

Holywell Primary and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	132060
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	315911
Inspection dates	24–25 January 2008
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
Number on roll	407
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pauline Read
Headteacher	Frances Millett
Date of previous school inspection	9–12 June 2003
School address	School Road Rubery Rednal Birmingham B45 9EY
Telephone number	01214 537829
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average school. The school has a Nursery with children attending for either a morning or afternoon session. Approximately half of the children who attend the Nursery go on to join the Reception classes. Attainment on entry is average and only a small percentage of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds.

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. It provides a well-balanced education for its pupils that has a positive impact on all aspects of their development. Pupils make good progress because of good leadership and management, good teaching and the positive working environment. Improvements made to the quality of teaching, planning and assessment systems have largely removed past fluctuations in pupils' rates of progress. Although there remain some inconsistencies, teaching is good overall and as a result, pupils make good progress from Year 1 through to Year 6. The recent focus on improving pupils' mathematical skills has been particularly successful in raising standards. Standards are above average in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes make satisfactory progress because the curriculum is not fully appropriate for the youngest children.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils learn how to be safe and healthy and to take responsibility for themselves and others. They enjoy coming to school, as evidenced by the good levels of attendance and their good behaviour. Pupils make a good contribution to the local community. Relationships are good and play a key role in the good progress pupils make in their personal development. They benefit from a good curriculum that includes a wide range of extra-curricular activities, a good emphasis on physical activities and the encouragement of a healthy lifestyle. Provision for the care, guidance and support of pupils is good. The school has effective and rigorous systems for the collection and analysis of data to monitor the progress of individuals. However, there is room for improvement in the consistency and extent to which pupils are made aware of their own targets for learning.

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school as is evident in comments, such as, 'My son comes home excited and enthused by his learning and his motivation remains high, which I consider a good indication of the variety of teaching methods and resources used in the school'. The school has worked hard and successfully to overcome the difficulties caused by significant staff turnover. It has responded well to the issues for improvement of the previous inspection. It has the clear determination and a good capacity to make further improvements.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Most children enter the Nursery and Reception classes with levels of attainment that are in line with expectations. Most make satisfactory progress and reach the levels expected for their age by the start of Year 1. This is because the provision made for them, including the quality of teaching and systems for tracking children's progress, is satisfactory. Relationships between staff and children, and provision for children's care, well-being and safety are good. Children clearly enjoy learning and make good progress in developing their personal and social skills. However, although there are examples of good teaching, the lack of appropriate planning for, and resourcing of, a 'freeflow' indoor and outdoor Early Years curriculum severely restricts opportunities for independent learning.

As a result, children's independent learning skills are not being developed to their best advantage. Although the Foundation Stage leader is aware of the need to develop a more appropriate Early Years curriculum, this is not securely in place.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the youngest children's independent learning skills by improving planning and provision for the outdoor curriculum in the Foundation Stage.
- Improve the consistency of teaching, particularly in ensuring that pupils in all classes have a good understanding of how well they are doing and how they can improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Typically, children enter the school with broadly average standards for their age. Children in the Nursery and Foundation Stage classes achieve satisfactorily because of the satisfactory teaching, although restricted opportunities for independent outdoor activities limit the development of their independent learning skills. Levels of attainment when pupils leave the Reception classes to join Year 1 are in line with expectations as a result. Due to the improvements made in the curriculum, in assessment and tracking systems and in the quality of teaching, the rate of progress has improved throughout Years 1 and 2 and is now good overall. In the most recent (2007) national assessments, standards were slightly above average in Year 2. In Year 6, standards were above average in English and science but average overall in mathematics. Standards in mathematics throughout the school have improved due to the school's recent sustained focus on numeracy. This has ensured that current Year 6 pupils are on track to achieve above average standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of the year. Pupils who are gifted and talented make good progress and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, social and moral development is good. Multi-cultural education is satisfactory. This is an area that the school has identified that requires improvement, and inspectors agree. This is an orderly community where pupils display good behaviour, positive relationships with others, and a willingness to take on responsibilities. They are courteous and polite, holding doors open for others and greeting adults with a smile. In class, they behave well and have good attitudes towards their learning. Most pupils want to learn and offer such comments as, 'Teachers are great, especially when we are struggling'. Pupils enjoy school and demonstrate this through their above average attendance. They feel safe and confident that adults will provide support should it be required. Pupils gain a good awareness of healthy eating and many choose to have fruit for break and lunch times. They show awareness of safety, for example in moving sensibly about the school. Standards of literacy and numeracy are good and skills important for their future success, such as working together, develop well.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes is satisfactory. Lessons in Years 1 to 6 are typically lively and full of pace and challenge, so that pupils are motivated and learn well. As a result, attitudes and behaviour are good. Teachers work hard to ensure pupils understand basic mathematical and writing concepts. Lessons are well planned and progress is monitored carefully and regularly so that pupils are helped to build on what they have learnt before. There is some outstanding practice, including open-ended questioning and good use of interactive display boards to engage and motivate pupils. There are good opportunities for pupils to verbalise their thinking, which ensures some very good progress. However, these strategies are not used consistently through the school. Similarly, there remain variations from class to class in the emphasis teachers place on pupils developing an understanding of their own targets for learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant and is leading to good progress in English, mathematics and science. Action taken by the school has effectively and significantly improved provision for information and communication technology since the last inspection. Provision for personal, social and health education is good and is having a significant impact on pupils' behaviour and their attitudes towards their learning. Aspects of the 'Every Child Matters' agenda pervade school life and are preparing pupils well for becoming valued members of their local community. The school is aware, however, of the need to review the Early Years curriculum to make it more relevant to the needs of the youngest children.

Pupils praise the provision for physical education and speak enthusiastically about competitions, exciting lessons and visitors from the world of sport which enhance the provision. There is a wide range of visits and visitors and an exciting range of well-attended after-school clubs which receive high praise from pupils and contribute to making learning a memorable experience.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Arrangements to ensure children are safe and healthy are good. Good links are made with other professionals and services to promote the care and welfare of pupils. Staff develop strong and caring relationships with the pupils. As a result, they respond quickly when pupils are troubled or need extra support. Pupils work and play in an attractive, very well maintained and extensive learning environment.

Systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress have improved significantly since the last inspection. Through the use of the whole-school assessment systems, teachers and senior staff have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' achievements in reading, writing and mathematics.

Tracking progress in these subjects is undertaken on a termly basis, which ensures early intervention if a pupil is falling behind. In some classes, pupils have a clear understanding of their own targets for learning but this is not consistent across the school. Pupils' work is marked regularly but although pupils are delighted to receive merits for their work, there is sometimes unclear indication of why the work is good.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and senior management team set a clear educational direction for the school, clearly linked to school improvement. They successfully promote the well-being of all pupils. Methods for evaluating the school's work, the effectiveness of decisions and areas to be improved have improved significantly. Although there remains room for more consistency in the use of data, significant areas for development, such as the need to improve teaching and planning in Years 1 and 2, have been acted upon effectively. In most cases, subject leaders manage their areas of responsibility well and, together with the effective use of external expertise, are impacting positively on pupils' learning. However, some subject leaders have a limited grasp of strengths and weaknesses in their subjects across the school. The strategies employed to raise standards in mathematics have begun to have the desired effect in ensuring standards in mathematics match the high standards achieved in English and science. However, the headteacher is aware of the need to adapt and develop the Early Years curriculum and to provide more opportunities for pupils to learn about life in a multi-cultural society.

Although governors are very supportive of the school, there is room for more rigour in understanding the issues facing the school and effectively holding it to account. The school's finances are managed well and efficient use is made of resources. Parents are very satisfied with the school and are effectively involved in helping their children to learn. One parent wrote, 'Due to the excellent teaching and support staff and the first-rate facilities, our daughter's development has far exceeded our expectations'. The school has set challenging targets for improvement, and progress towards these targets is evaluated regularly and systematically. Because of this, the school has a good capacity to improve further.

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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.	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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of boarding provision	
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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 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?	2

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	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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	2
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

Annex B



28 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Holywell Primary and Nursery School, Birmingham B45 9EY

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.

You go to a good school. Your headteacher and staff care for you well and give you good support to enable you to learn and enjoy your lessons. They make sure that your teaching is good and that you understand how to look after yourselves and keep safe, which you do well. You told us that you like 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.

I have asked your school to do two things to make it even better:

- ensure that the youngest children have regular opportunities to explore and investigate in the outdoor classroom areas
- make sure you all have a good idea of what you can do to make your work even better.

Thank you again for making us feel so welcome in your school.

Yours sincerely

Clive Lewis
Lead inspector