

Holland House Infant School and Nursery

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103360
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	336063
Inspection dates	29–30 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Andrew Stafford

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	219
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Rob Salter
Headteacher	Mrs Diane McFarlane
Date of previous school inspection	22 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons and observed seven teachers. They held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils, including the school council. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school development plan, safeguarding documentation and the 65 questionnaires returned by parents and 27 by staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

the success of strategies to continue to raise standards in key subjects

- how well pupils use their key literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects
- how well the school identifies and responds to underachievement.

Information about the school

This is an average sized school. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, with a small proportion from minority ethnic families. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. Most of these have emotional and social needs or speech, language and communication difficulties. The school has Healthy School status and the Activemark award. A Children's Centre, which is an integral part of the school, has opened on the same site.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is an outstanding school. A significant success of the school is its outstanding partnerships, both with parents and a wide range of outside agencies to support pupils' learning. Parents are extremely supportive of the school and value all that it offers their children. One parent, representing many, stated, 'The ethos of the school is totally child-centred, caring and inclusive, and values each child as an individual.' These partnerships, together with excellent care, guidance and support, are especially effective in supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, pupils learning English as an additional language and other vulnerable groups. As a result, these groups make good progress in their learning and, by the end of Year 2; the majority outperform similar groups nationally in the teacher assessments.

Children's behaviour is excellent in lessons and outdoors. This is demonstrated by how well pupils are occupied at playtimes. For instance, they water plants in their gardens or play with the equipment chosen and laid out by representatives from the school council. Children readily take on these, and other responsibilities, making an outstanding contribution to the school community. Children have outstanding awareness of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and they particularly enjoy the daily 'Wake and Shake' exercise sessions. Comments made by children show that they understand the consequences of poor diet and lack of exercise. They have a great deal of choice of healthy foods from the dining hall and over two hours of physical activities each week, for which the school has received Healthy School status and the Activemark award. Children have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe, as demonstrated by, for example, their knowledge of road safety and the reasons they are all taught to swim. Governors and staff rigorously ensure that the school complies fully with all requirements for child protection, and safeguarding of pupils is outstanding. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Assemblies contribute exceptionally well, for example, to opportunities for pupils to quietly reflect on important moral issues.

An outstanding feature is the success of the Foundation Stage Unit and its very effective contribution to the school's provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. As one parent wrote, 'I have to say that my child could not have had a better start to her education.' Children get off to an excellent start in the Nursery because of excellent teaching and learning and the imaginative and creative use of the indoor and outdoor learning areas. Children in Reception clearly benefit from the mixed-age groupings in their first year in the Foundation Stage Unit and reflect the enjoyment of learning evident across the Early Years Foundation Stage. Resources and provision in the indoor learning area for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are very good, and the

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improved range of equipment to support their outdoor learning is excellent. As a result, children greatly enjoy the wealth of opportunities to experience all six areas of learning in an outdoor classroom.

Standards in reading have risen and are now high. In writing, standards have improved from below average to above average, and the upward trend continues. The effective 'setted' teaching of letters and sounds and giving younger children, especially boys, greater opportunities for large mark-making, have had a positive impact on improving standards. Pupils are successful in using their writing skills in their topic work because the excellent curriculum created by their teachers helps them understand that they are writing for a real purpose. Standards in mathematics are above average and there are good examples of pupils using their measuring skills accurately in scientific investigations.

Teachers have excellent relationships with pupils. Their subject knowledge is very good, especially in the teaching of key skills. Teachers' planning is not consistently effective, however, in meeting the needs of all pupils, especially the more able. Planning is not always focused precisely on what different groups of pupils are expected to achieve by the end of lessons. As a result, there are times when more able pupils do not achieve as much as they could within lessons.

The inspirational leadership of the headteacher has resulted in a committed staff team who work successfully in driving the school forward. There is a very clear vision aimed at school improvement, with a focus on the further raising of standards. School self-evaluation is comprehensive and accurate. The successes this year, including the higher standards again in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2, confirm that the school has good capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teachers' planning in Years 1 and 2 is more consistent in meeting the needs of all pupils, especially the more able, by placing greater emphasis on what different groups are expected to learn by the end of each lesson.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

Pupils greatly enjoy school and are very friendly and welcoming. They readily engage in conversation with visitors and enjoy talking about their work and achievements. In lessons, they work very hard and show good levels of concentration. In a literacy lesson in Year 2, pupils worked together in groups exceptionally well to analyse 'silly' poems and then report their views to the rest of the class. In a literacy lesson in Year 1, pupils who find learning hard showed very good sustained concentration when designing and making their 'magic hats' as part of the stimulation to remember new vocabulary. Occasionally, interest waivers in lessons and this is linked to insufficient challenge, especially for the more able.

There is no significant variation in the performance of groups in the school. The gap between girls and boys has closed, with boys now outperforming boys nationally in the

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teacher assessments at the end of Year 2. This year there was improvement in the proportion of pupils who achieved the higher Level 3 in reading and mathematics. The quality of artwork is stunning and standards in science exceed those expected nationally.

Pupils feel totally safe and secure in school and are clear that any occasional unkind comments are dealt with swiftly when they confide in trusted adults. Pupils readily list foods, and how much exercise they should take, to show their excellent understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles. Through the school council, and pupils' role as 'Special Person of the Day', pupils take responsibility for supporting their classmates, and this makes a very strong contribution to the happiness of life in school. The cultivation of the school's gardens by pupils, also working with their fathers, has raised pupils' awareness of good ecology and taken the school into the wider community. Pupils are prepared successfully for transfer to junior school.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teachers make very effective use of information and communication technology to

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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support pupils' learning, especially the interactive whiteboards. Teachers use these successfully in explaining new learning and teaching new skills. A significant feature is the way that teachers encourage pupils to use the interactive whiteboards to explain their ideas and thinking to the rest of the class. Marking is good and teachers have high expectations that pupils should present their work neatly, as is most evident in their writing and topic books.

Assessment of the performance of groups of pupils is strong. Any potential underachievement is identified quickly and intervention programmes rapidly put in place. Many of the intervention programmes are run by the highly skilled teaching assistants, including for those few pupils learning English as an additional language. As a result of such programmes, pupils make good progress and catch up on their learning. At a day-to-day level, there is inconsistency in the way teachers use assessment of prior learning to plan next steps for pupils and this contributes to a lack of challenge for more able pupils within individual lessons.

Pupils talk enthusiastically about the visits they have been on and visitors who come to their school and these are clearly very memorable experiences for them. The school's successful use of the social and emotional aspects of learning has a strong impact on strengths in pupils' personal development. The excellent curriculum is planned very carefully to give pupils a meaningful understanding of links between subjects. For example, in topic work, pupils imaginatively used their literacy skills to express perceptive ideas about the work of famous people like Van Gogh.

Parents are unanimous in their view that the school keeps their children safe. Transition arrangements for joining the Nursery and/or Reception classes are excellent. One parent wrote, 'The induction sessions are very helpful in building the children's confidence.' This feature deepens parents' understanding of how their children learn and gives parents time to share any worries or concerns with teachers or teaching assistants. Another parent wrote, 'I must praise, in particular, the pastoral care of the school. My child and I have needed and benefited from the support that is readily available. My child is happy at Holland House and will be sorry to leave.'

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher brings a real sense of drive and determination to the school that has been embraced by the whole staff team. The leadership team has a determined focus

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on the need to continue to drive up standards and a relentless approach to the monitoring and tracking of the progress of groups of pupils to address any potential underachievement. The school's good promotion of equality is clearly demonstrated by the way in which the progress of different groups of pupils, and individuals, is analysed and any concerns quickly acted upon. All staff work together particularly well as a team with a common vision and sense of purpose. Parents recognise this, and one wrote, 'Management is strong and purposeful, but approachable, and there is a sense of cohesion with the entire staff.' Safeguarding procedures are exceptionally secure. Practice is meticulous in meeting safeguarding requirements, and any day-to-day issues are dealt with swiftly by a team including senior leaders and a teaching assistant trusted by children to look after their welfare. Vigilant procedures by all staff make the site extremely secure.

The school and highly committed governing body have carried out an audit of community cohesion and local, national and international links are strengthening pupils' awareness of the different traditions and cultures that exist in modern society. Governors challenge the school and hold it to account for the standards achieved.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children in the Nursery and Reception arrive happily at the start of the day and quickly settle to the imaginative range of activities on offer. With the mixed-age groupings in the Nursery and Reception, the outdoor area is extremely popular. Children enjoy the current theme of 'Minibeasts' and especially playing 'Hunt the Minibeast' in the sand pit.

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Children show good levels of individual concentration, for example in writing sentences about the pictures in their reading books. Equally, they work very effectively as a team in making their minibeast collages. Children show good understanding and interest when linking letters and sounds using words containing 'oo'. Based on their broadly average starting points, children make excellent progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and the majority exceed the goals they are expected to achieve by the time they start Year 1.

The Early Years Foundation Stage leaders have been instrumental in creating an outstanding setting where staff work very well together as a team. Teachers, and teaching assistants have excellent relationships with children. They are particularly skilled in questioning and using this to develop and extend children's thinking. Resources are used exceptionally well, including the interactive whiteboards, computers and construction toys that lead to very good creative development. The range of resources is extremely good in the outdoor area and children enjoy choosing their own activities during the free flow between indoor and outdoors. Assessments of children's learning are good, with the use of the individual 'My Learning Journal' building a detailed picture of children's successes in school and at home. Partnerships with parents are excellent and a major factor in children's successful learning.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

A high proportion of parents wrote very positive and supportive comments about their children's experiences in the school. Parents are particularly appreciative of the quality of transition into the Nursery, the 'exceptional Foundation Stage' and the high quality of teaching their children receive. 'Parents are encouraged to involve themselves in their child's education through workshops and homework, and parental input is actively sought', wrote one happy parent.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Holland House Infant School and Nursery to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 65 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 219 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	47	72	18	28	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	56	86	9	14	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	37	57	28	43	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	37	57	27	42	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	46	71	19	29	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	41	63	24	37	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	45	69	20	31	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	41	63	24	37	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	41	63	23	35	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	43	66	22	34	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	36	55	29	45	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	46	71	19	29	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	53	82	12	18	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



1 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Holland House Infant School and Nursery, Sutton Coldfield, B72 1RE

Thank you very much for the lovely welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We were very impressed with how friendly you all are. On behalf of the team, I would like to thank the school council, in particular, for giving up part of their lunchtime to meet with me. I am delighted to tell you that you go to an outstanding school and these are some of the areas that are especially good:

- those of you in the Early Years Foundation Stage get an excellent start to being at school
- by the end of Year 2 you reach standards that are higher than for most seven-year-olds
- you have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe and be healthy
- you have excellent relationships with your teachers and teaching assistants
- you enjoy going on visits and meeting visitors who come to your school and your artwork is stunning
- the school works exceptionally well with your parents to help you learn and make good progress in school.

Even though yours is an outstanding school, there is one thing which I think would make it even better. So I have asked your headteacher, teachers and governors to:

- make sure that when planning lessons, teachers give you work that makes you have to really think and work hard.

Carry on being such lovely young people and work hard for your teachers in lessons.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Stafford

Lead inspector

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