

# Holcombe Brook Primary School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	105311
<b>Local authority</b>	Bury
<b>Inspection number</b>	377222
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 March 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Sarah Drake

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	233
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jonathan Haworth
<b>Headteacher</b>	Gill Evans
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 May 2007
<b>School address</b>	Longsight Road Holcombe Brook Bury BL0 9TA
<b>Telephone number</b>	01204 882304
<b>Fax number</b>	01204 886240
<b>Email address</b>	holcombebrook@bury.gov.uk

---



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
[enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



© Crown copyright 2012

---

## Introduction

### Inspection team

Sarah Drake  
Juliet Demster

Additional inspector  
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed 15 lessons taught by 10 different teachers. They held meetings with school staff, members of the governing body, two groups of pupils, and they spoke informally with parents and carers. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation relating to pupils' progress and school management, including tracking data, work in pupils' books and school self-evaluation and development planning. The inspectors also took into account the responses to the inspection questionnaires returned by pupils, members of staff, and 110 parents and carers.

## Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school which serves a semi-rural community to the northwest of Bury. Most pupils are White British and few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible to receive a free school meal is low. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average. The school meets the government's current floor standard. It holds numerous awards including Healthy Schools, Eco-schools Green Flag, Activemark, the Basic Skills Quality Mark and the Charter Mark for excellence in public service. In 2009 a new deputy headteacher was appointed and the post of assistant headteacher was created. The current headteacher took up post in January 2012 on the retirement of the previous headteacher.

Two privately run childcare settings; a Nursery and an out-of-school club operate on site. These did not form part of this inspection but reports about their quality can be found 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

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>

## Key Findings

- This is a satisfactory school. Parents and carers are very appreciative of the support that staff provide for their children. Pupils enjoy their time at the school because of the many interesting activities on offer. The school is not a good school because the teaching is not consistently of sufficiently good quality to ensure that pupils make good progress. Also, leadership, including that of middle leaders, is only in the early stages of developing a rigorous approach to driving improvement.
- Achievement is satisfactory. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and their attainment in reading is usually above average, but in lessons they are too often satisfied with working at a leisurely pace. Pupils’ understanding of mathematical facts and functions is sound, but they are less secure in applying this knowledge in order to solve problems.
- Teaching is satisfactory overall. In the best lessons fast pace and probing questioning provide pupils with levels of challenge that inspire and energise their learning. More usually, assessment is not used to good enough effect to ensure that pupils make better than satisfactory progress.
- Pupils behave well and act in a sensible, safe manner. They form good relationships, collaborate well and treat others with politeness and respect. Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities and they carry them out well. Attendance is consistently high.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. Staff now have increased opportunities to access continuing professional development and to carry out their management monitoring roles, but there has been insufficient time for this to have had a measurable impact on the quality of teaching or pupils’ learning. Development planning is not sufficiently sharply focused on improving pupils’ achievement.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the rate of progress of all groups of pupils so that it is at least good by:
  - ensuring that pupils are clear about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work
  - having higher expectations of pupils' productivity and the presentation of their work
  - providing more opportunities in meaningful contexts across the curriculum for pupils to apply their mathematical skills to solve problems.
- Ensure that teaching is consistently of good or better quality by:
  - increasing the precision with which the learning objectives of lessons are clarified in planning and explained to pupils
  - using assessment information more effectively to provide children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and pupils throughout the school with the right levels of challenge
  - speeding up the pace of lessons.
- Improve leadership and management to be at least good by:
  - focusing development planning closely on enhancing pupils' achievement
  - increasing the impact of middle managers on improving the rate of pupils' progress
  - streamlining the assessment and tracking system.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

In the past, most children's skills on entry to Reception have been above or in line with those expected for their age, although more recently increasing numbers have joined the school with skills somewhat below age-related expectations. Children happily settle in the Early Years Foundation Stage, form good relationships and grow used to school expectations and routines. They make consistently good progress in understanding the links between letters and sounds and in reading, but in other areas of learning their progress, while variable, is closer to satisfactory. Pupils' good progress in reading continues throughout the school so that their attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is above average. Pupils enjoy reading. Most parents and carers make a strong contribution towards their children's success through regularly listening to them read at home. They are largely positive about their children's progress, but a small minority consider that pupils could be challenged more highly. Inspection evidence shows that this view is accurate.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 has generally been above average over recent years, but in 2011 it fell to broadly average. Current pupils' work is also broadly average. It is stronger in English than in mathematics where there is little evidence of pupils applying their skills to solve problems. When good opportunities for this are provided, as in a lesson where Year 6 pupils collaborated exceptionally well to work out the distance that light travels in one year, those of all abilities relish and rise to the challenge. However, too often in lessons, while remaining suitably on task, pupils demonstrate little urgency to complete a significant amount of work and they do not always take enough care with its presentation. Pupils follow instructions carefully, are compliant and behave well, even when having to listen for

extended periods. They are very supportive of each other, for example, when others are having difficulty using a computer program. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs enjoy their learning and make satisfactory progress alongside their peers due to well targeted support. Pupils are enthusiastic about physical activities and the school has success in a wide range of sporting competitions. Pupils' singing is of high quality.

## Quality of teaching

Pupils say that they often find the activities in lessons interesting and fun. The majority of parents and carers consider that their children are well taught, but comments from some such as, 'in parts the teaching is good, but it is inconsistent', give a more accurate description. The teaching implements the planned curriculum in a satisfactory way although teachers provide few opportunities for pupils to practise their numeracy skills in meaningful contexts across the curriculum. The initial stimulus for lessons, such as preparing a presentation for others or receiving a letter from a giant, often engages pupils' interest and generates enthusiasm. However, emphasis on the activity is sometimes greater than the focus on pupils' development of skills. While the planning identifies activities for different groups, it seldom outlines the expectations for those of different ability and these are not always made clear enough to pupils. This means that activities do not always provide the right level of challenge to promote good progress. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the planning is insufficiently closely linked to recorded observations and assessment of individual children's skills and needs.

Some lessons move at a brisk pace, with effective use of pupil discussion and probing questioning from adults that leads to pupils making good progress. This occurred when pupils in Year 4 rapidly improved their choice of descriptive words to create effect, as they developed a recipe for a monster. Elsewhere, Year 6 pupils confidently honed their speaking and listening skills as they decided what they would like to discover about the planets. Such lessons promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development successfully, for example, as they collaborate, respect others' right to be heard, and formulate questions such as: 'What is at the end of the universe?' In other lessons the pace flags, with either too much talking from the teacher or too little interaction with pupils as they work, to bring dynamism to their learning and help them focus their efforts purposefully. The marking of work is similarly inconsistent. Some provides helpful comments to guide individuals' improvement but, often, there is just a tick or a positive word such as 'good'. Pupils have personal and writing targets, but these are not always reviewed with enough regularity. Good relationships and effective behaviour management are strong features in every classroom. Teaching and special support assistants make a positive contribution which helps pupils of lower ability and those whose circumstances may have made them vulnerable to participate fully.

## Behaviour and safety of pupils

The views of pupils, parents and carers are similar to those of the inspection, namely that behaviour is typically good. Pupils are proud of their school and describe it as, 'happy and exciting with kind teachers'. They also say that they have 'friends we can rely on'. Those who arrive midway through their primary education are warmly welcomed and soon feel at ease. Pupils say that bullying and other forms of unkindness are rare and are dealt with swiftly and effectively. They understand that 'telling the truth straight away' is the quickest way to resolve playground spats or other fallings out. Pupils generally act in a safe manner and the very large majority say that they feel safe either most or all of the time. Pupils have

a good understanding about how to keep themselves physically safe but some are less clear about the dangers posed by new technology. Pupils are good ambassadors for the school. They are unfailingly polite and some acted as very efficient guides for parents and carers who visited their children's classrooms for 'showcase' activities during the inspection. Pupils' good behaviour, warm relationships and mature self-confidence help to create a positive and supportive learning community. They arrive at school punctually and attendance is consistently well above average.

## **Leadership and management**

The school has successfully tackled the areas for development of the previous inspection. Leadership and management responsibilities are more widely distributed and significant improvements to the accommodation have enhanced the provision indoors and outside. However, the roles and expectations of those with responsibility, such as middle leaders, are only now being clarified with time allotted to enable them to carry out their tasks to good effect. Access to training over the past six months has increased teachers' confidence and skills, for example, to input data into the system for tracking pupils' progress. This contains abundant information about an individual's performance in tests, but does not always reflect the work in pupils' books or flag up useful pointers about the performance of different groups or where potential weaknesses lie. The system is unwieldy and, therefore, the information is not readily accessible to all who might find it useful. School and subject development plans do not yet have measurable success criteria to focus the improvement process and through which to gauge the impact of actions on pupils' achievement.

Members of the governing body are heavily involved in the life of the school. They have a strong vision for the school's future and play a strategic role in its development. They ensure that arrangements for safeguarding meet requirements. The school satisfactorily promotes equality. Its inclusive, warm and tolerant atmosphere, combined with effective use of outside agencies when necessary, ensures that pupils progress at a similar rate from their starting points. Gaps in attainment, between groups that are more likely to be vulnerable and all pupils, are closing. The good quality curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Regular review ensures that it is bespoke to the school, builds on pupils' ideas, and also ensures that they build their skills in a sequential manner. Its strength lies in the way that themes, such as 'Ready, Steady, Cook Holcombe Brook' or Native Americans, capture pupils' interest and make them eager to learn. It is enriched well through visits, visitors, extra-curricular activities and links with schools locally, in Europe and in Rwanda.

The school has a long held good reputation among parents, carers and the wider community for its positive ethos, variety of enrichment opportunities and pupils' happiness. Despite this, the comment, 'Our new headteacher has made amazing positive changes in the short time she has been here,' is typical of those made by staff, pupils, parents and carers. There is already a more rigorous approach to monitoring and evaluation, actions being taken to improve progress in mathematics and plans in place to enhance leadership roles. The school has satisfactory capacity to improve further.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

---

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



15 March 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Holcombe Brook Primary School, Bury, BL0 9TA**

Thank you very much for the warm welcome that you gave to the inspectors when we visited your school recently. Particular thanks go to those of you who read books to us and spoke with us; you helped us to understand what it is like to be a pupil at your school. Thanks also to all those who filled in questionnaires.

Holcombe Brook is a satisfactory school. It is especially successful in the way that the activities that teachers organise for you capture your interest and make you say that you often find learning fun. You form good relationships, treat others with respect, behave well and are good at being helpful. Almost all of you attend school almost every day – well done.

You make good progress and reach above-average standards in reading. It is great that your parents and carers and older pupils help with this, as well as your teachers of course! Your achievement in English and mathematics is satisfactory overall and is better in some year groups than in others. We have, therefore, asked the school's leaders to make sure that all teaching is of at least good quality. In particular we have asked them to make sure that it gives you the right amount of challenge, and that teachers make clear what they expect you to learn in the lesson and help you to understand more clearly how to improve your work. We also think that some of you could work harder in lessons and take more pride with the presentation of your work; this is how you can help to increase the amount of progress that you make. Finally, we have asked the leaders to focus their actions firmly on helping you to achieve higher levels and to check that the actions they take are actually doing this.

We know that you enjoy learning and we hope that you continue to do so. This letter comes with our best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Drake  
Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone **0300 123 4234**, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).