

Holme Slack Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119234
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	326978
Inspection dates	16–17 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Dave Byrne

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	157
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 Keith Manogue
Headteacher	Mrs Michelle Peck
Date of previous school inspection	1 January 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Manor House Lane Preston Lancashire PR1 6HP
Telephone number	01772 795257

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	16–17 June 2009
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Fax number

01772 655 257

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than average and serves an area with above average levels of deprivation. An above average number of pupils join or leave the school at times other than normal. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. A large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. A small proportion is from a minority ethnic background. The number of pupils with English as an additional language is above the national average but very few require support for learning English. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is over twice the national average with some year groups registering over half in the category. Over three times the national average of pupils have a statement of special educational need. There is a resource base for pupils with a hearing impairment. The school makes provision for children at the Early Years Foundation Stage in a Reception class.

There is pre-school provision on site, run by a private provider. This was inspected separately by Ofsted.

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 which is making a positive difference to the lives of its pupils and their community. Leadership and management have improved since the last inspection and pupils now achieve higher standards due largely to more effective teaching and learning.

Pupils benefit from outstanding levels of pastoral care. Good relationships pervade the school. These not only help pupils to feel safe and secure but also give pupils the confidence to have a go at challenging work in lessons. The needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are met very well. The inclusion of all pupils, including those with a hearing impairment, is successfully achieved. The cultural diversity within the school's population is celebrated and the needs of boys and girls recognised.

Achievement is good. Children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with levels of development which are much lower than those typical for their age. They make good progress in Key Stages 1 and 2. By the end of Year 6, standards are broadly average in English, mathematics and science. This represents good achievement from their starting points. The school rightly identifies that there is scope for further improvement in standards in English.

Teaching and learning are good. The range of needs within each class is generally well catered for. Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to the inclusion and progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A good curriculum complements the good teaching. Many exciting curriculum initiatives have been introduced to add enjoyment to lessons and to develop pupils' weak skills in speaking. Excellent use of role-play and drama activities is made in all classes. Pupils in Year 1 were totally engrossed in their trip to the seaside. As well as being lots of fun, pupils also broadened their knowledge and understanding of the world and were introduced to new and challenging vocabulary and sounds.

Personal development and well-being, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. The large majority of parents and carers praise the school but a few express mild concerns about behaviour. However, inspectors consider that behaviour is essentially good as a result of effective management by all staff. By the end of Year 6, most pupils grow into mature, caring and responsible people who are well prepared for their next stage of education. They are aware of the choices required to stay healthy and safe and know how to take responsibility.

Leadership and management, including governance, are good. An excellent partnership between the headteacher and the deputy headteacher is driving the school forward at a good rate. Strong teamwork between all staff makes sure that inclusion is extremely well managed. Managers keep a close eye on achievement and standards and use assessment information to identify areas to improve. Despite a very clear vision, the school improvement plan is very brief and lacks a suitably long-term vision for the school's development. This limits the improvement in some important areas. With its proven track record, the school has good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. The levels of skills of children when they start in the Reception class are generally well below what is typical for their age. Good induction arrangements and good levels of welfare help children to settle and

thrive. Their personal skills develop well and they reach levels expected for their age. In other aspects of their learning good progress occurs but significant weaknesses in communication and language development mean that children leave the Reception class with standards below those typical for their age.

Good and imaginative teaching gives children a wide range of exciting activities matched to their individual needs. Children are given the confidence to follow their own interests within the safe and secure indoor learning area. Enjoyment pervades all that goes on in the Reception class. Children were totally engrossed in their Bear Hunt acted out in the hall; crawling along a bench through a 'Snow Storm' of white polystyrene while at the same time learning and using new language. Good attention is given to improving speaking through developing children's knowledge and understanding of sounds and letters. Outdoor provision currently limits progress in some parts of each area of learning. The school is aware of this and a building upgrade is imminent.

The involvement of parents and carers is actively promoted and guidance is available for those who wish to help their children learn at home. Staff know the children well and make good use of assessment to keep an eye on their progress. This helps to target additional support where required, for example, by arranging speech and language therapy.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English across the school, especially by providing pupils with better guidance on how to improve their work and enabling them to become more involved in setting their own targets.
- Improve the quality of the school's improvement plan to fully reflect the long-term vision for the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Overall achievement is good and standards are in line with those expected nationally when they leave in Year 6. This represents good progress compared to pupils' starting points when they join the school. Teachers' assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2008 were much closer to average than when the pupils started in Year 1 reflecting good progress. At Key Stage 2, standards have been steadily rising in recent years to broadly average. In 2008, they dipped slightly, mainly due to a weakness in reading. The school acted swiftly to introduce strategies to improve pupils' speaking and understanding of phonics and to make writing more exciting. Evidence held by the school indicates that progress in reading is currently accelerating and standards in writing are improving. Twice the national average of pupils has learning difficulties and/or disabilities with many needing extra help with literacy. A high proportion of pupils have poor language skills which reduce aspects of their academic performance. Very good support means they meet the challenging expectations and make good progress. The school's tracking of pupil progress show that those learning English as an additional language make good progress and those from Asian British ethnic origin tend to do better than other pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development, are good. Pupils feel safe, and most enjoy school life. A small but significant

minority, however, miss school regularly and some come to school late which reduces attendance to being broadly average. Pupils display positive attitudes to learning. A typical comment was, 'I like the lessons because they're interesting and challenging, and you're never quite sure what will happen next.' Pupils are friendly and polite, and their behaviour is good. Relationships are warm and pupils of all backgrounds are caring towards one another. Pupils develop a good understanding of the range of cultures within the school and the local community and increasingly of their place in the wider world. The school has an Activemark award for its commitment to sport and is recognised as a Healthy School. Pupils know what to do to stay safe and to be healthy. Pupils make a successful contribution to the school community through the many extra responsibilities they take on, for example, as school councillors or playground helpers (termed 'squaddies'). The many personal strengths and social skills of most pupils, coupled with their positive attitudes to learning and good progress in basic skills, give them a good platform for their future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good with some excellent features in Key Stage 1. Relationships are very good and pupils say their lessons are fun. The recent increase in the use of role-play and drama has boosted pupils' love of learning and accelerated their progress in literacy. Staff are very effective in questioning and this leads to some lively class discussions and good opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking skills. Teachers generally take an active approach to learning. They plan topics carefully and use resources that interest pupils. Lessons therefore cater for the different learning styles of pupils and motivate them successfully. The information from regular assessments is used very well to plan work for the different ability groups. The more able pupils enjoy extension tasks. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, emotional problems or learning English as an additional language receive good support and do well. Teaching assistants are generally well trained and experienced. They make a significant contribution to learning, both in class and group work. An excellent contribution is made in supporting pupils with a hearing impairment and those who need support for speech. Teachers keep up to date with marking but it is not always effective in providing pupils with sufficient guidance about how they can improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and meets the needs of all pupils well. It raises pupils' aspirations for their future lives and successfully broadens their knowledge and understanding of the world. A suitable focus is given to developing pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. Recent revisions in the way subjects are planned are impacting positively on pupils' enjoyment. For example, the increased use of role-play and drama makes learning more relevant and is raising standards in speaking, reading and writing. Pupils particularly enjoy themed days and weeks. They gained much from an arts week and Year 6 are enthusiastically making plans for their 'Initiative Day'. In Year 6, pupils were fascinated by a visitor who played in a group that supported the Beatles and prompted a variety of incisive questions for him. The curriculum makes a valuable contribution to pupils' good personal development through a very strong personal, social, health and citizenship education programme. A wide range of very well selected educational visits, including residential visits, extends learning

beyond the classroom. Pupils benefit from working cooperatively, such as creating a vegetable garden and developing the school's grounds, to enhance their learning. An extensive variety of extra-curricular activities, including music and sporting activities are well attended.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good with outstanding elements in pastoral support. Arrangements for child protection, health and safety, and safeguarding meet current requirements. Parents overwhelmingly agree that their children feel safe and happy at school. Staff go to great lengths to find specialist help for pupils where it is needed. Learning mentors make a significant contribution to the excellent inclusion of all pupils and also contribute greatly to minimising absence and lateness. The use of teaching assistants to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well planned and targeted to ensure the pupils participate fully. The school's unit for hearing impaired pupils is very effective in ensuring its pupils integrate extremely successfully while developing their growing independence. The school effectively tracks each pupil's progress. This is used to direct additional help where needed, including to challenge the gifted and talented. Pupils' involvement in assessing their own progress and creating targets for their own improvement lacks consistency across the school and holds back the progress made by some pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management, including governance, are good. The headteacher and deputy headteacher form a dynamic and very productive partnership. Together, they have developed a strong staff team who share the same vision for the school's future. Senior and subject leaders keep a close eye on provision and achievement. They clearly know the strengths of the school and areas for improvement and take action to deal with any weaknesses. For example, steps taken to improve standards in English across the school are showing signs of success. The longer-term vision and ambition for the school, although clear in its direction, is not reflected well enough in the current school improvement plan. The targets for improvement are very narrow and current criteria for assessing the success in reaching targets are vague.

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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?	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?	2
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	2
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	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
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?	2

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	3
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?	2
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**

18 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Holme Slack Community Primary School, Lancashire,

PR1 6HP

Holme Slack is a good school. It supports all of you very well and helps you to grow into mature, friendly and mostly confident young people. You make good progress academically, with many of you overcoming difficulties with learning. Most of you leave school in Year 6 with average standards in English, mathematics and science.

Your staff are very caring and do a great job helping all of you to learn and enjoy school. Lessons are usually fun and teaching is good. The many opportunities you have in lessons to act things out make much of your learning enjoyable. You benefit from a wide range of clubs and visits.

We were very impressed with your good behaviour, your manners and friendliness. It was so good to see how well you get on together and show care for others. The school helps you to become thoughtful citizens who understand how to keep healthy and be safe. The celebration of the differing cultures and backgrounds within school gives you positive attitudes for future life.

Your headteacher is a very important reason why your school is successful. Working together with the governors, the deputy headteacher and other key staff, she ensures that the school is constantly improving. They value your opinions and views and act on them, for example, in planning improvements to your toilets. We feel your school is doing a good job in playing an important role in your local community. It values the support it receives from those locally who work hard to improve your learning.

To improve the school further we have asked that it does two things.

- Raise standards in English.
- Improve the school development plan.

I send you all the best wishes for your future and hope that you continue to try hard in school.

Yours sincerely

Dave Byrne

Lead inspector