



Holly Hill Methodist CofE Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103479
Local Authority Birmingham
Inspection number 286673
Inspection date 18 January 2007
Reporting inspector David Rzeznik HMI

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	New Street
School category	Voluntary aided		Rubery, Rednal
Age range of pupils	3-7		Birmingham B45 0EU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 6758700
Number on roll (school)	189	Fax number	0121 6758411
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	John Richardson
		Headteacher	Christine Parker
Date of previous school inspection	25 November 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools.

Description of the school

Holly Hill is a slightly smaller-than-average infant school with a part-time nursery. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. A small number are of Black or mixed heritage. The school population is stable. The number claiming free school meals is high because the school is located in an area of social deprivation with higher-than-average unemployment. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties, including those with statements, is above average. There are a few pupils with visual impairment, physical or other disabilities. Pupils enter the Nursery with attainment that is below that expected for children of this age. The school has achieved the Basic Skills Quality Mark and a Birmingham Healthy Schools Award. In June 2006 a Children's Centre was opened on the school site to provide extended child care services for the locality.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Holly Hill is a good school that successfully fulfils its aim to educate pupils in a Christian environment. The school knows that it is effective and the inspector judges the care, guidance and support provided as outstanding. The work done by the learning mentors to support and guide the most vulnerable pupils is of high quality. The school is very successful in removing the barriers that hinder pupils' progress. It is a school that is extremely welcoming and has successfully developed a strong family ethos. Very good partnerships have been established with parents and the local church to promote pupils' well-being. Parents' views of the school are extremely positive.

Provision and standards in the Nursery and Reception classes (Foundation Stage) are good and pupils make good progress in all areas of learning. By the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are slightly above average. Attainment in science is above average. Pupils make good progress as they move through Years 1 and 2 because teaching and the curriculum are effective and build on what pupils know and can do. Classroom assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils' listening skills are good but their speaking skills are below average. When speaking, pupils lack fluency and many are unable to use complex sentences to explain things. Staff do not yet do enough to encourage pupils to talk in sentences, or model the necessary language structures, to further develop their speaking, vocabulary and grammatical skills. There is effective tracking and assessment of pupils' performance to plan extra support and to set realistic targets. Listening and speaking skills are informally assessed but no written record is kept. It is therefore difficult to pinpoint the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' learning.

The curriculum is good and enables pupils to achieve well both academically and personally. Whilst the learning outdoors in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory, the environment lacks stimulating play resources to further develop pupils' creative, imaginative and physical development. Pupils say they are happy and really enjoy school, and this is reflected in their outstanding behaviour, regular attendance and very positive attitudes to learning. Their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils have a good understanding of their own culture and a suitable awareness of other religions. However, their understanding of cultures and lifestyles different from their own is limited. Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and governors have developed a strong team ethic based on high aspirations and a clear vision. There are good systems for monitoring and evaluating provision. This has led to the school accurately identifying its main strengths and weaknesses. The school's capacity to improve is good.

It has demonstrated that it can raise standards by effective intervention. For example, in the past academic year, standards in mathematics and writing have been markedly improved by raising expectations, and through improving teaching methods and staff subject knowledge.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' speaking, vocabulary and grammatical skills by: -creating more opportunities for them to talk in sentences -staff modelling language to develop correct sentence formation -assessing pupils' listening and speaking skills to judge their attainment and progress over time.
- Improve the quality of the outdoor curriculum, particularly the range of play resources in the Foundation Stage.
- Further develop pupils' understanding of cultures and lifestyles different from their own.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils join the Nursery with skills and knowledge below the levels expected for their age. On entry, their communication, personal, social and emotional skills are much lower than normal. There is therefore much catching up to do. Right from the start their progress is tracked and support is effectively targeted at specific and individual needs. As a result, pupils make good progress in all areas of learning, and exceptional progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Pupils continue to make good gains in their learning as they move through Years 1 and 2. Whilst pupils make good progress in their basic skills, their speaking skills remain below average, and are insufficiently well developed by the time they leave school. The more able are achieving well. The numbers reaching the higher level in mathematics and science are greater than that seen nationally. Pupils with learning difficulties and those with physical and visual impairment achieve well and meet the targets set in their individual education plans. Standards are slightly above average overall. In reading, writing and mathematics, pupils are about a term ahead of pupils nationally. Science standards are above average and pupils make very good progress in this subject.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. Behaviour throughout the school is outstanding. Pupils say they feel safe and secure and enjoy being playground squaddies because they can help those who may have a problem or want friendship. Pupils are making a positive contribution to school life. For example, some from Year 2 were involved in the recruitment of a new teacher. They decided what attributes the teacher should have and interviewed the candidates alongside governors. Pupils also raise funds for the Poppy Appeal and Operation Christmas Child. The recent audit of school lunchboxes and food choices at dinnertime shows pupils are choosing healthy foods to eat. The school travel plan is successfully encouraging pupils and their parents to take more exercise by encouraging them to walk to school rather than use the car. The school bank helps pupils gain an understanding about the importance of saving and sound financial management. Visitors from local workplaces teach pupils about adult life, particularly the importance of having good basic skills, being punctual, polite and

getting on with others. Assemblies, acts of worship and religious education lessons ensure pupils' spiritual education is developed well. The moving and sensitive prayers on the prayer board reflect the strong spiritual ethos that underpins the school's work. Pupils' understanding of cultural diversity in the world at large is less well developed.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils are well taught. Classrooms are bright and pleasant, with easily accessible resources and very good quality displays of pupils' work. The strengths in teaching include very good relationships between adults and pupils resulting in a very positive learning climate in class. The one-to-one work done with pupils with specific learning difficulties and disabilities is effective. Well- focused support enables them to fully access the curriculum and achieve the lesson objectives. Good use is made of whiteboard computer technology to develop teaching points and increase pupils' motivation and enjoyment. A good range of behaviour management strategies is used to engage pupils' interest and keep them on task. The less effective lessons were characterised by pupils spending too much time sitting on the carpet listening to the teacher, with insufficient opportunities to practise the skills being taught. On occasions, group activities are unproductive and time is not used wisely. In general, there is too little modelling of spoken language to develop pupils' vocabulary and grammatical skills. Assessment procedures are good, although there is no written system for recording pupils' attainment or progress in listening and speaking. Marking is regular, helpful and developmental.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good because it has been designed with the pupils' needs and interests at its heart. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is good and this means they make better-than-expected progress. The grouping of pupils by ability in mathematics works well. It ensures that learning tasks are suitably matched to pupils' capabilities so all pupils are stretched. Effective use is made of computers, particularly in mathematics. The curriculum is enriched by visits and visitors, including theatre trips, music workshops and football coaching. Pupils enjoy the additional activities such as skipping, dance, art and recorders, as demonstrated by their good attendance.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

What is striking is the outstanding way pupils are cared for, guided and supported. For example, the learning mentors have identified the pupils most at risk and frequently work with them to ensure they achieve success. The support and guidance for those

with social and emotional difficulties are first rate, and this means that each individual's self-esteem and self-confidence are significantly boosted. The effective deployment of staff means that when there are lapses and pupils do not conform, there is always someone on hand to provide advice and support to rectify things. Anger management sessions are effective in enabling pupils to understand what makes them lose control and the effect anger has on themselves and others and why self-control is important.

Robust risk assessments are carried out for the building and for trips out of school. Staff vetting arrangements are rigorous and the records held fully comply with government requirements.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management at all levels are good. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors have been effective in creating a Christian ethos which promotes high expectations for pupils' welfare and achievement. There is a real sense of teamwork and an outstanding commitment to running an equitable and inclusive school in which every child and parent matters. The school is outward looking and the strong partnerships that have been developed with a range of other providers and agencies are successfully removing some of the main barriers that hinder success. The school improvement plan is sound. It clearly identifies the key priorities for the school, but it lacks suitable measures as to how progress will be evaluated. The school has built up a higher-than-normal budget surplus. However, it has plans in place to spend it appropriately by improving the accommodation and resources.

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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
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?	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 disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

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?	2
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.

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 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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Hello, I am the inspector that visited your school. I am writing you a letter to tell you what I found out. Thank you for talking to me and for being so friendly. I know your mums and dads think the school is good and I agree.

What I liked most

- You really enjoy coming to school and are happy there.
- As soon as I walked through the front door I could see that you were part of one big family. Thank you for making me so welcome.
- I was pleased to see that your faith plays such an important part in your own lives and that of the school. I thought your prayers on the prayer board in the entrance hall were very special and I hope they are answered.
- You are really friendly and very well behaved.
- The learning mentors provide very good support to those who most need it.
- All the grown-ups work hard to ensure you make the good progress that you do. They take great care of you and I know that you take care of each other too.
- The displays of your work are very good. Your classrooms are bright and all the things you need are close by.

I have asked the headteacher and governors to do some things to make Holly Hill even better

- When you speak to your teachers I want you to talk in sentences. I want your teachers to show you how to speak properly and for you to copy what they say.
- I want the outdoors to be a better place to play in with even more interesting things to do there.
- I want you to learn about how other people in the world live. I also want you to understand why people may do things the same way as you and sometimes differently.