fund a full time coordinator for pupils who find it hard to learn has a beneficial impact on these pupils' progress. The headteacher is committed to developing the leadership skills of her staff and is working hard to use the strengths of existing staff to support less experienced leaders. The headteacher and senior staff regularly monitor the quality of teaching and standards in the different subjects. The school promotes community cohesion extremely effectively by actively fostering a very strong sense of community, both within the school and outside it. It helps pupils to gain an excellent understanding of people's different beliefs and customs, both in the United Kingdom and across the world.

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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 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?	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 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	2

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	2
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**

26 January 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Holland Park Primary School, Clacton-on-Sea, CO15 6NG

Thank you for helping us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and watching you learn. We would like to tell you what we found out.

You told us that this is a friendly school and that you really enjoy coming. We agree with you. We were very impressed with your excellent behaviour, particularly in assembly and those of you who had lunch with us. We enjoyed hearing about how you care for the chickens and watching you catch them at the end of the day. We were pleased to see that you wash your hands very thoroughly afterwards. You are very lucky to be able to eat such fresh eggs! This helps you to know how to keep fit and healthy and it was good to hear that many of you come to school on the 'walking bus'. You get the chance to do a lot more sport than many children. All the grown-ups look after you extremely well and you also care for each other too. We thought that the buddy groups are a very good idea to help you make friends of all ages in your large school. You all make good progress and do as well and sometimes better than most children of your age. This is because teachers make learning fun and help you to enjoy your lessons. We were interested to hear about life in Ghana and hope that 'Ghana Day' went well. Mrs Farrelly and governors work very hard to make your school a happy place to be. Your families know that you go to a good school.

We have asked Mrs Farrelly and the teachers to help those of you who find it quite easy to understand mathematics to do even better by carrying on with the new systems to help you that they have started this year. You can help by continuing to work as hard as you can. We have asked if some of your teachers could share their ideas with each other so that all lessons could be as exciting and interesting as possible for you all.

We hope you carry on enjoying your time at Holland Park School and do well in your next school.

Best wishes

Alison Pangbourne

Lead inspector