

Holt Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126329
Local Authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	340961
Inspection dates	22–23 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Margaret Dickinson HMI

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	114
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Irit Canzini
Headteacher	Mrs Margaret Harnden
Date of previous school inspection	9 June 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. The inspectors visited nine lessons and held meetings with staff, the chair of governors and a group of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including the school's own monitoring of its performance, its improvement plan, and the sheets for tracking pupils' progress. A total of 43 parents' questionnaires were analysed.

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

- the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- the learning and progress of pupils between the end of Reception and Year 2, and the learning and progress of pupils currently in Year 5
- how well pupils with special educational needs and learning disabilities achieve
- how effectively leaders and managers evaluate the school's strengths and weaknesses and take action to improve the school's work.

Information about the school

Holt Voluntary Controlled (VC) Primary School is a village school where the very large majority of pupils come from the local community. Children start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage Reception class. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. Their needs are wide-ranging, from those who need extra support with their learning or concentration, to those who have very specific learning or medical needs. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have been in post since the last inspection but all other teachers have joined since that time, and three started this term. The school holds several awards, including Eco Schools Silver and the Healthy School Award. A range of sporting activities takes place after school, as part of the school's extended provision. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 were out of school on a visit on the second day of the inspection.

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

Holt VC Primary School is a satisfactory school. It has a friendly atmosphere and all pupils are well known as individuals. Pupils enjoy school, like their teachers and love the clubs and trips. One older pupil said, 'The trips get better and better' and, judging by others' enthusiastic responses to the recent residential visit, this was a view widely shared. Two aspects that shine through are pupils' interest in sustainable living and the extent to which they keep themselves healthy. This is very evident at playtimes, when many enthusiastically take part in games. It is also evident in their strong commitment to eating healthily and their excellent participation in sporting activities and clubs, both in and out of school.

Staff are very caring and are committed to pupils' welfare. They establish a positive atmosphere in lessons and relationships are very good. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported, particularly those with specific difficulties. Teaching is satisfactory and promotes satisfactory learning and progress, with the strongest achievement occurring in Reception and in Years 5 and 6. Pupils' work is marked well on a day-to-day basis but information from assessments is not always used effectively to adapt work in lessons for pupils of different capabilities. The provision in the Reception class has improved enormously since the last inspection. Children now get a good start to their early education. Between Years 1 and 4, pupils' learning and progress has not always been consistent, leaving some pupils with a lot of ground to make up during Years 5 and 6. Good teaching at the top end of the school and additional help in English and mathematics have helped them to catch up, and they have achieved satisfactorily. The senior leaders have been aware of where the weaknesses in provision lay and have taken successful steps to improve the situation. Things are now better and pupils' learning and progress are becoming more consistent. The school's approach to tracking and monitoring pupils' progress, however, is not yet promoting good learning and progress for all groups of pupils.

The school's own evaluation of its effectiveness is mainly accurate but largely based on informal knowledge of the school's work rather than through a range of robust monitoring procedures. Leaders have brought about clear improvement in the Early Years Foundation Stage and standards have improved to above average. Their impact on the learning and progress of individual pupils has been less marked. The school's capacity to improve further is satisfactory.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Track pupils' progress more robustly, identifying pupils who have not made the

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expected progress over the last two years, and ensure teachers target and support them to help them make accelerated progress.

- Strengthen the rigour and effectiveness of senior leaders' self-evaluation, ensuring a clear focus on outcomes for pupils, and particularly the learning and progress of individual pupils.
- Ensure all teachers plan work that challenges all groups and enables them to learn well, based on secure knowledge of their recent progress and their capabilities.

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

Standards are above average by the time pupils leave the school. From pupils' higher than expected starting points, this represents steady progress. There are pockets of good progress. The pupils in Year 2 last year, for example, made better progress than when they were in Year 1. Pupils' learning and progress have also continued to be stronger at the top end of the school. During the inspection, pupils had positive attitudes to their learning and most of them worked hard in lessons. Pupils in Year 5 and 6, for example, were interested and enthusiastic when writing a letter because it was directly related to their recent visit. Just occasionally, when tasks continue for rather too long, or teachers talk for a long time, some pupils start to lose concentration and this slows their progress. The early signs are that pupils in Year 5 are learning at a better rate than they did when they were in Years 3 and 4. The pupils recognise that this is the case and report that more is being expected of them. Scrutiny of pupils' work in Years 3 and 4 shows they have made a sound start so far this year in writing and mathematics.

Pupils are proud of their garden and talked with great energy and commitment about their composting and recycling, and all the things they grow in their garden. This has extended to pupils selling their own vegetables and learning about organic farming. They enjoy taking responsibility and caring for others, whether at school, through being a play-leader or helping to raise funds for a school in Juba. Pupils feel safe in school and are well behaved, polite and friendly. A few parents do not feel that behaviour is good and this was pursued during the inspection. Several pupils commented that a small number of pupils do indeed sometimes slip up and 'let the school down' but they were clear that, on the whole, behaviour is good and that it has definitely improved this year.

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	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
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	3
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	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?

This is a school where individual pupils are known well to staff. Links with parents are good and the staff work hard to build partnerships with them. Teachers encourage pupils, value their efforts and give praise where praise is due. They use a range of questioning techniques well, to explore pupils' thinking and engage them in lessons. Teaching assistants are also used effectively in most cases and some support is very good. The school has worked hard to develop its curriculum and build links between subjects. Pupils in Years 5 and 6, for example, were using their experience from this term's trip to learn how to write a particular type of letter. The curriculum promotes pupils' enjoyment and personal development well but is not yet adapted sufficiently to support good learning and progress for all groups of pupils. Pupils are well supported in their personal development because they are known well as individuals. All staff play an important part in this. The good links with outside agencies are also a factor in helping to support pupils who are encountering particularly vulnerable times.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

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How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership and management are promoting satisfactory outcomes for pupils. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are committed to improving outcomes and raising standards and have taken some important steps to bring this about. Their actions have boosted pupils' learning in aspects of mathematics and reading for groups of pupils. As a result, the unvalidated 2009 results at Year 6 show improvement. More pupils also attained the higher Level 3 by the end of Year 2 this year than in recent years. Nevertheless, there is some work still to do before all pupils achieve well and build effectively upon their starting points as they move through the school. In this respect, equal opportunities are promoted satisfactorily. The headteacher and governors promote and protect pupils' safety and the school meets the requirements for safeguarding children. The required checks are carried out for all adults who work with pupils and new staff have been trained appropriately in child protection. The school has responded well to the requirement for schools to help pupils gain understanding of communities different from their own and has recently developed links with schools in Slough and Bristol.

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

On the whole, children start school with skills, knowledge and understanding that are above expectations for their age. They benefit from good teaching and good levels of care. Activities are relevant and well planned, so that children's learning and

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development are good across all the required areas. A key improvement is the outdoor area, which has been transformed since the last inspection, and is used very well by adults and children throughout the day. Both adults are knowledgeable about how young children learn. They take every opportunity to promote the children's learning and development, through skilful questioning and constant encouragement and support. As a result of the good provision, the large majority of children exceed the goals for their age by the time they leave Reception and a greater proportion leave with a good level of achievement than is normally the case. Children have settled well in this early stage in the term, helped greatly by the programme of introductory visits, the welcoming atmosphere in the classroom, and the willingness of the staff to welcome parents into the classroom at the beginning of the day. The small steps in children's learning and development are noted frequently and there are good arrangements for compiling learning logs on each child to track and demonstrate their individual achievements.

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

The very large majority of parents are positive about the school's work and several commented on the improvements they had seen in the school. Where parents added written comments, these were mostly positive. The aspects mainly singled out for praise were: the strong teamwork, the support teachers give pupils, the approachability of staff, and the emphasis on keeping healthy and providing extra opportunities, such as clubs and trips. Several parents commented that their children had recently joined the school and confirmed, in most cases, that they had settled very well. A few parents had concerns, which mainly related to behaviour and feeling that their children were not being stretched sufficiently. The inspection findings support parents' positive views and agree that some pupils have not achieved as well as they could have done in the past but this is showing improvement. Behaviour was pursued during the inspection and found to be good overall.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Holt Voluntary Controlled 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 43 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 114 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	23	54	20	47	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	22	52	20	47	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	12	28	27	63	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	37	15	35	4	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	18	42	19	44	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	17	40	21	49	2	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	23	54	17	40	2	5	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)	22	51	15	35	3	7	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	13	30	26	61	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	9	21	22	52	5	12	2	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	37	21	49	3	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	18	42	21	49	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	22	51	20	47	1	2	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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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.



24 September 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Holt Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Trowbridge, BA14 6RA

Thank you very much for welcoming me to your school. I was pleased to be able to talk to so many of you. To all of you who spoke to me, whether as a group, in the playground or around the school, thank you for telling me about your school, the things you like, and all the special things that you do.

This letter is for you, to tell you about what I found out about your school. Your school is providing you with a satisfactory education. You make the progress that is expected and many pupils leave school able to work at a higher level than is often the case for pupils of your age. You are well behaved and most of you work hard and try your best. Some of you in Years 5 and 6 have some ground to make up with your learning but you have made a good start this year and I hope that you will all do your very best so that you leave school having achieved your potential. I was very impressed with your excellent commitment to keeping healthy and active and your interest in growing things and selling your produce at the farmers' market. The pupils I spoke to were very proud of all the eco work that you do, and rightly so.

I have asked the school to work on three things before the school's next inspection.

- To find out which children have not made enough progress over the last two years and give them every possible help to catch up.
- To improve the way the school checks up on itself, to find out how good the school's work is and what could be done to improve it further.
- To make sure all teachers plan work in lessons that is just right for you ' not too easy and not too difficult.

Best wishes

Yours faithfully

Margaret Dickinson

Her Majesty's Inspector

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