

Holmesdale Infant School

The Avenue, Dronfield, S18 2LR

Inspection dates 2–3 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Pupils make outstanding progress in reading, writing and mathematics in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2.
- Standards are high, and year on year pupils' attainment is well above national averages.
- Teachers provide stimulating and challenging lessons, reflecting consistently high expectations for what pupils can achieve.
- The behaviour of pupils in lessons and around the school is outstanding. They show respect and consideration for each other and for the adults around them.
- Through determined and expert leadership, the co-headteachers have sustained, and are further improving, the achievement of pupils and the quality of teaching.
- A huge enjoyment in the reading of books and the telling of stories fires pupils' imagination and encourages their creativity.
- The school has carefully chosen subjects, topics and themes that are of real interest to the pupils and best promote their learning.
- Pupils feel safe and happy in this caring school, where they become increasingly independent and able to manage their own safety.
- Teachers make full use of support staff in Reception to support and extend pupils' learning, but not so well in Key Stage 1.
- The school grounds are used to the maximum and outdoor education is an everyday part of school life for all pupils.
- The school provides outstanding support for its highly committed staff, who are constantly developing their professional skills.
- The governing body constructively questions leaders about the school's performance and very ably supports its development.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed six lessons, of which three were joint observations with one of the headteachers. In addition, he made short visits to five other lessons and looked at pupils' work in their books and listened to them read.
- There were meetings with groups of pupils, senior leaders and representatives of the governing body and the local authority.
- The inspector took account of a letter from a parent, the 25 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and talked to parents at the start of the school day. The inspector also considered the 19 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspector examined the school's own data on pupils' current progress; planning and monitoring documentation; records relating to behaviour and attendance; and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Andrew Stafford, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Holmesdale Infant school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The very large majority of pupils are White British. A very small proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds speak English as an additional language.
- The percentage of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium (which provides additional funding for pupils in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free school meals and pupils with families in the armed services) is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported by school action is below average. The proportion supported by school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The co-headteachers entered a job-share arrangement in September 2012. Both give support and guidance to other senior leaders and schools in the local authority area.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that in Key Stage 1 the best use is made of all support staff in each class by:
 - planning for their active participation in all stages of each lesson to support, monitor and engage with pupils.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- At the end of Year 2, pupils achieve standards that are well above those found nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. These high standards were also evident during the inspection in the excellent work pupils had produced in their books, and in their advanced speaking and listening skills.
- Most children enter the Reception class with skills and abilities below the levels expected for their age. They go on to make outstanding progress during their time at Holmesdale Infant School. By the end of Reception, children not only have very well developed literacy and numeracy skills, but also show very strong physical and creative development. They are exceptionally well prepared for work in Years 1 and 2.
- Pupil premium funding is spent carefully and to good effect. Additional staff in the classroom support eligible pupils, and all pupils are able to take advantage of extended school opportunities such as Positive Play sessions and one-to-one tuition. As a result, pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium make similar progress to other pupils, and their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is in line with that of their classmates.
- The school takes very seriously its commitment to tackling discrimination and ensuring that all pupils have equal opportunities to succeed. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are achieving exceptionally well, in line with their classmates. Most are exceeding national standards in reading, writing and in mathematics.
- The way pupils are encouraged to use their literacy and numeracy skills across different subjects is outstanding. In Reception, children were observed showing high standards of literacy for their age, using speech bubbles to write what they say about their friends. Pupils use their rapidly developing knowledge of letter sounds to help them read new and unfamiliar words. In a Year 2 physical education lesson, pupils matched the number of pupils in lines to bars on a graph, making rapid progress in extending their knowledge of number.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Outstanding teaching and high expectations are having a significant impact on the progress that pupils make at school. Teachers' meticulous planning in all three year groups results in lessons that stimulate pupils' interest and offer them appropriately challenging tasks.
- Two outstanding practitioners in the Reception class create a vibrant and colourful environment in which children quickly learn to use their own initiative and develop independence. Teachers carefully track the children's developing skills and adapt lessons to make the most of opportunities as they arise, both in the classroom and in the well-used outdoor play area.
- Play leads naturally into learning, and there is clear evidence of outstanding progress in children's learning diaries and through the many other ways their achievement is recorded and assessed. The way children add spoken comments to their photos and artwork is particularly helpful.
- Excellent practice was observed during the inspection in the teaching of letters and sounds, and a passion for reading is encouraged in all lessons. Pupils are surrounded by story books and factual books, and are constantly curious to know more and excited to share their discoveries.

The school has acknowledged that some books appeal more to boys or to girls, and is catering more precisely for their differing needs when restocking the recently refurbished library.

- Support staff are used very well in the Reception class but there is less consistently good practice in Key Stage 1. At certain stages of the lesson, particularly at the start and end, opportunities are sometimes missed for teaching assistants to monitor and record pupils' responses and to help model new language with a dialogue that echoes what the class teacher is saying.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The key to the pupils' outstanding behaviour, both in lessons and around school, is the calm and purposeful atmosphere created by senior leaders, classroom teachers and support staff. The pupils can be seen helping each other find the right books, holding doors open for staff and patiently taking turns in their games. Pupils quickly develop a sense of trust, care and respect due to the excellent relationships they form with all adults in the school.
- Pupils show great eagerness for learning. The notable ease with which they work together in pairs, small groups or whole classes contributes greatly to their accelerated learning. In lessons pupils demonstrate advanced levels of collaboration and exemplary behaviour. They switch effortlessly between working around a table in a group to sharing their discoveries with a 'talk partner' to the whole class listening to others reading out their writing. Pupils have the confidence to ask questions when they are confused and the courtesy to listen to each other when required.
- Year 2 pupils spoke confidently, sensibly and knowledgeably to the inspector about their own safety. This confidence is closely linked to the programme of outdoor education that all pupils enjoy. They feel safe in the school grounds and are able to have a significant degree of age-appropriate freedom to explore and investigate the environment. They learn from an early age to assess risks in relation to, for example, using tools such as scissors and implements in the school garden and the outdoor 'Forest School'.
- In this harmonious school, any incidents of negative behaviour are few and far between. Even so, the pupils are fully aware of what constitutes unacceptable behaviour and how to deal with bullying should it occur. This extends to an awareness of their safety on the internet and the use of 'Dolphin' to signal any concerns to their teachers.
- Pupils demonstrate a real pride in the quality of the work they produce and in being a member of the school community. A typical comment was, 'Our school is a great place to come to, to have fun, learn new things and make friends.' Their eagerness to attend school is shown by their consistently above-average attendance.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteachers' expert leadership of teaching is instrumental in the school sustaining high levels of progress and attainment for all pupils. The focus is firmly on the well-being and achievement of the pupils, and any signs of underperformance are immediately tackled.
- Through a process of rigorous self-evaluation and constant monitoring of progress, the school is fully aware of its strengths and areas for improvement. A detailed school development plan puts the training of staff at its heart and a desire for 'every teacher to be a leader' involves playing to strengths and sharing best practice.

- The responses to the staff questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive. Staff feel valued and benefit from excellent training. They have opportunities for promotion, and go on to positions of senior leadership in the school. Pay rises and promotion are carefully monitored by both the headteachers and the governors.
- Parents are positively welcomed into the school, are very well informed about its work and are really encouraged to be involved in supporting their children's education. Many are effusive in their praise for all aspects of the school's work. One described the school 'as a true community school with a caring and nurturing ethos'.
- The local authority both supports the school and is supported by it. Regular visits and training for staff and governors contribute to the outstanding management of the school. At the same time the headteachers are able to offer guidance to other schools through occasional visits and longer-term support. They are ably assisted in this by their own highly efficient and extremely capable leadership team.
- The safeguarding of children is a top priority for the school. It makes every effort to ensure not only that all statutory requirements met, but that all pupils have the same positive experiences.
- Topics, themes and ideas are carefully woven into programmes of study where pupils' exploration and self-discovery are the drivers for excellent learning. Teachers are happy to allow pupils to pursue their own interests during a lesson if it is clear that fresh knowledge is being acquired by children finding out things for themselves.
- The school has embraced outdoor education as a regular part of the school day. It is integrated into all aspects of learning and led by a highly qualified Forest School leader. While the younger pupils start by exploring the woodland areas in the school grounds, all pupils go off site to experience greater challenges and to develop further their independence and initiative.
- The outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of the pupils' education are as important to the school as any other. Pupils show a keen sense of what is fair and what is right and have the confidence to stand up for themselves and others, to make sure they all have the same chance to succeed. Lessons pause to acknowledge moments of awe and wonder as children experience a spiritual dimension to their learning. The school also communicates to the pupils, as far as reasonably possible, the diversity of modern Britain through a series of visits to places of worship for different faiths and by welcoming visitors.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is outstanding. The governors are extremely well informed about the quality of teaching, how well school leaders are supporting and improving staff performance, and how teachers are rewarded. They are very clear about the school's strengths and weaknesses and how well its pupils are performing compared to pupils nationally. Finances are very well managed and governors hold the school fully to account for the way in which extra funding, such as the pupil premium, is spent.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	112680
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	412495

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	118
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Spooner
Headteacher	Gillie Oldfield & Catherine Robinson (co-headteachers)
Date of previous school inspection	11 October 2007
Telephone number	01246 413284
Fax number	01246 413284
Email address	headteacher@holmesdale.derbyshire.sch.uk

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