

# Holway Park Community Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123739
<b>Local Authority</b>	Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	292768
<b>Inspection dates</b>	12–13 June 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Lorna Brackstone

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	231
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Francis Scarborough
<b>Headteacher</b>	Paul Harper
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 September 2001
<b>School address</b>	Shakespeare Avenue Taunton TA1 2JA
<b>Telephone number</b>	01823 252126
<b>Fax number</b>	01823 353129

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This average-sized school serves a socially and economically disadvantaged area. Most families have White British backgrounds but mobility is high. Nearly half the pupils who attend the school have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Attainment on entry into school is extremely low, with particular weaknesses in communication skills and social development. Many of the pupils who join the school midway through their primary education have complex social and physical learning difficulties and disabilities. A group of children from Reception and Years 1 and 2 spend part of their time in a small group which helps to promote their personal and social development.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school that provides a high quality education for all of its pupils. It is well led and managed and this has enabled it to make a good improvement since the last inspection. Parents are unanimous in their praise for the school. As one parent explained, 'The school has made such amazing changes for the better and continues to improve every year'. The headteacher and his leadership team work well together and have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The school has a good capacity to make continued improvements.

Standards are broadly average by the end of Year 6, showing a good improvement since the 2006 results. Whilst standards in the current Year 2 are below average, there is an improving trend. This is particularly noticeable in reading and mathematics, which have been part of a whole-school focus. However, writing has not shown the same improvement and the school is fully aware that standards in writing in particular need to improve. The curriculum has been recently reorganised and is of good quality, including an excellent range of additional activities. Planning ensures that topics interest the pupils and sensibly link subjects together to reinforce learning. However, planning does not provide a sufficiently wide range of opportunities to fully develop skills, especially in writing. Teaching and learning are good. As one parent explained, 'Teachers are professional, approachable and a credit to Holway'. Pupils are fully engaged in lessons and these are well planned to meet the needs of the differing abilities. However, although teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour is high, the same level of rigour is not applied to the presentation of work in books, which is often untidy. Nevertheless, the good teaching and learning, and the stimulating curriculum, have improved pupil achievement and this is now good throughout the school.

The overall care, guidance and support that pupils receive are good and, as a result, their personal development and well-being are also good. The pastoral support they receive is exceptional and parents and carers benefit from this as well as pupils. This has significantly improved relationships between home and school. Targets for literacy and numeracy are helpful to pupils in giving general guidance on how they can improve their work. However, when their books are marked, the teachers do not consistently give the pupils specific guidance on how they might reach the next steps in their learning.

The quality of provision and the progress children make in the Foundation Stage are good. The children are well taught and enjoy a curriculum that meets their needs well. Good partnerships have been made with outside agencies to promote pupils' learning and provide them with quality experiences. The school works closely with the local secondary school to ensure that transition is smooth. Economic strategies are developed well through a business enterprise programme and strong links with a teacher training agency ensure that the school is kept up to date with educational initiatives.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in writing by providing more opportunities across the curriculum to fully develop skills.
- Improve the quality of marking to provide consistent advice on how to improve learning and to encourage higher standards of presentation.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Standards are broadly average by the end of Year 6 and improving because the curriculum is much more meaningful for the pupils than previously, and learning is now relevant to them. Pupils' achievement is good, including those who join the school midway through their primary education, many of whom with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Whilst standards are still below average in the current Year 2 class, there has been a good improvement in reading and mathematics. Consequently, the gap between the 2006 results and the average expectation has been narrowed significantly. However, writing has not shown the same improvement and the school is fully aware that it needs to improve standards there. Children in the Reception class achieve well because the good teaching and the good curriculum help to develop their communication skills and provide them with a secure environment for social growth. However, because attainment is so exceptionally low on entry into school, they have still not reached the level expected for their age by the time they start Year 1.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They like coming to school and show positive attitudes in work and play. They clearly understand the consequences of school rules. As a result, behaviour has improved significantly and is now good and the high rate of exclusions has disappeared. Attendance is satisfactory and improving because there are outstanding systems and support in place to monitor absence. The good quality opportunities for learning in the Reception class help the children to make good progress in their personal and social development. However, it is still below the expected level when they start Year 1 because their social and emotional needs are so complex.

Pupils feel safe in school and are happy to go to a teacher if they have a worry or concern. They display a good understanding of how to stay fit and healthy, for example, in knowing the importance of 'warming up' before exercise. Working as a 'buddy' at playtime to help the youngest children, serving at the tuck shop, sharing their views with the school council and raising money for charity ensure that pupils contribute well to their own and to the wider community. Pupils' involvement in extra-curricular activities and competitions, residential visits and their business enterprise work, coupled with their satisfactory level of basic skills, enables them to be adequately prepared for their future economic well-being.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. Relationships throughout the school are good and, consequently, pupils feel confident in their learning. They respond well to the lessons because they are fully involved in the stimulating curriculum. Most teachers carefully question them to make sure they are all concentrating. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well by teaching assistants, who use a good number of strategies, such as signing and visual displays, to ensure that they fully understand what they are learning. No time is wasted dealing with behaviour issues because pupils know exactly what is expected of them. However, teachers do not always have high enough expectations of how pupils present their

work in their books and feedback on how they can improve their work is not consistently clear. High quality planning in the Foundation Stage balances the specific teaching of key skills with independent play activities. Teaching staff in Reception also interact well during role-play activities and this promotes high quality learning in language and social skills.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

Interesting topics and meaningful links between subjects ensure that the curriculum is relevant to the needs of the pupils. In the Reception class the work is suitably based around activities that motivate the children such as the 'Garden Shop' and fun number songs. The well-planned curriculum thoroughly motivates pupils throughout the school. For example, Years 5 and 6 are extremely motivated about their 'Daisy, Daisy' topic which includes Victorian history, geographical work about railways and canals, art studies of William Morris, and scientific steam power investigations. An excellent range of visits provides pupils with first-hand experiences, for example, outings to the SS Great Britain and to the local market. The school is aware that curriculum planning does not yet provide a sufficiently wide range of opportunities to fully develop all key skills, especially writing. The excellent opportunities provided at lunchtime and after school for musical and sporting activities make a very positive contribution to the development of pupils' self-esteem and confidence.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils throughout the school are exceptionally well cared for and this contributes well to their enjoyment and achievement at school. Parents and children benefit from the outstanding help provided by the Parent Support Adviser, resulting in improved attendance and punctuality. The exclusions rate has declined and there are now much more positive attitudes between home and school. Home visits and introductory sessions before starting school ensure that Reception children settle in well. Procedures to ensure that pupils are kept safe and secure, including those relating to child protection, are well established. Personal development is monitored extremely well. Pupils are confident that they are looked after very well but would appreciate a more consistent approach to their problems or concerns by the lunchtime supervisors. The good links with outside agencies ensure that pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good support. Academic guidance overall is satisfactory. Although targets for literacy and numeracy help them understand what level they are working at, specific guidance on how to improve is not consistent enough.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

As one parent commented, the headteacher has 'real drive' and, together with his leadership team, provides a firm steer for the school. Pupils' progress and teaching are rigorously checked and this means that the leaders of the school have a good understanding of strengths. The innovative changes to the curriculum have improved standards. The detailed development plan provides a clear focus on what needs to be improved further, such as standards in writing and better quality marking. Curriculum leaders, including those responsible for the Foundation Stage, have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development within the subjects they have responsibility for. Governors are very supportive of the school and are well

involved in its life. They are knowledgeable about the improving standards and provision, and provide good levels of challenge.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<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>	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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	3

### The quality of provision

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

<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>	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	2
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**

13 June 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Holway Park Community Primary School, Taunton, Somerset TA1 2JA

Thank you very much for making us so welcome at your school. We would like to say a special thanks to the group of pupils we met who told us all about life at Holway Park Community Primary School.

Your school provides you with a good education. You feel safe and cared for because the school looks after you extremely well and gives you good support overall. You make good progress in both your academic and personal development and, by the end of Year 6, reach broadly average standards in your subjects. You behave well and enjoy your learning. This is because teaching is good, and so are the activities planned for you. Lessons are presented in a way that makes sense to you.

You are proud of all the after-school activities you are involved in and we liked hearing all about the ukulele orchestra. You particularly enjoy the visits out of school, which help you learn more about different topics, and the residential visits are a firm favourite. We were very impressed with your detailed knowledge about keeping fit and healthy.

The adults in charge of the school are leading and managing it well. Your headteacher is very determined to always give you the very best education.

We have asked the school to help you to improve the quality and standards of your writing. We have asked your teachers that when marking your books they give you more guidance on how you can move on in your learning. You can also help by trying much harder to make your work much neater.

Once again, thank you for your help. Keep doing your best and working with the adults to make sure that Holway Park Primary gets better and better.

Yours sincerely

Lorna Brackstone and John Collings The inspectors