

# Holt Farm Infant School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114879
<b>Local Authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	357641
<b>Inspection dates</b>	21–22 September 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Tusha Chakraborti

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	227
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Ray Pearce
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Robin Goodier
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 May 2008
<b>School address</b>	Ashingdon Road Rochford, Essex SS4 1RS
<b>Telephone number</b>	01702 544058
<b>Fax number</b>	01702 530076
<b>Email address</b>	admin@holtfarm-inf.essex.sch.uk

---

<b>Age group</b>	4–7
<b>Inspection dates</b>	21–22 September 2010
<b>Inspection number</b>	357641

---

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 1234 234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

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

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

T: 0300 1234 234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2010

## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 15 lessons taught by 10 different teachers in the nine classes in school. Meetings were held with the headteacher, groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, checked arrangements for safeguarding and scrutinised a range of documentation including development plans, records of progress, the monitoring of teaching and learning and minutes of the governing body's meetings. They also scrutinised responses to the inspection questionnaires from 46 parents and carers and 23 staff.

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

- The standards reached and progress made by all groups of pupils in the current academic year in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The impact of the school's action in raising the attainment and achievement of all pupils, including the girls and the oldest children in the Reception classes.
- The effectiveness of the quality of teaching in accelerating pupils' learning and progress.
- The effectiveness of the use of assessment to plan activities that are well matched to the learning needs of all pupils.

## Information about the school

The school is of average size. The large majority of pupils are White British. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Around a quarter of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities, which is an average proportion. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language or are at the early stages of learning English. The school has received Healthy Schools status and Activemark award. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in three Reception classes.

**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

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education. It is an improving school where standards are rising and there are some strengths. The school is experiencing high mobility in Years 1 and 2. This, coupled with low starting points and a high proportion of pupils who find learning difficult, resulted in sharp decline in standards of attainment in 2009, although they were average or above average in previous years. However, the successful teamwork of the headteacher and staff in implementing a more rigorous system for monitoring of progress has put the school back on track. The pupils' attainment is now average and pupils make the progress expected of them. Progress in reading has been quicker than that in English and mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make satisfactory progress overall, with some making good progress. Children get off to a good start in the Reception classes. They reach expected levels and make good progress in all areas of learning.

A strength of the school is the extent to which leaders, teachers and support staff work together to ensure an effective level of care for all pupils. Staff work efficiently in close liaison with outside agencies to support all pupils, including those whose circumstances make them most vulnerable.

The school is a harmonious community where pupils enjoy learning and feel very safe and secure. Pupils behave well, develop good personal and social skills and grow up as confident learners because of the caring ethos of the school. Views taken from parents reveal that the vast majority are happy with their children's experience in the school. One parent commented, 'having had a child in this school since 2007, I am happy with all aspects of the school and my child's education'.

Staff have good relationships with the pupils, praise their efforts and make good use of interactive white boards and other resources to support learning. The most effective teachers are clear about what they want the pupils to learn and how this will be achieved, matching work well to individual needs. Some teachers are not using the information they have on what they know pupils can already do to adapt their lessons to meet the varying needs of all pupils in their classes. More-able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently to ensure that they achieve as well as they can. In some lessons, long teacher input means that pupils are not engaged sufficiently in their learning. Teachers do not always work closely together when planning lessons and they have not had the opportunity to observe good practice and identifying the features that make for good or better teaching.

The headteacher and the senior leaders have put in place an effective monitoring and evaluation system to raise standards in all areas of the school's work. The assessment system has been revised and a more rigorous system is now in place, tracking pupils' progress systematically. Leaders recognise that this is only the start and that there is much more to be done, particularly in moving teaching and learning forward. An action

**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

plan for community cohesion is being implemented, but pupils' understanding of cultures other than their own is limited. Self-evaluation is accurate and provides a secure basis for development planning. The governing body has a secure understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement. Although the school is starting to see improvements in progress and attainment, these have yet to be sustained over a longer period. For these reasons, the school's capacity to improve is satisfactory.

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

- Raise standards further and accelerate the achievement of all pupils in writing and mathematics by:
  - engaging pupils more effectively in lessons so that they are more involved in their own learning
  - making more effective use of assessment information to plan lessons with clear objectives to move the learning of all pupils forward
  - raising teachers' expectations and ensuring that the more-able pupils are consistently challenged.
- Improve the quality of teaching by:
  - ensuring that teachers in the same year group always plan together
  - providing a more effective balance between teacher input and the time for pupils to work independently
  - establishing a programme where teachers can develop their skills by observing best practice.
- Extend opportunities for pupils to gain an understanding of cultural diversity by
  - giving a stronger emphasis in the school's promotion of community cohesion.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

Pupils thoroughly enjoy learning. Observations of lessons show that pupils learn, develop understanding and acquire new skills at a satisfactory rate. They listen carefully to their teachers and concentrate on the tasks they are set. When given the opportunity, they enjoy discussing their ideas with others and working cooperatively. Pupils enjoy reading a wide variety of books and narrating stories. This was seen in a Year 2 lesson where they drew pictures to plan the sequences of their stories and enthusiastically discussed their plans in groups. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress year on year as a result of the consistent and well-targeted support they receive from all support staff.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and most take part in a wide range of sporting activities. Their good levels of social and moral development are evident in their good behaviour around the school and their contribution to the school community. Pupils respect others' values and beliefs. They responsibly undertake jobs around the

**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

school, such as working as playground helpers or when representing others on the school council. The school council put forward some useful contributions to improving life in school, for example, they have recently chosen the good range of playground equipment. They raise funds for charities and recognise the need to do so. Attendance has improved and is now average.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

## How effective is the provision?

The good relationships between adults and pupils contribute well to pupils' growing confidence and the progress that they make. Pupils enjoy discussing their ideas with others, although often opportunities are missed to engage them in this way or encourage them to take responsibility for aspects of their learning and so become more independent. They only become restless on those occasions when they have to wait a long time to get started because the teachers' introductions have gone for too long.

There is a good range of after school clubs including, sports, arts, gardening and cookery as well as special events such as visits by theatre groups that enhance pupils' enjoyment in learning. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise, consolidate and extend their literacy, numeracy and computer skills in all subject areas. The school has identified this as a priority for development and is making good progress towards implementing a thematic and creative curriculum to ensure cross-curricular links.

**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

The school provides good pastoral support for all its pupils and its good links with the external agencies strengthen the pastoral system continually. The improved use of assessment data is particularly effective in identifying the precise needs faced by pupils with special educational needs and those pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. They are carefully targeted and effectively supported through early intervention programmes in the nurture group. The arrangements for transferring children between the classes within the school as well as between Year 2 and the junior school are good.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

The senior leaders are driving improvement successfully. They have put in place strategies by which they can develop the expertise of teachers and raise pupils' learning and achievement consistently. They make good use of the information they gain from tracking pupils' progress and evaluating teaching to identify weaknesses and set clear improvement goals. The thorough analysis of data enables the school to identify the action that is needed to maintain recent improvements. These strategies are beginning to drive up standards. However, much of these developments are just becoming embedded into the work of the school and it is too early to see an impact on overall achievement through the school.

The school has successfully developed strong partnership with parents involving them increasingly in their children's education. A close partnership with neighbouring schools and other local organisations have clearly helped the school move forward. The school is committed to equal opportunities and is consistently seeking ways to raise standards of achievement for all groups of pupils. Community cohesion operates well at the school and local level, but progress is slow in promoting understanding of diversity within the wider society. Leaders and governors have put in place secure arrangements for safeguarding the welfare of the pupils.

**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

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make a good start to their education as a result of a well-organised curriculum and good teaching. A positive learning environment with attractive displays and a good range of resources ensures that children make good progress during their time in the Reception class. They start school with skills and abilities that are below the levels expected for their age and, by the end of the Reception year, the majority of children reach standards that meet the Early Learning Goals at end of the Reception year.

Children are given good opportunities to choose their own independent activities when they arrive at their classes. They quickly engage in their chosen activities with interest and enthusiasm. They develop good coordination and personal skills as they explore the well equipped indoor and outdoor areas. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from good support from skilled teaching assistants and take an active part in all activities.

A wide range of practical activities are planned effectively to stimulate children's imagination and to extend their speaking and listening skills. This was evident in a session where children were purposefully engaged in the process of making jam tarts. They developed good social skills and worked well together in groups exploring smell and texture of the pastry they used for making jam tarts. Regular teaching of the link between sounds and letters supports children well in developing their early literacy skills. Occasionally, however, children spend too long in the carpet area listening to introductions, when they could move more quickly into activities.

The school ensures good relationships and close contact with families through an effective induction system. Children's welfare and safety is given the highest priority. Children are assessed consistently and effectively. Leadership is effective in providing children with an enjoyable, safe and secure learning environment.

**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

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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 vast majority of parents and carers responding to the questionnaires were very pleased with their children's experience in this school. They appreciated that the school keeps their children safe and it ensures that pupils develop very good understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle. Several parents and carers commented that the headteacher is 'fantastic' and 'very approachable' and staff are 'dedicated and helpful'. Most parents feel that they are sufficiently informed about their children's progress. Inspectors agree with the views expressed by the parents and carers and find that the school works well in partnership with them.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Holt Farm Infant 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 46 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 227 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	33	72	12	26	0	0	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	32	70	14	30	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	18	39	27	59	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	21	46	22	48	2	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	27	59	19	41	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	20	43	25	54	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	29	63	17	37	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)	20	43	26	57	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	22	48	24	52	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	37	28	61	0	0	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	17	37	28	61	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	30	65	16	35	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	31	67	15	33	0	0	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 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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



23 September 2010

Dear children,

**Inspection of Holt Farm Infant School, Rochford, SS4 1RS**

Thank you all very much for welcoming us to your school and being so friendly and helpful. We were pleased to see how much you enjoy school. We agree with you that your teachers take good care of you. You behave well and are always keen to help each other. You carry out your duties, including the special jobs as play leaders or school council representatives, responsibly. Thank you also for the questionnaires that you filled in for the inspection and sharing your views with us.

Your school is providing you with a satisfactory quality of education. As a result you make satisfactory progress and the large majority of you reach the standards expected by the time you leave Year 2.

To improve your school further, we have asked the headteacher and staff to:

- give you more chance to discuss your ideas and help you improve your writing and mathematics skills further
- make sure that the work provided for you is just a bit harder to move your learning forward as rapidly as possible
- extend your understanding of the similarities and differences between different communities by finding out about people elsewhere in Britain and making links abroad.

I am sure that you and your teachers will work hard to make these improvements. You can help the school to get even better by working hard and attending regularly, so that your school continues to be a happy place.

I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Tusha Chakraborti

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 1234 234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).**