

Holbeach Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100688
Local Authority	Lewisham
Inspection number	285846
Inspection date	18 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Wendy Simmons

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	390
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr L Phillips
Headteacher	Ms C Boxall
Date of previous school inspection	20 May 2002
School address	Doggett Road London SE6 4QB
Telephone number	020 8690 4713
Fax number	020 8314 5923

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Holbeach is a very large and ethnically diverse school. The largest groups include almost equal numbers of pupils from Black British Caribbean and White British backgrounds. A very high proportion of pupils speak English in addition to their home language. Many pupils experience social and economic deprivation in their home lives. The school has a growing proportion of homeless families, refugees, asylum seekers and very vulnerable pupils. A high number of pupils join the school at intermittent times throughout the school year. A very high proportion of pupils have learning difficulties, especially in some year groups. The school is currently working towards gaining the 'Sports Mark' in 2007 and the 'Healthy Schools' award by 2008.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Holbeach is an outstanding school where pupils from all backgrounds receive an 'all round' education. Outstanding leadership, especially by the headteacher and her deputy, is at the heart of this very effective school. In addition to the very strong leadership, there are many interlinking features that contribute to pupils' outstanding achievement. These include:

- An outstandingly varied curriculum inspires pupils to work hard and gain a very wide range of skills
- Pupils' personal development is outstanding, especially their social, moral and cultural development
- Very good relationships and outstanding care, guidance and support result in happy learners, who overcome any difficulties quickly
- Consistently good teaching leads to many examples of excellent learning, as does the very wide range of clubs, visits and extra activities
- The school provides very well for pupils learning English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties. As a result, they make excellent progress

When children start in the Foundation Stage, their skills are exceptionally low. They get off to a good start and make good progress because there is a very strong focus on developing children's social skills and their ability to communicate with each other. Nonetheless, standards are lower than average at the end of the Reception Year. Staff make very good use of the facilities that they have but are hampered from extending learning in the outside area. This is because the space is cramped and lacks high quality areas for such things as gardening, clambering and exploring.

Pupils make outstanding overall progress between Years 1 and 6. In particular, those who have been at the school for a long time do very well. By the end of Year 6, standards are broadly average in English, mathematics and science. In art and music, standards are higher than average and pupils take part in a good range of sports and they adopt healthy lifestyles. There is a strong focus on English and much discussion work is linked to helping pupils with their writing. However, pupils find higher level reading skills very difficult. They need considerable time and support to explain how they reason, deduce and infer things from texts. This is a barrier to even more gaining high levels in their work. Leaders recognise this and are allocating even more time to discussion activities.

Pupils are right to be proud of their school and confirm that they are very happy and extremely well cared for. They say, 'We are all treated equally, no one is better than anyone else'. Parents have confidence in the school and one summed the school up very well when saying, 'My child benefits from attending a school that reflects a very varied and mixed community'.

What the school should do to improve further

- Help pupils to talk about their reading, so that they explain why things happen, especially when the plot or facts are complicated and the meaning is not obvious
- Develop the outside learning areas for the Foundation Stage and the playground provision for all pupils

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Achievement is outstanding. When children join the Foundation Stage many have limited language and communication skills, poor knowledge and understanding of the world around them, underdeveloped physical skills and weak mathematical knowledge. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage and further very good progress between Years 1 and 6. Pupils produce high quality art and music and these enrich their 'all round' achievement very well.

Standards are close to average by the end of Year 6. Many reach the expected average level in English, mathematics and science. In the last year, the provision for gifted and talented pupils improved, with more working on higher level skills than in the past. Standards fluctuate from year to year due to variations in the numbers of pupils with complex learning difficulties and the high incidence of pupils joining and leaving the school at intermittent times throughout the year.

All groups of learners, including those from diverse ethnic backgrounds, make at least good progress. Those who have been at the school for a long time often make exceptionally good progress. The exciting curriculum and outstanding support and guidance contribute to this. For example, pupils with learning difficulties are very well supported and, as a result, many reach the expected average by the end of Year 6.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils enjoy school and are excited by all that it has to offer. As a result of the school's very good efforts, pupils' attendance has improved and is much higher than most other schools in Lewisham. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding, and they are polite and respectful. The focus on social skills starts very well in the Foundation Stage where children learn how to concentrate, listen, explore new things and work and play successfully with others.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, as evident in the low incidence of bullying, no incidence of racism and in pupils' involvement in many cultural activities. For example, pupils enjoyed the opera 'Jaz's Journey', and value the many theatre visits and work with professional artists. Pupils have a growing understanding of the need to eat and drink healthily and they take part in a good range of sporting activities, although the playground space does not promote this to best possible effect. Pupils grow in confidence, share ideas and take increasing responsibility. They willingly work in teams, share ideas and cooperate and this helps them to make an outstanding contribution to the community and care for others. For example, pupils raised money for an orphanage in Kenya by selling cakes made from 'Fair Trade' products. Through the 'Wild Life Club', pupils work enthusiastically at weekends to improve the environment in 'Ladywell Park'.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Pupils are enthusiastic and work hard because activities are fun. Learning is good in the Foundation Stage, but the lack of a high quality outside area limits the range of investigative and physical activities that can be provided, especially in the Nursery.

Plans are in place to improve this, but the school is struggling to get the financial resources needed to realise their goal. Throughout the school, teachers have good knowledge of the subjects taught, and plan their lessons well, so that pupils of all abilities are given suitable challenges. Assistants give good support. Pupils have the chance to learn in different ways. For example, good investigation work, especially in science contributes to pupils' good progress and teaching has improved significantly in mathematics. Adults ask good questions and these help pupils to think and use more varied vocabulary in their answers. Effective use of 'talking partners', drama, role play and letter and sounds (phonics) activities help pupils to make very good progress in their writing. However, when they are reading, pupils find it difficult to explain precisely why things happen, especially when meanings are complicated or not obvious. The school has correctly identified the need to help pupils to discuss books more.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is very well thought out so that pupils from all backgrounds can enjoy learning, achieve outstandingly well and gain many skills for their wider personal development. There is an excellent focus on using visits to widen pupils' life experiences. In particular, the arts are very well promoted. Book, fitness and health weeks contribute much to pupils' excellent achievement. Gifted and talented pupils benefit from additional music tuition for keyboard skills and enjoy a range of art and drama activities. In particular, the most able mathematicians worked with Brunel University on a 10 week enrichment project, which has helped to improve their achievement and skills. Pupils learn French and enjoy a wide range of sports coaching, including the Kent Cricket Club and a local judo club.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Induction programmes are outstanding for those who arrive throughout the year and those starting in the Foundation Stage. One new pupil said, 'I have been to quite a lot of schools and this one stands out the most...you can learn more here'. Child protection procedures are rigorous and the care for vulnerable pupils is outstanding. Excellent links with specialists help pupils with their learning, social skills and emotional development. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and those learning English as an additional language is especially strong and helps them to achieve very well. Staff know the pupils very well and make effective use of assessment information to track and check pupils' progress, so that extra support can be provided if pupils need it. As a result, pupils are very clear about what they need to do to improve their work. Such things as the 'catch-up' classes and holiday clubs help pupils to achieve very well.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher, with senior staff, provides excellent support for staff and pupils and has a very clear vision for development. At the time of the last inspection, the school was judged to be very good and since then has developed further. Standards have risen, especially in science. The school has a good capacity to improve, but building projects are hampered by limited funding and the fact that the school shares the building with an adult education centre. Leaders are correctly working to improve the outside

learning and playground areas in their drive to help pupils to have even more daily exercise. This is part of leaders' vision to gain the 'Sports Mark' and 'Healthy Schools' awards.

The roles of middle managers have developed considerably, so that all leaders are involved in evaluating the work of the school. Leaders support all staff very well and are currently helping assistants to gain specialist qualifications.

The governing body provides good support. Governors know the school well and ask challenging questions about what goes on because they are keen for all pupils to do as well as possible.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ Grade 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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

28 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Holbeach Primary School, London, SE6 4QB

You may remember that I came to your school recently to find out about your school. Thank you for being so friendly and helping me with this. I am writing to let you know what I found out.

Your school is an outstanding school, which means that you do many things exceptionally well. You clearly enjoy learning and value all that the adults do for you. In particular, you especially enjoy the exciting visits and extra activities. You are exceptionally well cared for and teaching is good. These things help you to learn quickly and be happy at school. You work hard and, because adults help you to make the most of your time at school, you make outstanding progress, which will help you to do well in the future. Your behaviour is excellent and you respect and help others, which is something to be really proud of. I was pleased to listen to many of you talking with each other about your ideas for making your writing interesting. You do very well in developing important basic reading and mathematics skills. Your music and art work are wonderful. Well done for working so hard.

Most importantly, your headteacher and all of the staff and governors are working to make the school even better for you. I have asked them to do the following things to do this:

- make the outside areas more attractive, as you asked me to help with this;
- help you to talk about your reading, so that you can explain what the text says, especially when the plot or facts are complicated and the meaning is not obvious.

Please help your teachers with this by reading as often as you can and by talking about your books. Good luck, when singing at the 'Lewisham People's Day'. Help as much as you can and enjoy the new playground, as you deserve the best!

Yours faithfully

Wendy Simmons Lead inspector