

# Hollybush Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117263
<b>Local Authority</b>	HERTFORDSHIRE
<b>Inspection number</b>	290775
<b>Inspection dates</b>	18–19 June 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Patricia Cox

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	231
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr David Reed
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Alan Brown
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 October 2001
<b>School address</b>	Fordwich Rise Hertford Hertfordshire SG14 2DF
<b>Telephone number</b>	01992 581454
<b>Fax number</b>	01992 410210

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Most pupils in this average sized primary school are from White British backgrounds. Although the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is low, a small but growing number of pupils are from Eastern Europe and at an early stage of learning English. The proportion entitled to free school meals is average and pupils come from families with a range of social backgrounds. The proportion with learning difficulties and disabilities is lower than average. There has been high turnover of teaching staff recently. Attainment on entry to the Nursery is above national expectations and often well above.

The school has achieved the ActiveMark for physical education (PE), the Eco-School Bronze award and Investors in People.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Hollybush is a satisfactory school that provides its pupils with a satisfactory standard of education and gives sound value for money. Most parents are positive about the school; for example, one commented on the strong support that the whole school community gave her son's learning difficulties. The school is soundly led and managed, and has satisfactory capacity to improve further. The headteacher, with the strong support of the deputy headteacher, is providing a clear educational direction. Together, they have introduced some suitable initiatives this year but it is too early to see a significant impact. There is an adequate understanding of the school's strengths and the areas where improvement is needed, but there is an over-optimistic view of its effectiveness. Action taken to bring about the necessary outcomes has had a satisfactory impact. For example, subject leaders are improving their skills with enthusiasm and there is some good practice, although some are at a relatively early stage in taking responsibility for standards in their subjects. The leadership of the school has a good bank of information about the progress pupils are making. However, it does not use its full range of monitoring and assessment information to build a thorough picture of the effectiveness of teaching.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and an adequate understanding of the level at which they are working. However, the use of assessment to plan further work is inconsistent and therefore tasks are not always matched well enough to the needs of all pupils in the class. Nevertheless, pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall in relation to their starting points, and standards remain above average by the time they leave. Children make a sound start in the Foundation Stage and their attainment is above that expected by the time they enter Year 1. Pupils' progress is variable through the rest of the school, particularly in writing, where they do not always do well enough. In reading, mathematics and science their achievement is securely satisfactory but not in information and communication technology (ICT) and not always in writing. There are too few opportunities for pupils to develop these skills across all subjects. The curriculum is satisfactory and there is a good range of activities outside the school day. However, the teaching time for Key Stage 2 is below that recommended and there is some imbalance between subjects, and so some are allocated a limited time.

The school provides pupils with good pastoral care. There are effective systems for promoting good behaviour and these are applied consistently. Therefore, almost all pupils behave well in class and around school and are thoughtful of others. Their personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are satisfactory. Pupils have a good understanding of how to live a healthy life. However, attendance is below average, in spite of the strenuous efforts of the school, because too many parents do not ensure that their children attend regularly or on time. While pupils have targets to improve their work, they are not involved enough in setting these or in measuring their progress towards them.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils make consistent and at least satisfactory progress in all classes, especially in writing and ICT.
- Further develop the use of assessment and target-setting so that teachers match work closely to the needs of all pupils and involve them in knowing what they need to do to improve.

- Ensure that all those with responsibilities in the school are closely involved in developing more rigorous systems, using all the information available, for checking its effectiveness and identifying what needs to be done to raise standards.
- Ensure that the teaching time at Key Stage 2 takes consideration of that recommended nationally and that the curriculum is sufficiently balanced to give pupils a thorough grounding in all subjects.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

In all classes, some pupils make good progress while others make too little during a year. Children's achievement in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall but generally better in mathematical and creative development, and knowledge and understanding of the world than it is in communication, language and literacy. The results of the Year 2 assessments in 2006 were similar to the national average overall, but lower in writing, and pupils had not made sufficient progress overall. This represented a fall from previous years, when standards were well above average. The results in 2007 are slightly improved and are somewhat higher in writing. These assessments demonstrate satisfactory progress for this group, where there is a higher than usual proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities.

The results of the Year 6 tests have been above average in recent years and in 2006 were well above average in English, mathematics and science. The pupils had made satisfactory progress overall since they were in Year 2, and their progress in English was good. The work of the present Year 6 pupils is above average in reading, mathematics and science, but average in writing. They have made mainly satisfactory progress through Key Stage 2 but not as much in writing or ICT, because they have not had sufficient opportunity to use and develop their skills across the curriculum. Throughout the school, pupils whose first language is not English make sound progress in acquiring fluency in the language. Those with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 3**

The pupils develop a sound spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness overall. Their moral and social development is good, but opportunities to develop spiritual and cultural awareness are more limited. The younger pupils enjoy school but some of the older ones say they would like their lessons to be more exciting. They say that there is little bullying and, if it occurs, it is dealt with effectively. Pupils contribute well to the school and wider community. The school council takes its role seriously and knows that it can help to improve the school. There is a range of fund-raising activities for charities. Pupils enjoy choosing a healthy lunch from the selection of colour-coded dishes and are working towards the Healthy Schools Award. They are building a satisfactory foundation for later life and the next stage in their education.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Classrooms are bright and displays are mounted carefully, although there is little celebration of pupils' work as part of the displays. In many lessons, teachers show good general knowledge and use some interesting resources. The better teaching is enthusiastic, involving and interesting the pupils, and there is a brisk pace. Throughout the school, teachers have a general awareness of the level at which their pupils are working. They often plan work at different levels to cater for the range of attainment. However, this use of assessment is at an early stage, so the tasks are sometimes too easy for some or too difficult for others. Teachers plan their lessons conscientiously, setting out what they want their pupils to learn. Activities are usually matched to these aims but this practice is inconsistent.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The school has begun to link subjects so as to develop and apply skills that have been taught. Provision for personal, social and health education is satisfactory and promotes pupils' personal development soundly. The good range of activities outside the school day adds to pupils' enjoyment. However, because the curriculum is not sufficiently balanced, the time for some subjects like art and design is too restricted, particularly for the older pupils. Provision for ICT is limited because the school does not have enough resources for pupils to use across the curriculum. The curriculum is adapted satisfactorily to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and those whose first language is not English. The Foundation Stage curriculum is designed satisfactorily to develop children's skills in all areas of learning. Their outdoor area has been improved and further suitable developments are planned.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. The school takes good care of its pupils' physical and emotional needs. Procedures for safeguarding them are rigorous and staff are trained in child protection matters. The school tracks pupils' progress but not enough is done to ensure that those who are at risk of making insufficient progress are supported quickly enough. Pupils have targets in English and mathematics but these are imprecise. Few are familiar with them and most do not know what they need to do to improve. Marking rarely helps them to see how well they have done or how they can do better. There is good support for the families of pupils with learning difficulties and those who are at an early stage of learning to speak English. The identification of pupils with learning difficulties and the support for them operate soundly.

## Leadership and management

#### Grade: 3

The headteacher has a satisfactory understanding of where improvement is needed, but has attempted to tackle too many areas at once. Therefore, progress since the previous inspection, though satisfactory, has not always been as rapid as it could have been. Planning for

improvement is sound, although it would benefit from a longer term view and greater rigour. While most parents are pleased with the education provided, a few have some concerns about the school and perceive that their views are not always listened to. Nevertheless, the school does send out regular questionnaires to canvass their views and frequent newsletters to keep them informed. Governance is satisfactory. The governing body carries out its responsibilities with growing expertise and involvement under the chair's good leadership. The school manages its finances well and has made sensible arrangements in the light of projected costs.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**

## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
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	3

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

20 June 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Hollybush Primary School, Fordwich Rise, Hertford, Hertfordshire, SG14 2DF

Thank you very much for being so helpful when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed our visit, particularly the conversations we had with you and watching you working in lessons. It was a pity we missed the Year 6 children, but we hope they had a very good journey to the Isle of Wight. We thought you might like to know what we found out about your school and what you could do to help. We think that you behave well and understand how to stay healthy. The members of the school council do their jobs well and are very sensible. You are concerned for others and raise a lot of money for charities.

We found out that your school is satisfactory and that you make the same amount of progress as most children in other schools. The school looks after you well and if there's any bullying it's dealt with quickly.

There are some things we found that need to be improved.

- Your writing and ICT aren't as good as they could be so you could help by trying your best.
- Your teachers need to make sure that the work that they give you is just right for you and that your targets help you to do better.
- Mr Brown and the teachers should regularly check how well the school is working so that they can work out what needs to be changed to make the school better.
- The older children need to spend a bit more time in lessons and especially doing subjects like art and design.

What you could do to help you to do really well is to make sure that you come to school every day and on time.

My best wishes for the future

Mrs Pat Cox

Lead Inspector