

Holdbrook Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117091
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	326523
Inspection dates	14–15 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Joan Hewitt

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)	210
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	20
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	21
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Joe Brock
Headteacher	Mrs Karen Scudamore
Date of previous school inspection	31 January 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Longcroft Drive Waltham Cross Hertfordshire EN8 7QG
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors and one Childcare Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school. It has Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision for children in the pre-school, Nursery and Reception classes. It serves an area of mainly social housing. The surrounding community is made up of many faiths and cultures, with significant Italian and Turkish populations. Many pupils are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. Many pupils start or leave the school at times other than the beginning of the academic year. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) is above average. The school has the Investors in People Award and achieved Active Mark in 2008.

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 and improving school. It has some outstanding features; most notably the care, guidance and support it offers to children in its care. The pastoral guidance for pupils is particularly strong and this can be seen in the mutual respect and affection between children and adults.

Another strong aspect of the school's work is the outstanding curriculum, particularly the enrichment and extra curricular activities. The school does excellent work in gaining the trust and respect of parents and the local community. For example, some parents attend English classes and consequently the liaison between home and school is further enhanced. Outstanding use is made of the school's rich culture to support children's learning so that they have a good sense of their role as local and global citizens.

Pupils arrive at the school with standards that are below and sometimes well below national averages. Recent assessments and national test results at the end of Key Stage 2 show they make good progress across the school to achieve broadly average standards. Progress for individual pupils and classes fluctuates because of the significant number of children leaving and joining the school at different times throughout the year. A number of children take extended holidays to visit family abroad. The school provides work so that such children can carry on learning, though without the environment of the school, they do not achieve as well as they could. Teachers provide good learning opportunities for children and consequently they enjoy their lessons and make good progress. There are many examples of outstanding teaching where teachers provide pupils with the opportunities to work independently and this accelerates their progress. Occasionally, however, opportunities to stretch the most able are missed and, where this occurs, their progress slows down.

Pupils' personal development and well being is good and some aspects are outstanding. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils are often excited by what they learn and are able to think reflectively, sometimes for an extended period. A telling example is the long silence that they are able to achieve during shared exercises and games based on yoga.

Senior leaders, supported by governors and staff, are effective and know the school well. They consistently take action to remove barriers to learning and raise standards. The school has good plans to strengthen the role middle leaders play in helping teachers deliver more outstanding lessons. Led by a charismatic and energetic headteacher, the school has created a harmonious atmosphere in which children from a multitude of different faiths, ethnic origins, languages and abilities can flourish.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Planning is effective in the Nursery and Reception classes and ensures a good balance between times when children choose what to learn for themselves and when teachers decide what they should do. Children progress at a good rate over time, leading to good achievement in all areas of learning and development. Good provision indoors is supported by a securely fenced outside area, although options for using this space when the weather is particularly inclement are sometimes limited by lack of shelter. Senior staff are well aware of this and are seeking approval for plans to rectify it. For many children starting points are low so that, by the time they enter Year 1, not all reach the expected goals for their age, especially in language and communication

skills. Nevertheless, a very good link with staff in Year 1, together with careful adaptations of teaching, supports children's transition when they move on. This ensures that their good rates of progress can be maintained. Leadership and management in the EYFS are good and teachers monitor learning and progress effectively. Staff quickly identify children who are not making enough progress and take effective action.

Children develop their basic skills in the pre-school successfully because staff support their learning effectively. The leadership and staff work successfully with parents, but not enough is done to share planning for their children with them. A small number of the inside and outside areas are not used effectively to develop children's imagination, partly because resources are a little limited. Children's welfare needs are outstandingly provided for throughout the EYFS. They receive high quality care from all the adults who work with them. This ensures that children feel safe, comfortable and ready to engage with learning. Whilst adults regularly plan together for children's learning, this does not always include specific learning objectives or the next steps in children's learning, particularly in key areas such as language development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure planning in the pre-school is shared with parents and accelerate plans to provide shelter in the outside area to further enhance children's learning in the EYFS.
- Build on the best practice and involve middle managers more fully in monitoring and supporting teaching to increase the proportion of outstanding lessons.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children enter the nursery with standards below and sometimes well below the expectations for their age. They make good progress in the EYFS. Achievement across the school from Years 1 to 6 is good and so by the time they reach the end of Year 6 pupils' standards are in line with national averages. Some pupils make outstanding progress, but some arriving mid year and who stay for a short period do not progress as well. Pupils' progress has improved steadily in the last few years because the school sets pupils challenging targets and offers them effective support in helping them to reach them. Pupils' writing skills improved significantly in 2007 and the staff are doing good work to match that improvement in their reading skills. Pupils who are in the early stages of learning English gain skills quickly and this helps them to access all aspects of the curriculum. Pupils who find learning more difficult also make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' good personal development and well-being is demonstrated in their willingness to work together in groups and cooperate on investigations. They behave well and this contributes strongly to the climate for learning within the school. Pupils respect each other, mix well and develop very rapidly in their cultural awareness, appreciating different ideas and the religious values of other people to a great extent. They greatly enjoy school and this can be seen clearly in lessons, where pupils are very keen to contribute. A number of families struggle to support their children in coming to school regularly. The school takes rigorous and robust steps to improve pupils' attendance. Nevertheless, attendance remains below average. Pupils contribute very effectively to the school's management, offering ideas for improvement through their school council and carrying out many supportive tasks around the building. They are influential in the wider community, raising considerable charitable funding and paying visits to a home

for elderly people. They have a good understanding of how to eat healthily and act safely. Good progress in literacy, numeracy, ICT and social skills prepares them well for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Learners make good progress because of the good and sometimes outstanding teaching they receive. Teachers provide pupils with a range of interesting activities that engage and motivate them. Children have excellent relationships with their teachers and this promotes good attitudes to learning. Those pupils who struggle to attend regularly are also warmly welcomed into lessons. Teachers assess the children's work regularly and accurately. Children also have the opportunity to measure their own success and this effectively helps them to be responsible for their own learning. Whilst teachers generally provide a good level of challenge, there are times when the more able pupils are not extended far enough. Consequently, their rates of progress are not as fast as they could be. The school make good use of additional adults to support learners who are in the early stages of learning English.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

An outstanding feature of the school is the curriculum, particularly the way the school makes the most of its extended provision. An impressive range of sport and other enrichment ensures all children are engaged and that there is something for everyone. For example, at a well-supported lunchtime tap dance class, pupils not only benefit from learning a physical activity but gain skills of concentration. All statutory requirements are met and the curriculum is usually closely matched to pupils' needs. Literacy skills are promoted effectively throughout the curriculum. The school has recently adopted an exciting programme in science, which is already showing signs of improving the way pupils apply new skills across the curriculum. The school sets great store in developing pupils' independent learning skills. This helps pupils who have low self-esteem to achieve well and move on to the next steps in their education.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

This aspect of the school's work is outstanding because it creates stability and opportunities to achieve, particularly for children who have turbulent lives. Robust systems for ensuring children's safety underpin the school's caring nature and ensure that pupils' pastoral needs are given close attention. The school provides a safe, secure environment and pupils respond by adopting safe behaviours. The school is highly effective in helping vulnerable pupils by working in close partnership with a range of outside agencies. Pupils who find it difficult to learn, or struggle to attend school regularly, are well provided for. Teaching assistants provide effective classroom support to pupils and good systems ensure that they are deployed where they will make most impact. Pupils who arrive from other countries are warmly welcomed and the impressive support they receive results in them settling quickly into school. Consequently, they are then able to focus on their learning and make good progress. The school has good systems for tracking pupils' progress that are used effectively to identify underachievement and plan effective intervention. Children know their targets and how to use them to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Senior and middle leaders are focussed effectively on raising standards and achievement and as a result have taken good steps to improve since the last inspection. Their success can be seen in the recent improvements in children's writing and the results in national tests at the end of Key Stage 2. The school has an accurate picture of its strengths and the areas it could improve through a wealth of monitoring and robust tracking of pupils' progress. Feedback given to teachers is useful. However, it does not always focus tightly enough on learning and consequently teachers are not always clear on how they can improve the learning of the pupils in their care from good to outstanding. The school knows this and middle leaders are developing their role in analysing the results of their monitoring to increase the proportion of outstanding lessons. All teachers, adults and children do exceptional work in promoting community cohesion, not only within the school, but also beyond the school gates. The strong bonds pupils form with each other and with staff promotes tolerance and understanding between different faiths and ethnic groups. This in turn has a positive effect on the families of those pupils. The school uses challenging targets effectively and it has good capacity to secure further 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?	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?	2
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	3
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?	2
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	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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?	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?	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**

16 October 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Holdbrook Primary School, Waltham Cross EN8 7QG

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We were impressed with how friendly you were. We really enjoyed looking around and meeting you, your teachers and other adults and seeing what you achieve in school. We found talking to you very interesting and these discussions helped us to come to decisions about how good your school is.

Yours is a good school with some outstanding aspects. We were particularly impressed with how well you work and play together. You told us how well teachers help children who are new to the school settle in so that they can work hard and achieve. It was good to see how polite and well mannered you are and that you concentrate well in lessons. You told us that you feel safe in school and about how much you enjoy your lessons. We can understand why. Your teachers make sure the work is right for you and help you to take responsibility for your own learning.

The clubs and activities you have are excellent and we were pleased to see how many of you attend them. We really enjoyed the tap dancing and saw that you were concentrating hard and learning new skills. Mrs Scudamore and the teachers make sure everybody learns about different faiths and backgrounds and this helps you to understand each other. This is extremely important in preparing you for when you are adults. You know a great deal about how to keep safe and healthy and it was good to see children in the Foundation unit talking sensibly about healthy food.

We have asked the teachers to make sure your learning is even better by improving the areas where the younger children play outside. We have also asked the pre-school teachers to let your parents know what they have planned for you so they can help you too. Mrs Scudamore checks your work regularly and other teachers help her. Some of your lessons are excellent and I have asked the teachers to make sure all your lessons are of the same quality.

You go to a good school where lots of people from different cultures and faiths learn well together. You are helping your families to see how well this works too. You can play your part in making the school even better by making sure you attend regularly and by continuing to work hard.

Yours sincerely

Joan Hewitt

Lead inspector