

Holsworthy Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113379
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	338157
Inspection dates	30 June –1 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Martin Kerly

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	325
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Reynolds
Headteacher	Alan Muller
Date of previous school inspection	12 July 2007
School address	Sanders Lane Holsworthy EX22 6HD
Telephone number	01409 253700
Fax number	01409 254662
Email address	admin@holsworthy-primary.devon.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 15 lessons and 11 teachers, held meetings with pupils, governors and staff, and informally met parents at the start of the day. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including the school's plans, policies, records of progress made by the pupils and 79 completed questionnaires received from parents and carers

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

- evidence of any trends in the attainment of children when entering the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1
- how successfully a gap in the performance of boys and girls has been reduced
- evidence of recent improvements in pupils' attainment in reading and science
- the consistency in the quality of teaching and the ways pupils are involved in assessing their progress.

Information about the school

The school is larger than average. A new Early Years Foundation Stage Unit, comprising separate Nursery and Reception classes, was opened in January 2010 in a new building within the school site. This building also contains a new children's centre but this is not managed by the school's governing body and so not reported on here. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are taught in three mixed-year classes. Almost all other pupils are taught in single year-group classes. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is a little higher than that found in most schools. These needs are varied, but in the main relate to speech and language difficulties. Almost all pupils are White British and very few are learning English as an additional language. The school has several awards, including the very recently confirmed Eco Green Flag, as well as Activemark and Healthy Schools status. The school was engaged in an arts week throughout the time of the inspection, with the normal class timetables suspended

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. It has many good features and a few outstanding elements. However, there are several aspects that need to improve to enable it to become a good school. The pupils' good personal development and well-being is a major strength. Pupils behave well and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are exceptionally committed to helping out around the community, with many very conscientiously taking on roles as councillors, monitors, activity leaders and fundraisers, both within school and more broadly around Holsworthy. Pupils' awareness of the importance of adopting healthy lifestyles is outstanding. This is shown by their excellent understanding of what constitutes a balanced diet and commitment to regular physical exercise. Almost all parents and carers who replied to the inspectors' questionnaire appreciated these qualities and recognised the good care, guidance and support that their children receive from the entire staff team.

Girls and boys make satisfactory progress and attainment is broadly average. Some recent dips in attainment, for example in reading in Year 2 and in science in Year 6, have been reversed this year as a result of changes in practice and improved intervention. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a sound start in their new accommodation. It is early days in this new building and the school is still finding its way in establishing a coherent and consistent way of operating, particularly in relation to assessment. At present there is some lack of clarity regarding leadership roles for Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities throughout the school make good and, in a few cases, outstanding progress. This is a result of much good and some outstanding teaching in their three classes. The quality of teaching elsewhere is often good, as was seen during the inspection in several art and design lessons, but it is less consistent, and especially so in the core subjects. Scrutinies of pupils' English, mathematics and science books show that some of the school's agreed systems are not being implemented in the way intended in each class. Teachers do not always plan work that fully reflects the full range of pupils' abilities, have high enough expectations of the more able or provide sufficiently clear information to pupils about how they can improve.

The school's core value to make learning exciting and engaging is clearly at the heart of the commitment by the headteacher and other leaders to enthral and stimulate the pupils. The school does this well. There is an outstandingly rich and varied range of special activities and events within the good curriculum and the pupils enjoy their time in school very much. The leadership team and governors carry out a number of checks on the school's performance. However, the school's capacity to improve is satisfactory rather than good. This is, in part, because of an over-reliance on informal checks,

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especially with regard to monitoring classroom practice. A few judgements about pupils' performance and the quality of provision are over-generous. The tendency to celebrate the good elements of practice rather than pinpoint and challenge those precise aspects that need to improve is slowing the school's overall rate of improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress by establishing good or better teaching in the majority of lessons in all classes, especially in the core subjects, by April 2011 by ensuring that teachers:
 - plan and provide activities that carefully reflect the full range of pupils' abilities
 - have high expectations of the more able pupils
 - provide regular and clear feedback to pupils and
 - involve them routinely in thinking about how to improve and their next steps in learning.
- Increase the leadership's effectiveness in bringing about school improvement by:
 - establishing by October 2010 a clear and manageable annual programme of checks and balances to enable leaders, middle managers and governors to monitor all aspects of the school's work
 - increase the frequency and rigour of formal observations of lessons by January 2011
 - ensure the recorded findings from monitoring pinpoint clearly and precisely any points for improvement and possible strategies to respond to them and that these are shared, as appropriate, with senior staff and governors.
- Make the best use of the new Early Years Foundation Stage Unit by establishing clear leadership and a coherent and consistent approach in each classroom, including assessment practices.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils enjoy school and are enthusiastic about all the special events and experiences planned for them. One told an inspector, 'There is lots of colour and we have great resources.' Nevertheless their attendance is only average and their overall achievement is satisfactory. This is because progress for the large majority is satisfactory rather than good. Girls' progress, which has been weaker, is accelerating and is now very close to that of the boys. The attainment of children on entry to the school is showing signs of declining, especially in early language skills, and is now a little below expectations. Most groups of pupils further up the school were broadly as expected on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage and when transferring into Year 1. Evidence from lessons, pupils' books, work displayed in classrooms, discussions with pupils and the school's much improved assessment records shows satisfactory progress. As a result, attainment in English, mathematics and science is broadly average by the end of Year 6. Many of

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the pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are approaching age-related expectations in their attainment by the time they leave the school, especially in science. This is a result of their consistently good progress. Pupils' average literacy and numeracy skills mean they are securely prepared for their next stage of education and adult life. This is supported well by their positive attitudes and willingness to work collaboratively and in teams, as seen, for example, when producing batik art work.

Pupils become exceptionally involved in community issues, correspond with town councillors and the local press, and take part in discussions about local plans and in litter collection schemes. In school, they fulfil a very wide range of roles as school or eco councillors, mediators, play leaders, running the healthy tuck shop or raising money for charities. They feel safe in school, and say they are confident about gaining the support and help of a member of staff if they have a problem. They are well informed about road and internet safety. They strongly appreciate the opportunities for healthy cooking activities, including the recent visits from local chefs on Healthy Eating Day, and enjoy leading and participating in the daily physical activities routines.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
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	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	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

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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A walk around the school reveals a vast array of displays showing the extremely varied and interesting experiences and activities provided, covering a very broad curriculum. Many reflect the strong emphasis on the personal and social development of pupils, and are reflected in gaining awards such as Healthy School status and Activemark. The quality of art and design is high and environmental issues are a common theme, such as the focus on the tropical rainforest during the arts week and the recent oil disaster in the Gulf of Mexico. Despite these excellent features, including the recent Green Flag award, the overall curriculum is good rather than outstanding. This is because the adaptation and fine planning for English and mathematics do not always reflect the full range of pupils' abilities in the class.

Teachers and teaching assistants have good relationships with the pupils and manage behaviour very well, promoting a purposeful working atmosphere in lessons. Pupils respond to this, listen carefully and value one another's ideas and contributions. There is much good, and some excellent, teaching and learning, as seen, for example, when a teacher was introducing the batik work, using high quality resources, skilfully linking pupils' previous experiences to reinforce the relevance. The teacher provided very clear guidance to the pupils about how to plan and prepare and set some precise targets by which the work could be judged and appreciated. Pupils then set about the planning stage very confidently, with high aspirations and expectations about what they could and would achieve. High expectations and clarity of input were not seen consistently in other classes, with the occasional low- level activity while the class teacher focused on a particular group. A number of potentially good assessment techniques have been introduced but these are not yet embedded across the school. This is reflected in the variation in quality and extent of guidance displayed in classrooms, the different approaches to marking pupils' work, as seen in books, and the limited occasions where pupils have clearly reflected on their teachers' comments and responded to them. This results in some variation in the pace of learning and pupils' longer-term progress

The provision and coordination of support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are good and lead to their strong progress. The school is very effective at helping pupils to overcome potential barriers to learning and has helped individuals to improve in confidence, achievement and relationships. There are good induction arrangements for children when joining the school and an innovative scheme to support the transfer to secondary school for those pupils who are judged to be more vulnerable. Almost all parents and carers responding to the inspectors' questionnaire expressed confidence that the school keeps their children safe.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

<p>The quality of teaching</p>	<p>3</p>
<p>Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning</p>	<p>3</p>
<p>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</p>	<p>2</p>

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The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2
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How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, supported by all the other leaders, promotes a strong commitment to extend pupils' horizons and aspirations for the future beyond their immediate environment. The outstanding enrichment within the curriculum is a direct result of good leadership in this aspect. The leaders have introduced effective systems to track pupils' progress and use them well to set targets and identify where additional support is needed. This proved successful this year in overcoming a weakness in reading in Years 1 and 2. However, sometimes the interpretations of pupils' attainment and progress are over-generous. This, along with a few other factors, restricts to 'satisfactory' the school's capacity to improve further. There is a reluctance to conduct formal monitoring of classroom practice, or insist that agreed practices are implemented. Notes from informal monitoring sometimes lack clarity about exactly what needs to improve, with a greater emphasis on strengths than the school's assessment data suggests is justified. Governors fulfil their legal responsibilities well and visit the school frequently to help keep informed. However, reports they receive do not always give them the full picture about the school's strengths and weaknesses and this limits their ability to challenge or hold the school to account. They ensure that safeguarding policies are fully in place, for example safer recruitment and child protection, and the headteacher ensures all members of staff administer them well and are regularly trained.

There is a clear commitment to promote equal opportunities, with all pupils equally valued and their achievements celebrated. The school works strenuously in partnership with parents and carers and external professional agencies and organisations in order to support particular pupils' needs and the well-being of all. It works energetically and imaginatively to promote community cohesion, contributing to the local, national and global communities through a range of projects and initiatives. Pupils take part in public meetings and contribute to development projects. They are very aware of the fair trade issues, lead charity collections with an established link in Goa, including email exchanges, and in school relate very well to one another regardless of background.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
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

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The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The children make satisfactory overall progress in the Nursery and Reception years. Much of the learning environment, in and out of doors, is bright and stimulating, offering the children a substantial range of experiences. By the end of the Reception Year, most are on track to attain the learning goals expected for their age. However, an increasing proportion of children arrive with limited language and communication skills and their attainment remains below expectations at the end of this stage. Children's personal and social development is nurtured well within a calm, caring and supportive atmosphere in which they feel secure and confident. The handover at the beginning and end of the day is managed well, with, for example, very careful supervision of children moving from one building to the other. A significant proportion of children make good progress in their physical and creative development, as was seen, for example, when making sculptures and sewing cushions depicting spiders.

The teachers and their assistants are continuing to consider how to make the best use of the new accommodation. Variations in how assessments are carried out, collated and used make it difficult for the school to make judgements about overall progress and to use assessments effectively in planning new experiences. At times, the focus is more on the activities themselves rather than the gains made in children's learning and how these might be extended. This reduces the potential for planning the next step in their learning.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

A small minority of parents and carers replied to the inspectors' questionnaire. Each question received a positive response from the very large majority of those that

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responded. Parents and carers were unanimous in their recognition of the school helping their children to adopt healthy lifestyles, and inspectors agree. Almost all confirmed their children enjoy school and their overall support for their children's school experiences. The area of least agreement was related to how effectively the school deals with unacceptable behaviour, where a few disagreed. Inspectors found the school has appropriate systems in place for the few incidents that occur.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Holsworthy Church of England 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 79 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 325 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	48	61	30	38	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	43	54	33	42	2	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	23	29	48	61	5	6	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	28	35	44	56	2	3	2	3
The teaching is good at this school	35	44	39	49	1	1	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	27	34	47	59	2	3	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	35	44	44	56	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)	29	37	43	54	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	29	51	65	4	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	22	28	41	52	8	10	4	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	32	44	56	7	9	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	37	47	38	48	2	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	40	51	36	46	3	4	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 Holsworthy Church of England Primary School, Holsworthy EX 22 6HD

Thank you for helping us when we visited your school during arts week. We enjoyed talking to you and seeing some of your work. Yours is a satisfactory school with lots of good features and some aspects that need to improve. We were particularly impressed by the brilliant way so many of you help out around the school, for example as school or eco-councillors, helping to gain the Green Flag award, or as play mediators and librarians. You make a difference to people's lives in Holsworthy and further afield by working hard to organise charity appeals and performing locally. You get involved in local issues and express your views by writing letters to the newspaper or town councillors. Very well done! You also impressed us by the way you are so clear about the importance of eating healthy food and taking regular exercise. All your parents and carers who replied to our questionnaire agree the school does well in this. You are thoughtful and sensitive towards one another, and clear about what is right and wrong. Many of you told us you feel safe in school. This is because all the adults in school take good care of you and are always there to help if you have a problem from time to time. In lessons, you behave well, listen carefully and get on sensibly with your work. This helps you to make steady progress. Your headteacher and teachers are great at planning interesting things for you to do, such as all the super activities during arts week. Your headteacher and other leaders are always thinking about ways to improve the school. We have asked them to work together with all the staff and the governors on three things to make it even better.

- Help you make even more progress with your work by ensuring teachers always give you work that is not too hard or too easy and give more time for you to think about what you have learnt and how to improve.
 - Improve the way leaders and governors check up on how well the school is doing, including carrying out more checks on what is happening in each class.
 - Ensure the very best use is made of the new Early Years Foundation Stage unit
- You can help by telling your teachers if your work is either too hard or too easy.

Yours sincerely

Martin Kerly

Lead Inspector

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