

Holbrook Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131116
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	328555
Inspection dates	31 March –1 April 2009
Reporting inspector	Trevor Davies

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	235
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Tim Finch
Headteacher	Mrs Anne Parker
Date of previous school inspection	21 January 2008
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Wych Lane Bridgemary Gosport PO13 0JN
Telephone number	01329 286011
Fax number	01329 286915

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Holbrook Primary is larger than many primary schools. The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average. It has a resource provision for pupils who have language impairment.

The school was last inspected in January 2008, just after the return of the headteacher from a period of secondment to another school. The judgement of the inspection was that the school did not, at that time, provide an acceptable standard of education and it was given a Notice to Improve. Since then, the school has received intensive support from the local authority and received an HMI monitoring visit in October 2008.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

In accordance with Section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school no longer requires significant improvement.

Since the headteacher's return to the school, she has led the drive for noticeable improvement, well supported by other members of her highly committed leadership team. Her vision for the school is clearly reflected in the high quality of the school's self-evaluation. Consequently, this is now a good school and the school's capacity for continuing improvement is good.

While the standards that pupils achieve remain broadly average, they make good progress throughout the school, building successfully on the good start children receive in the Foundation Stage. As a result of the good teaching and support that they receive, pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress, as do those in the specialist resource provision for speech, communication and language needs.

'My child has been welcomed into this kind and caring school' is a comment typically made by parents. Inspectors agree that Holbrook Primary School offers a supportive and highly inclusive environment to all its pupils. Effective procedures and a strong pastoral system support all pupils well on entry, and throughout their time at the school. Their spiritual, moral social and cultural development is good and is effectively promoted, both within school and on trips and residential visits. Pupils know about and adopt healthy lifestyles. They are supportive of each other and cooperate in their learning, and develop skills of teamwork and cooperation through their varied programme of extra-curricular activities and fundraising events. However, underdeveloped skills in writing continue to impede their preparation for the next stages of their education and for the world of work.

The quality of teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection, so that it is now consistently good across all key stages. In the Foundation Stage, the children find the greatest difficulty in developing their writing skills, a pattern which remains characteristic throughout the school, and as a result their progress in writing is slow in other areas of the curriculum. Recent procedures to improve tracking of academic progress have helped to raise standards, although the pupils are not sufficiently involved in the setting of short-term targets to accelerate their progress. Most importantly, pupils are not fully involved in the assessment of their work so that they know how to improve.

The school has a carefully considered curriculum, which is broad and has good progression from year to year. It has been further enlivened by the introduction of Child Initiated Learning and excellent use of the school library. The extra-curricular provision and enrichment activities further enhance the curriculum and contribute extremely well to pupils' personal development. The school is at the heart of the community and its links to families, other schools and the wider community through fundraising and other activities ensure that its community cohesion is outstanding.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Foundation Stage is well led and managed, so that children have access to a curriculum that promotes the six areas of learning effectively in a bright, spacious and well-equipped environment. A calm and purposeful atmosphere prevails, built on daily planning of activities by staff, who understand well the developing needs of those in their care. There is an appropriate

balance of adult-directed tasks and child initiated-activities. Children settle well to group activities, during which they listen attentively and participate readily. Personal, social and emotional development is a priority, as the necessary starting point to drive learning forward. As a result of the care and support the children receive, they rapidly gain the confidence to select their own activities and to move naturally between the indoor and outdoor areas. The good teaching noted in the last inspection report has been maintained and contributes effectively to improving skills in reading and numeracy. Opportunities for role play serve to develop children's communication skills and to enhance confidence. The teaching of letter sounds is skilfully done, but it does not have as great an impact as the staff would like, because the children's starting points on entry to Reception are very low. Creativity is imaginatively promoted. For instance, the children were encouraged to look at a Monet painting and paint their own water lilies. The staff establish good relationships with parents and carers to promote links between school and home. When the children leave Reception, they are well prepared to integrate into the main school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of pupils' writing throughout the school.
- Involve pupils more fully in the assessment of their work so that they know how to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards by the end of Year 6 are broadly average in mathematics and just below average in English and science. This represents a considerable improvement since the last inspection a year ago when a steep decline in standards was identified. Tests and teacher assessments for Year 2 pupils in 2008 show that pupils' attainment was below average in reading, writing and mathematics, with few pupils reaching the higher levels. However, this represents good progress from a very low starting point. Writing standards are lower than those in reading across the school. Standards in Key Stage 2 and especially Years 5 and 6 were a concern at the last inspection, but with intensive support from the local authority, there are indications that progress is accelerating and that standards are beginning to rise. The school has implemented robust tracking procedures during the past year, which has contributed to improved progress and achievement. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities do well, making progress in line with their ability.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

In lessons and assemblies, pupils generally display positive attitudes, concentrate well and listen attentively to others. Most respond well to the school's very clear focus on developing respect, tolerance and a sense of responsibility. Behaviour is good in lessons and pupils move around school in a safe manner. A small minority of parents expressed concern about disruptive behaviour hindering the progress of others. No evidence of this was seen during the inspection and the school has a clear set of procedures relating to managing pupils' anger. Attendance is average. Pupils form good collaborative relationships with staff and each other, which help to promote their personal growth and self-esteem. Pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is good. They celebrate Diwali and Chinese New Year, have recently studied African culture and have taken part in an Indian dance demonstration at Gunwharf Quays. Pupils have a keen sense of how to stay safe. They appreciate the need to exercise and enjoy the

opportunities for sport and other physical activities available to them. Through the school council, pupils have another channel to contribute to their school community, resulting in such projects as the adventure trail. Pupils contribute very positively to fundraising activities to support charitable organisations and, in one case, to support the needs of a fellow pupil. They are developing good skills of cooperation through the use of the Talking Partners strategy in class, teamwork in extra-curricular activities and on the residential visits. However, underdeveloped skills in writing continue to impede their preparation for the next stages of their education and for the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Focused support from the local authority and the school's recent monitoring of the quality of lessons have resulted in an improvement in teaching. This means that there is now greater consistency between key stages and pupils make better progress, especially in Years 5 and 6. The good quality teaching in evidence at the last inspection in Years 1 and 2 has been maintained, building successfully on the good start pupils receive in the Foundation Stage. As a result, pupils' basic skills in reading and mathematics have improved, although they are less confident with writing. The pace of lessons is usually good, because teachers plan work carefully and provide clear learning objectives for each lesson. These are shared with pupils, so that they understand the purpose of each activity, although teachers do not sufficiently involve pupils in establishing the next steps to improve their work. Planning is detailed and adapted to ensure that each lesson builds on pupils' previous learning. Teaching assistants are used well to help those who need additional support with reading, writing or mathematics.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school is increasingly planning special topics that create links between subjects, which makes learning more meaningful for pupils. Child Initiated Learning has been introduced into the curriculum: it is enjoyed by the pupils and helps them to be more motivated, independent and engaged in classroom activities. The curriculum is now monitored more rigorously to ensure that, in mixed-age classes, pupils do not repeat work the following year. The strong emphasis on basic skills in Years 1 and 2 is now having an impact on pupils in older classes, as they begin to make better progress in English, mathematics and science. Reading is given a particularly strong emphasis in the school, with an excellent library that provides a wonderful resource for the pupils. They have attended a 'Gruffalo Evening' with their parents in the library, and gave a presentation at the Hampshire Illustrated Book Awards. However, writing skills, and the opportunities for pupils to practise these skills in other subjects, are less well developed. School residential visits to Privett in Year 5 and Wales in Year 6, do much to enrich the pupils' experiences. Music, sport and the creative arts, together with the many clubs and activities, which are very strong features of the school's curriculum, also make an important contribution. Pupils particularly enjoy and achieve well in competitive sports and special events.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

A strong pastoral system operates in a highly inclusive environment. The staff invest considerable time and energy in pupils' emotional and social well-being and have a very clear understanding of their needs. As a result, pupils feel valued and secure and their self-esteem is raised. Although there is still a little bullying in the school, pupils say that it has decreased in the past year and that they can all identify a member of staff to whom they could turn when concerned or anxious. Child protection procedures are robust and regularly reviewed. Health and safety issues are fully addressed and risk assessments are thorough. New procedures to track progress systematically over time, were introduced before the last inspection; they are now having a clear impact on raising standards and improving progress, although pupils are not always aware of the short-term targets which would help them to drive their learning forward more rapidly. Vulnerable pupils and those who have diverse learning difficulties and/or disabilities are carefully monitored to ensure that they receive the additional support they require, including the services of the home-school link advisor. The school has a Language Impairment Unit onsite which provides very good support for children within the local area and further afield.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has had a marked and very positive impact since her return to the school. Supported ably by her leadership team, she has addressed many of the concerns arising from the last inspection. For example, the school has implemented a wide range of monitoring and evaluation procedures that have accelerated pupils' progress. Staff now identify and tackle school priorities more effectively and set challenging targets for improvement. They share a common sense of purpose that focuses well on pupils' needs and welfare and on good progress. Information from the assessment of pupils' progress is used to identify the school's strategic priorities. The governors are developing a greater understanding of their role in challenging, as well as supporting the school, in order to make it better. Many of the initiatives that have been introduced to support school improvement since the last inspection, are already having a positive impact on pupils' progress. For example, the school has specifically focused on the progress of the more able pupils. As a result, a greater proportion of pupils in the school are achieving higher levels. Therefore, the stability of the leadership team and the consolidation of the improvement strategies demonstrate the capacity for continuous improvement. Community cohesion is outstanding. This is because the school, which is at the hub of its community, has analysed its role within the local area and has implemented excellent systems for engagement and support, for families and organisations from different faiths and backgrounds both locally and worldwide, with very positive results.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

23 April 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Holbrook Primary School, Gosport, PO13 0JN

Thank you for being helpful and making us welcome when we came to visit your school. We really enjoyed talking to you and looking at your work. You told us that you enjoy coming to school and we agree with you that it is a very friendly school and that your teachers make your lessons interesting. The school provides you with a good standard of education.

Here are some of the things we think the school does well.

- It provides good opportunities for you to take part in physical activities and sport, go on exciting residential visits, use your superb library, and join lots of different after school clubs. You make good friendships. You play well together, behave well in lessons, and have good attitudes to your work.
- Your school is excellent at helping to create good relationships within the local community and the wider world.

There are two things we have asked the school to do to help you improve further:

- improve the quality of your writing throughout the school
- involve you more fully in assessing how you are doing in your work so that you know how to improve.

You can help by trying to do your best and continue to enjoy your time at school. Remember to ask teachers if you need help.

Yours faithfully

Trevor Davies

Lead Inspector