

Holden Clough Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106216
Local Authority	Tameside
Inspection number	336636
Inspection dates	4–5 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Sarah Drake

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	256
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Debbie Brindle
Headteacher	Mrs Beverley McGowan
Date of previous school inspection	14 March 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 16 lessons taught by 11 teachers. They held meetings with staff, members of the governing body, groups of pupils and a small number of parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation relating to pupils' progress, the curriculum, leadership and management. The inspectors also took into account the responses to questionnaires returned by 124 pupils, 14 members of staff and 94 (105) parents and carers.

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

- the progress made by all pupils, particularly those who are more-able
- whether inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning, identified by the school, are having a negative impact on overall levels of attainment
- the effectiveness of the restructured leadership team in driving forward improvement
- the impact of the school's many partnerships and recently gained awards.

Information about the school

This school is larger than average and serves a suburban area that has a mixture of owner-occupied and rented housing. The large majority of pupils are White British. The proportions of pupils who belong to minority ethnic groups and who speak English as an additional language have grown significantly since the previous inspection and are now larger than average. Most of these pupils are of Indian or Pakistani heritage. The numbers that are known to be eligible for a free school meal or that have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well below average. The school offers wraparound care provision for children of Nursery age.

Since the previous inspection the school has achieved national Healthy School status, the Active Mark, the International Green Flag Award, the International Schools Award and the British Council e-twinning award.

A private provider operates before- and after-school provision on the school site. This did not form part of the inspection but a report about its quality is available on the Ofsted website.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school which pupils accurately describe as 'fun-filled and friendly.' Most children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with the skills expected for their age and make good progress within a bright, happy environment. Attainment at the end of both key stages has risen over the past five years and is significantly above average. This is due to good quality leadership and management, based on careful monitoring of pupils' progress that informs all decision-making about adaptations to the provision. For example, the recent focus on developing pupils' reading skills is having a big impact on their attainment in this aspect of English, bringing it in line with the impressively high quality of their writing. Successful distribution of responsibilities among the senior leaders creates a strong sense of ambition and clear accountability that, together with the evidence of improvements already made, provide the school with good capacity to improve further.

The monitoring of the effectiveness of teaching has had some impact so that, overall, teaching is now of good quality. However, there remain inconsistencies throughout the school which mean that, although pupils make good progress overall, the rate is more rapid in some year groups than others. In some classes, pupils' progress is hampered because teachers do not allow enough time for the completion of tasks. Another relative weakness is that teachers do not always check that pupils act upon written advice on how to improve. The governing body meets regularly and is suitably informed about school life, but is not yet sufficiently rigorous in the way that it reviews the effectiveness of policies and procedures or holds the school to account for standards and progress.

Pupils enjoy school. They form good quality relationships, staunchly challenge racism and are adamant that bullying is a very rare event which staff tackle swiftly and effectively. The lively curriculum enables pupils to practise their developing skills across a range of subjects that interest them and encourage them to become enthusiastic learners. Opportunities such as those related to the environment and the linking with other schools broaden their horizons and prepare them well to take their place in the community.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Eradicate inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, by:
 - increasing the regularity and effectiveness of the monitoring of lessons
 - ensuring that all teachers allow pupils sufficient time to complete their tasks
 - ensuring that pupils understand and respond to the guidance provided through

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marking their work.

- Improve the rigour with which the governing body holds the school to account, by:
 - establishing a system for regularly reviewing the effectiveness of policies and risk assessments
 - enhancing members' understanding of how to interpret information about pupil progress.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils settle well in lessons, collaborate well when, for example, discussing their ideas or setting up an experiment. Those of higher ability, particularly, demonstrate real enthusiasm, concentration and perseverance with their work. The good quality relationships that are so evident throughout the school mean that pupils have the confidence to volunteer answers and to 'have a go'. They generally take care with their work and some use research that they have completed at home to inform their future work in class. Such positive attitudes towards learning underpin the good progress that all groups of pupils make. Many pupils in Year 5 are already working at the levels expected of pupils one year older. Around half of those in Year 6 are working at the higher levels expected for their age in English and mathematics. The few pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well in response to well-targeted support. Similarly, pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress so that there is no difference between their attainment and that of other pupils. Sometimes, when the quality of teaching is less effective, pupils grow restless, inattentive and spend too much time getting down to productive work. As a result, progress in these lessons is less rapid. Nevertheless overall, pupils' achievement is good.

The school's many awards celebrate pupils' well-rounded achievements beyond the classroom. Pupils understand the factors that contribute to a healthy lifestyle and many eagerly participate in extra sporting activities. They say they feel very safe in school. They have a sensible awareness of potential dangers, including those posed by the internet, and, having conducted a survey about their journeys to school, have highlighted to the local authority the hazards posed by busy roads and deep potholes. Many pupils take on responsibilities, ranging from the Year 2 'Little Rotters' environmental group, to those who help to coach others in cross country running or football. Pupils' good behaviour, politeness, respect for and the ability to empathise with others mean that the school operates as a harmonious, happy community.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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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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	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
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	2

How effective is the provision?

Since the previous inspection, the quality of provision has improved. Most lesson plans now identify how the activities will be adapted to suit the different abilities of pupils, and many teachers put this into effective practice in the classroom. They make good links back to pupils' prior learning and clarify precisely what they expect pupils to do. Most teachers use their good subject knowledge effectively, for example, when questioning pupils in a way that encourages them to think hard. Lessons where the teaching includes practical activities, use of role play, games or the added spice of a challenge between different teams, fire pupils' enthusiasm and lead to them making good progress. Sometimes the teaching requires pupils to listen to the adult for too long and, therefore, they have too little time to become actively engaged in their own learning. Pupils' work is assessed regularly but marking practice varies and does not reflect the school policy. Most teachers provide comments which pupils say they find helpful in pointing them towards the next steps in their learning. However, the comments seldom relate to individuals' personal targets and teachers do not always ensure that individuals act on the advice given.

The rich, diverse curriculum engages pupils' interest and supports their good progress. For example, the work of Year 4 pupils on Rangoli patterns reflects the Indian heritage of many. It has challenged their mathematical thinking and enhanced their artistic and information and communication technology skills. Close working with a range of outside agencies has led to increased involvement of pupils in decision making, such as the development of 'tomorrow's classroom'. Links with other schools locally and internationally enhance pupils' communication skills in Italian and Spanish, as well as

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English. Environmental work related to reducing energy consumption extends pupils' mathematical and observational skills as well as creating a sense of community responsibility.

Early identification of pupils needing additional support leads to good quality small group work, often led by effective teaching assistants. Partnership working with a group of local schools has had a significant impact on the ease with which pupils transfer from one class to another, then on to secondary school. Staff know pupils well as individuals and are alert to their needs. As one pupil commented, 'All the adults work hard to help us.'

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Determined leadership has driven the school forward and improved the outcomes for pupils. Because it is based soundly on analysis of pupils' progress, development planning identifies the correct areas of focus and sets clear, measurable success criteria. The expansion of the senior leadership team has led to closely targeted support for staff responsible for different age groups within school. Senior staff regularly monitor planning, the quality of teaching, the work in pupils' books and their progress. Inconsistencies in the usefulness of feedback given to teachers and in checks to ensure that development points have been acted on, mean that not all pupils benefit from the good practice seen in most classrooms. The governing body is very supportive of the school and takes a keen interest in its financial management. It is less rigorous in its review of policies and practice and in offering challenge in relation to the outcomes for pupils. Arrangements to ensure the safeguarding of pupils are satisfactory. Adequate staff training, vigilance and record keeping are in place but some policies are out of date and risk assessments lack some detail. Good practice related to ensuring equality of opportunity is helping to close gaps in the academic progress of different groups and to increase the participation of some reluctant pupils in activities such as physical exercise. The school successfully encourages parents and carers to become partners in their children's education through, for example, providing workshops and regular information about their child's progress. Through its many international, national and local links the school promotes community cohesion well.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
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 enjoy their time in the Nursery and Reception classes and make good progress in all areas of learning because the well-planned and organised provision captures their interest and encourages them to experiment. By the time they move into Year 1, the great majority have skills above those expected for their age. Good induction arrangements and partnership with parents and carers mean that children settle well and soon develop the confidence to choose for themselves what they want to do. They sustain their concentration well and collaborate amicably. Good links between the wrap-around provision and Early Years Foundation Stage staff ensure seamless provision for Nursery age children within a secure, familiar setting. Adults skilfully use their good relationships with the children to lead their learning forward. For example, through judicious intervention, a group of children building a tower were soon thinking about whether they would still be able to reach the top if they added another brick and whether it might be useful to engage the help of a taller classmate. Elsewhere, careful introduction to the newly established 'airport' meant that the children increased their understanding of different jobs, safety procedures and the use of x-ray equipment, preparing them well for further independent imaginative play. Staff make careful notes of children's achievements and adapt their planning accordingly, but do not yet record the precise next steps that individuals need to make in their learning. The outdoor provision reflects that available inside so children are equally well served in either. However, because the two year groups are physically far apart and there is insufficient staffing flexibility, children do not have continuous access to learning in the fresh air.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

All the parents and carers spoken with and the great majority of those who responded to the questionnaire are full of praise for the school. 'My child loves school, learns lots and it is a lovely environment for her to blossom in,' is typical of their comments. A small number expressed concerns about behaviour management. Whilst inspectors judge behaviour to be good overall, they agree that occasionally in lessons some pupils' restiveness and loss of focus have an impact on the enjoyment and learning of everyone in the class.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Holden Clough Community Primary School 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 94 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 256 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	77	69	33	29	1	1	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	77	69	35	31	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	59	53	48	43	4	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	63	56	43	38	4	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	69	62	41	37	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	45	40	61	54	4	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	61	54	49	44	1	1	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)	51	46	53	47	3	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	54	48	48	43	5	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	46	41	52	46	6	5	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	41	37	67	60	2	2	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	64	57	47	42	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	72	64	38	34	1	1	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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.



06 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Holden Clough Community Primary School, Ashton-Under-Lyne, OL6 8XN

Thank you for the warm welcome that you gave the other inspectors and me when we visited your school recently. It was good to see how polite and well-behaved you are, and how well you all get on together. Particular thanks should go to those of you who gave up some of your lunchtime to help us understand what it is like to be a pupil at Holden Clough.

Yours is a good school because, as one of you told us, 'All the adults work hard to help the pupils.' The teachers plan interesting lessons for you and take good care of you. This means that you want to work hard and concentrate well in lessons. Because of this you make good progress in your learning and many of you reach above average standards of work. You have good opportunities to learn about how people live in different countries, and about how the way that you choose to live has an impact on your own health and safety as well as the well-being of our planet. We were impressed by all your environmental work and also by how well you take on a number of different responsibilities.

Your headteacher and senior staff have already taken actions that mean the school has improved well over recent years and they are determined to keep up this momentum. To help them do so, we have asked them to make sure that all the teaching in every year group is as good as the best so that you can make even better progress. We think that you could help to speed up your progress by really taking on board the suggestions teachers make about how to improve your work. We have also asked members of the governing body to look more closely at your progress and to make sure that all the school's policies and procedures are kept up to date and working well.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Sarah Drake

Lead inspector

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