

Holystone Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108581
Local Authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	337106
Inspection dates	3–4 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Christine Inkster HMI

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 of pupils on the school roll	433
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Steve Hallowell
Headteacher	Mr Brian Goodall
Date of previous school inspection	25 April 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. Approximately 70% of the time was spent looking at learning. The inspectors visited 22 lessons, conducted learning walks and additional time was spent in the Early Years Foundation Stage classes. All teachers were seen teaching, a scrutiny of pupils' work was carried out, meetings were held with governors, staff and groups of pupils, and informal discussions were held with parents and carers. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at school documents, including policies related to the safeguarding of pupils, the school development plan, self-evaluation records, minutes of governors' meetings and the school's own assessment data. The inspectors analysed questionnaires from 257 parents and carers, 182 pupils and 16 staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the amount of progress made by all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language
- the quality of pupils' cultural development, particularly in relation to community cohesion
- how well teachers use day-to-day assessment information to plan lessons which meet the needs of all pupils
- the impact of leaders at all levels on pupils' well-being and achievement
- the progress made by children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in respect of their achievement and personal development.

Information about the school

This school is larger than most primary schools. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is lower than the national average. There are fewer pupils from a minority ethnic background than found nationally and a small number who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than the national average and a small number have a statement of special educational needs. The school provides for pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage in a Nursery and two Reception classes. The school has achieved a wide range of national awards including the Healthy School Award, Activemark and Sportsmark.

There is privately managed extended childcare provision on the school site, which is subject to a separate inspection and report.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is an outstanding school where every child does matter. Pupils flourish both academically and personally in this extremely caring and well-organised environment. The school is exceptionally well led by the headteacher and he is very well supported by a highly committed deputy headteacher and team of staff. They work extremely hard to ensure that pupils' individual needs are met. Governors provide high levels of challenge and support and are keen to ensure that the school continues to improve. The school knows its strengths very well and clearly prioritises areas for development which are supported by a range of consistent and high quality systems. There has been further improvement since the last inspection because of successful actions taken as a result of accurate self-evaluation and review. Consequently, there is outstanding capacity to improve further and the school provides excellent value for money. The school is highly regarded in the local community and pupils are excellent ambassadors for the school. Their behaviour is exemplary and they have excellent social skills. They are extremely courteous and polite and are confident in their interaction with adults and each other. This is confirmed by one child who states, 'my school is a lovely place to be because all the children are good mannered and very polite'. Parents and carers are extremely positive about the work of the school and as two parents stated in their questionnaires, echoing the views of many, 'the headteacher and his wonderful staff are fantastic and always put children first', and, 'I find the school excellent and my child would like to go on Saturday and Sunday'.

From starting points which are below those typical of their age, pupils make outstanding progress, leaving Year 6 with standards which are significantly above average. This is because of the consistently good and often outstanding teaching they receive. Teachers use assessment information very effectively to ensure that the learning needs of all pupils are fully met. High levels of effective support for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language help these groups of pupils to progress as well as their peers. The school has taken significant steps to improve the quality of writing and a high proportion of pupils now attain the higher Level 5 in the Year 6 national tests in this subject. However, while the content is of high quality, handwriting is not always neat enough and there is no consistent style or use of joined script throughout the school. The exciting curriculum provides a wonderful range of experiences which engage and motivate pupils. This promotes pupils' outstanding personal development and raises their self-esteem. Although community cohesion is good, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop national and global links to enable them to have a full understanding of their place within the wider community.

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There are exceptionally high levels of care and support for pupils within the school, including arrangements for safeguarding, and pupils say they feel very safe. The Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding and children thoroughly enjoy their learning in an exciting and caring environment.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve handwriting by December 2010, by:
 - - devising and implementing a whole-school style of joined script
 - - ensuring that there are opportunities to develop handwriting across all subjects
 - - monitoring and evaluating the quality of handwriting on a regular basis to ensure consistency of approach.
- Improve community cohesion, by:
 - - developing further national and global links in order to enable pupils to fully understand their place in the wider community.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

Pupils' achievement and enjoyment of learning are outstanding. In lessons, pupils concentrate exceptionally well, listen carefully to the teacher and to one another and are confident and motivated learners. Pupils take great pride in their work and are determined to succeed. They particularly enjoy being challenged to think carefully and are able to explain and justify their ideas and views; for example, in Year 2, when pupils were able to articulate characters' thoughts and feelings. Pupils make outstanding progress across the school from their below average starting points to reach standards that are well above average by the time they leave Year 6. Attainment is consistently high and all groups of pupils make excellent progress. There has been a strong trend of improvement, particularly in writing, since the last inspection. However, although the content of writing is of a high standard, scrutiny of pupils' work shows that handwriting is not always neat enough and there is no consistent style or use of joined script throughout the school.

Pupils say they feel extremely safe and that staff respond rapidly if they have any concerns or worries. They have an excellent understanding of how to live healthy lifestyles, as shown by their high participation in sporting activities and the way in which they choose to eat healthy foods. There is a very strong commitment to charitable activities and pupils understand how the funds raised can improve the lives of others. This was evident in an assembly when a visitor from 'LEPRA' praised them highly for their generosity and empathy towards others. Pupils relish opportunities to take on responsibilities within school, for example as school councillors, and they are closely involved in decision making. This is shown by the way in which they have requested the highly skilled caretaker to build a bicycle shed and make extensive improvements to the outdoor areas. The 'pupils' voice' is strong, as demonstrated by the way in which pupils wrote to the local council and succeeded in persuading them to make important safety improvements in the area close to the school. Pupils' attendance is high and they

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develop excellent basic skills that will serve them extremely well in the next stages of their education. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding overall. They have an excellent understanding of right and wrong and they have a highly developed spiritual awareness as shown by their sense of reverence in assemblies and joy in learning. They are extending their knowledge of other cultures, religions and beliefs through aspects of the curriculum, including religious education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is consistently good and a high proportion is outstanding, promoting excellent learning and progress. Key strengths are that teachers have very good subject knowledge and are reflective in their teaching. They use very effective open-ended questioning techniques which elicit thoughtful and high quality responses from pupils. This was demonstrated in two Year 6 English lessons where pupils were discussing the difference between implicit and explicit. Pupils were given excellent opportunities to explore their own feelings and emotions in these lessons. Teachers plan imaginative and challenging tasks which capture pupils' interest and make learning fun, often

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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incorporating games into lessons. This was confirmed by one child who stated, 'Lessons are such fun, it is almost impossible not to like them'. Assessment is used very effectively and consistently by all staff to ensure progression and continuity in learning for pupils. Assessment techniques involve highly effective analyses of the progress made by pupils and accurate identification of what they need to learn next. This information is then used very well to provide extremely challenging targets. Pupils have a very good understanding of their targets and what they have to do next to improve. Pupils are able to effectively assess their own progress and that of their peers. Marking and feedback are of a high quality throughout the school.

Pupils experience a rich and stimulating curriculum which contributes very well to their excellent achievement and enjoyment in learning. There is a very strong focus on developing basic skills, particularly in literacy and numeracy and these are used very effectively to support learning across all subjects of the curriculum. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used very well to interest and engage learners and pupils have regular opportunities to develop their ICT skills. The curriculum is planned very carefully and is closely matched to the needs of the pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who speak English as an additional language and those who are gifted and talented. This contributes significantly to these groups of pupils making the same excellent progress as their peers. There is an extensive range of enrichment activities, including visitors into school and visits, and a large number of extra-curricular activities including a choir and a steel pan band.

The ethos of the school is open and welcoming which creates a safe and happy environment for learning. Staff know pupils and their families very well and any pupils in need of additional support are identified early. Very effective help is given to address pupils' particular needs, often through contact with a range of other professionals or by highly skilled teachers and support staff. There are very good links with local secondary schools, which ensure that transfer arrangements for older pupils are smooth.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher plays a pivotal role in inspiring staff and encouraging pupils to achieve their best. There has been a strong drive for ambitious improvements because of a strong sense of common purpose and excellent teamwork among all staff. Leaders and managers at all levels, including governors, make sure that any discrimination is

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effectively challenged, ensuring there are equal opportunities for all. Safeguarding arrangements are very secure and fully meet requirements. There are excellent procedures in place which are well documented and all staff are vigilant in ensuring there is a safe environment for pupils. The school promotes community cohesion well and there are very strong links within the local community. National and global links are evident, but not yet fully developed. Governors bring a wide range of valuable expertise to the governing body and gain first-hand knowledge of the work of the school through regular visits to classrooms and meetings with staff. They have an excellent understanding of the strengths and areas for development within the school and are highly committed to ensuring that the school continues to improve.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle in quickly and greatly enjoy their learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage. From starting points below those typical of children of their age, they make outstanding progress to reach standards that are often just above average by the time they enter Year 1. This is because the quality of teaching is consistently good and often outstanding, and the curriculum is exciting and stimulating. This was demonstrated when children showed great delight when helping with an experiment to create a volcano and it erupted! Staff prepare high quality resources and use accurate assessments to provide learning experiences which are closely matched to the needs of the children. There is a clear theme running through all activities. For example, pupils thoroughly enjoyed searching for dinosaurs outside, making dinosaur shaped bread buns

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and running the museum in the role-play area where many dinosaur bones could be found. In the Nursery, children were excited when they were planting magic seeds to grow a beanstalk, writing birthday cards to the giant and playing with the jelly which was left over from the giant's birthday party. These experiences provide excellent opportunities to develop their speaking, listening and early writing skills. There is a good balance between adult-led activities and those that children choose for themselves. Children's personal development is outstanding, as shown by their exemplary behaviour and the great care and consideration they show towards one another. They are able to work very well independently, but also cooperate extremely well with one another and when in groups, sharing equipment and taking turns. Welfare arrangements are highly effective and all requirements are fully in place. Parents and carers are closely involved in their children's learning and are warmly welcomed into the school. The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is excellent. Staff work very closely as a team and are all highly committed to ensuring continued improvement.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Over half of all parents and carers returned a questionnaire. A very large majority of parents and carers have positive views of the work of the school. A few felt that the school did not take account of their suggestions. However, inspectors noted the suggestion box provided at the entrance to the school, and the headteacher, staff and parent governors are available every day on the school yard, should parents and carers wish to share their views. As one parent states, 'the school is very democratic in attaining parent views', and for, 'giving reasons behind adopting change'. All parents and carers indicate that they are happy with the school overall and that their children are well prepared for the future.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Holystone Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 257 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 433 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	178	69	73	28	4	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	191	74	63	25	2	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	151	59	102	40	3	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	159	62	93	36	2	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	186	72	65	25	2	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	154	60	99	39	2	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	150	58	100	39	4	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	126	49	109	42	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	145	56	102	40	4	2	1	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	143	56	103	40	2	1	1	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	131	51	111	43	5	2	2	1
The school is led and managed effectively	168	65	84	33	3	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	174	68	77	30	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



5 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Holystone Primary School, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE27 0DA

On behalf of the inspection team, I would like to thank you for the very warm welcome you gave to us when we visited your school. We enjoyed coming into your lessons and talking to you around the school.

You go to an outstanding school where each one of you is cared for extremely well. The headteacher, staff and governors work extremely hard to make sure you all achieve as well as you possibly can. You make outstanding progress in your learning because the quality of teaching is outstanding and there are many exciting and interesting activities for you to do. As a result, the standards you reach by the time you leave Year 6 are well above average. You make excellent progress, whatever your different abilities and needs. You are all making great strides in improving the quality of your writing and the majority of you reach high standards. However, when we looked in your books, we noticed that your handwriting was not always as neat as it could be and joined writing was only used occasionally. We have asked your teachers to make sure that you all learn to write neatly and in a similar joined style, particularly the older pupils.

We were very impressed with your excellent behaviour and courtesy, particularly when you held doors open for us as we walked around the school. You all work extremely hard in your lessons, enjoy your learning and cooperate very well with each other. You told us that you feel very safe and that adults will always listen if you have a worry or concern. We were very impressed by your generosity in raising funds for charity, particularly for 'LEPRA'. You have very good relationships with people in the local community, for example, when you visit a local factory or homes for elderly people. However, we have asked your teachers to try to make more links with people in this country and other countries to help to improve your understanding of how other people live. You can help by continuing to work as hard as you can. You should be very proud of yourselves and your school.

Yours sincerely

Christine Inkster

Her Majesty's Inspector

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