

Hollybush Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117263
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	338981
Inspection dates	25–26 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Clive Lewis

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	213
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alison Pearce
Headteacher	Mr Alan Brown
Date of previous school inspection	18 June 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors spent most of their time in school directly inspecting learning. They visited 12 lessons and observed all the teachers at least once. They held meetings with groups of pupils, governors and staff and informal discussions with groups of parents. They observed the school's work, including a sample of pupils' books, teachers' planning documents, tracking and assessment data, and analysed questionnaires from 66 parents, 103 pupils and six staff.

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

- the quality and consistency of teaching
- the quality and use of the school's assessment and tracking procedures
- provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

This is an average sized primary school. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is higher than average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is lower than average, as is the proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average as is the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need. The school has gained the Active Mark and the Eco Schools Bronze award.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Hollybush is a good school which has improved since the last inspection. Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides a clear sense of purpose and direction, clearly linked to school improvement. Strong teamwork between the headteacher, senior staff and the local authority has ensured that teaching and learning has improved, assessment and tracking systems have been strengthened and clear priorities have been set for further improvement. Most parents are very supportive of the school, as one parent commented: 'Hollybush is a lovely school with a warm and friendly atmosphere'. Staff want the best for each child and, through working closely with families, strive to achieve this goal. However, a minority of parents would like more information about what their children are doing in school and feel that the school's communication and relationships with parents could be improved.

Throughout the school, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage, all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress. Standards have been exceptionally high for a number of years. Last year, however, as expected, they were similar to those found in most schools. Observations confirm that, due to the school's effective response to the lower standards, pupils are now again making good progress across the school and standards are above average.

Arrangements for the evaluation and monitoring of teaching and learning are good and the quality of teaching in most lessons is good as a result. In a small minority of lessons observed, the pace of learning was too slow with the result that pupils made only satisfactory progress. Pupils' personal development is good. They have a good understanding of how to keep safe and of the need for healthy lifestyles. Parents say their children enjoy coming to school and pupils agree enthusiastically, although this is not yet reflected in above average levels of attendance. Although the school has good systems to monitor and improve attendance, the attendance of a small but persistent minority of pupils continues to give cause for concern. The curriculum ensures that pupils receive a good variety of exciting activities and experiences through visits, residential stays and visitors to school. Pupils particularly enjoy the wide range of after-school activities and clubs, including physical activities. Arrangements for the pastoral care and safeguarding of pupils are good. Pupils' progress is tracked carefully and data analysed rigorously to ensure any pupil falling behind is identified quickly and support provided. The school has good links with the local community but realizes it could do more to strengthen ties with groups in the U.K. and overseas. The school has a good understanding of how well it is doing and what needs to be done next and has a good capacity to maintain and sustain improvement.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency and quality of teaching so that all lessons are good or better.
 - Work to provide more information for parents and further improve relationships and communication with parents.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils make good progress as they move through the school. Observations during the inspection and school data indicate clearly that progress is good and standards are above average across the school. Pupils' good behaviour brings about an industrious atmosphere in which children can learn without interruption and make good progress. They know and understand the important factors which affect their health and feel safe in the school. Pupils value their school community and willingly take on responsibilities. They participate constructively in school life, suggesting and taking actions to help improve the school and have, for example, been involved, in decisions about playground equipment and behaviour reward systems. They are well-equipped for the future with their well-developed academic and social skills. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school but this is not yet reflected in high levels of attendance. Pupils respect each others' needs and interests and are curious about the world around them, embracing new experiences enthusiastically. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2

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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The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2 3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers have strong subject knowledge which enthuses and challenges pupils and contributes to their good progress. Lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives that are routinely shared with pupils so that they are clear about their learning. Good use is made of resources, including new technology to motivate pupils and enhance their learning. Good classroom management skills ensure that pupils work well together and there are no marked differences in the responses of boys or girls. In most lessons, carefully targeted questioning draws out pupils' ideas and develops their thinking and reasoning skills. Support by teaching assistants makes a significant contribution to the quality of learning. In a small minority of lessons progress is held back because teachers do not always move learning along at a fast enough pace. The whole-school assessment and tracking system provides the school with secure data on pupils' progress as they move through the school. This means teachers now have a better understanding of how well their pupils are doing and the action to be taken to support them effectively in order to reach their challenging targets. The curriculum provides carefully adapted activities to ensure all groups of pupils experience success. Staff are making links with different subjects to make learning more meaningful. The school's good and well-organised arrangements for the care of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, contribute to their good development and well-being and support their learning well.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2 2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

All leaders in the school are firmly focused on securing improvement and enabling pupils to do as well as they can. Since the last inspection, standards by Year 6 have been exceptionally high. The school, with the support of the local authority, has responded effectively to the dip in standards in the latest national tests. As a result, the rigour of

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the school's assessment and tracking systems has been improved and all teachers now have a better understanding of what their pupils have achieved and the progress they need to make. Staff have a clear sense of direction including a strong commitment to improving provision even further. Teamwork is promoted strongly and is reflected in the school's well-focused improvement plan which clearly identifies appropriate targets. The governors have a good overview of the school's work and future priorities, and fulfil their roles effectively. The school has a positive relationship with most parents and regularly asks for their views and acts on the responses, although a minority feel the school could do more to take account of their views. Equality of opportunity is promoted well. The school has good safeguarding procedures which meet recommended good practice across all areas of its work and are in line with government requirements. The school identifies dangers, fosters a realistic understanding of risk and helps pupils to keep themselves safe. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion. The school has strong and developing links with local schools and organisations but realises there is a need to develop further the wider national and global dimensions.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Provision for the youngest children is good. Children enter the Nursery class with skills that are broadly typical for their age. They clearly enjoy school, settling into the routines well and playing happily together or on their own. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage undertake a variety of whole class and group activities. They delight in learning

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and seeing new things. Pastoral care and welfare arrangements are effective. Consequently, children are safe, well cared for and aware of how to be healthy. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified quickly, are well-supported and are integrated well into all activities. Staff have good relationships with parents and carers, initially through home-visits and, once children start school, through daily contact at the start and end of each day. Provision for the outdoor curriculum is good. The newly remodelled Early Years Foundation Stage classrooms have free access to a spacious, secure outdoor area with a good range of adult-led and free-choice activities. This allows children to explore things with purpose and challenge and encourages them to make decisions for themselves, solve problems and develop their reasoning skills. There are good systems for the long-term assessment and tracking of children's progress. Staff monitor and record children's progress on a day-to-day basis and this information is used well to plan work carefully to match children's needs and enhance their rates of progress. Children's achievements are recorded in individual 'Learning Journeys'. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Adults have a good knowledge of the learning development and welfare requirements and guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage and children make good progress as a result.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of questionnaires returned was lower than in most schools of this size. The majority of parents who responded declared themselves very satisfied with the school. In several of the areas surveyed, regarding their child's enjoyment, the way in which the school keeps the children safe, the good quality of teaching, preparing their children for the future, their happiness with their child's experience and how well the school keeps them informed about their child's progress, 90% or more of parents were positive. That said, a minority of parents felt that the school does not take enough account of their suggestions. Inspectors found that, wherever possible the school acts on the views of parents but more could be done to reassure parents and address their concerns. Some parents felt that the school does not deal effectively with poor behaviour. Evidence suggests these concerns are historic. Inspectors were impressed by the consistently good behaviour in and around the school and the good behaviour management in every lesson observed. The concerns raised by a minority of parents

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about the effectiveness of the school's leadership and management were discussed with senior leaders but are not supported by evidence found during the inspection. Inspectors found that the school is well led and managed.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hollybush 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 66 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 213 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	33	50	29	44	2	3	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	31	47	30	45	3	5	1	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	27	41	34	52	4	6	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	26	39	32	48	5	8	2	3
The teaching is good at this school	28	42	35	53	2	3	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	22	33	39	59	3	5	2	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	29	37	56	3	5	2	3
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)	20	31	33	51	6	9	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	36	32	48	5	8	2	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	27	28	44	13	20	7	11
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	22	27	42	13	20	7	11
The school is led and managed effectively	15	23	19	29	19	29	8	12
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	25	38	34	52	4	6	1	2

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 pupil's 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.



Monday 1 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hollybush Primary School, Hertfordshire, SG14 2DF

I would like to thank you for your help during the recent inspection of your school. My colleagues and I very much enjoyed our visit. We enjoyed watching lessons and talking to some of you. You attend a good school that is a happy and friendly place. It is like that because your headteacher and staff are leading the school well. They care for you well and give you good support to enable you to learn and enjoy your lessons. They make sure that you understand how to look after yourselves and be healthy as well as keep safe. You told us that you really like your school and there are lots of things to do and enjoy. We agree with you. Your behaviour is good and you work hard and try to succeed in all that you do. Well done!

We have asked your school to do two things that we feel will help you to make better progress:

Make sure that all your lessons are as interesting and challenging as they can be so that you make good progress in every lesson.

Improve communications and relationships with your parents and carers so that they can work with the school to make it even better.

I wish you well in your future education.

Yours sincerely

Clive Lewis

Lead inspector

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