

Hollinsclough CofE (VA) Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124462
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	340578
Inspection dates	4–5 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Roderick Passant

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	9
Appropriate authority	Staffordshire
Chair	Mr Jason Hails
Headteacher	Mrs Janette Mountford-Lees
Date of previous school inspection	2 November 2006
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Age group	3.5–11
Inspection date(s)	3–4 March 2010
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The majority of the time was spent in finding out about pupils' learning; both teachers were observed and five lessons or part lessons were seen. The inspector met with the headteacher and staff, representatives from the governing body and informally with individual parents and pupils. The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a range of policies and documentation including those relating to safeguarding and school improvement. Ten parents' questionnaires were scrutinised along with returns from pupils and staff.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. He looked in detail at the following:

- the systems in place to judge the school's overall effectiveness
- how the school exploits the advantages of its small size while minimising potential disadvantages.

Information about the school

The school is an extremely small school serving a relatively remote rural area within the Peak District National Park. All pupils are White British. There are two classes. One is for pupils in Reception, and Years 1 and 2 and the other is for Years 3 to 6, although in neither class is there the full age-range of pupils. A very small number of pupils, whose parents educate their children at home, attend on a part-time flexible basis. The school has the dispensation to take children into the Reception class to provide nursery provision from three and half years old. The school hosts 'Stay and Play' an informal carer and toddler group which meets two mornings a week, a weekly yoga class and a monthly family film club. It also hosted an adult family learning programme in the autumn term leading to English and mathematics qualifications. The school has gained Healthy Schools and the Active Schools awards and the foundation status of the School's International Award. It is also gained certification mark as a dyslexia friendly school. The headteacher has been in post for approximately 18 months.

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

Within the school's very friendly, secure, calm and intimate family ethos, pupils achieve well and make good progress academically and in their personal development. Pupils behave and look after each other exceptionally well. They feel especially safe, and are very confident in the adults, who they regard as 'kind'. Staff know the pupils extremely well and this provides the foundation for the outstanding care, guidance and support that the school provides for its pupils.

Pupils make good progress because of the effective combination of formal, informal and one-to-one teaching. While good use is made of specialised assessments to identify the next steps in pupils' learning, assessment in other foundation subjects such as history and geography is less precise. The school makes extensive use of partnerships, trips and visitors to provide additional enrichment to the curriculum and extends pupils' social experiences through such links. That said, some pupils have a relatively cloistered view of the world and extending their awareness of the wider world and the diverse nature of our society remains a priority recognised in the school's improvement plan.

There has been a degree of turbulence since the last inspection due to changes in headteacher, staffing, falling roll and the effects of this. Nonetheless, teamwork across the school is now strong. The headteacher leads the school well and all staff work together and share the headteacher's commitment to ensuring that pupils make better than expected progress across the school. The headteacher has an accurate view of the school's strengths and of what it needs to do to improve. Nevertheless, her role as a teaching head requires a constant juggling of priorities and taking the time to stand back periodically to keep the school under review can seem a luxury. Currently, the process of self-evaluation is not systematically planned to ensure a wide range of views are gathered. There have been improvements since the last inspection, particularly in relation to the curriculum and, for example, the introduction of phonics that has led to significant improvements in reading. The key issues from the last report have been addressed effectively and this shows the school's good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Draw up a schedule of self-evaluation activities, drawing on key stakeholders and external views as appropriate, and timetable this into the school calendar in

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- order to fix these activities as a priority.
- Broaden pupils’ world view by building on and extending the school’s international and national links.
- Extend the use of specialist assessment materials within topics to ensure pupils’ skills are built upon progressively in foundation subjects.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils make good progress because they enjoy school and are keen and interested. They support each other well, sharing information and helping each other out. For example in a lesson on fractions when one pupil had difficulties and was helped out by another. Pupils are able to concentrate and get on with tasks, although in one lesson, teacher intervention was needed to lift the pace of their work. Pupils generally attain at least the expected level in English, mathematics and science; in the relatively recent past, most of the cohort attained beyond this. The school identified that progress in mathematics has been less than in English and took effective steps to tackle this. Pupils are confident speakers and make good progress in reading and writing. The school has responded effectively to the previous inspection report by ensuring that presentation of work remains a focus. Currently, there are no pupils on the register of special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, when there have been, school data indicates that these pupils made good progress.

Pupils have a good understanding of what makes a healthy lifestyle and an extremely clear appreciation of how to keep themselves safe. A good illustration of this is their risk assessment for the use of the pedal buggies in the playground, stressing that knee-pads and helmets must be worn. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and local community and contribute to decision-making about aspects of school life. Because they are valued as individuals, their views are also valued. Attendance is broadly average. Pupils’ personal qualities, particularly their confidence and positive attitudes to learning, combined with their basic skills and enterprise skills, ensure that they have the necessary skills for secondary school. The way they behave towards one another, their respect for others and caring attitudes reflects good spiritual, moral and social development. Cultural development is satisfactory.

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	3
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

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 feel safe	1
Pupils’ behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
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 are skilled at motivating and ensuring that pupils are engaged in their learning, and they respond positively to pupils’ interests. Effective use is made of specialist teachers, instructors and visitors to provide specialist knowledge in lessons.. For example, in French, swimming and awareness of the natural world. There is strong teamwork in lessons with teaching assistants providing effective support. Good use is made of practical activities, such as building an igloo or science experiments, which often act as a catalyst for pupils’ enjoyment and future work. Pupils’ progress is tracked carefully and good use is made of specialised assessment material to judge where pupils are in their learning in mathematics and English. However, it is less precise in other subjects. Pupils generally understand their personal targets. Marking often gives an indication how they can improve their work, but does not refer back to their targets. Much of the learning is promoted in informal settings and working with individuals so that even at playtimes, before and after school, adults and pupils work together positively. The good relationships that teachers have with pupils underpin learning. One parent wrote, ‘The school is extremely good at building relationships with the children, understanding them, getting to know them and making school a fun enjoyable experience. This creates a strong foundation for learning experiences to blossom.’

The school works hard to broaden pupils’ experience through extensive use of partnerships, visitors and trips. Good advantage is taken of specific events such as the exploring Islam day or expertise such as the animation in the pupil-produced health video, developed through links with a local college. Activities within the local school cluster further extend the opportunities for pupils, along with specialist workshops such as the Manchester United health day or those produced by various local authority teams, such as the anti-bullying/anti cyber bullying workshops. The curriculum has been revised by the headteacher to develop the creative links between subjects and there are good opportunities to use basic skills in a variety of contexts. The good links with the school nurse provides useful additional guidance to some pupils. The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has improved since the last inspection and pupils make regular use of the laptops for their general work as well as in specific ICT lessons. Extensive use is made of the

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local environment and school grounds. Some of the developments with regard to extending pupils’ global and national awareness are at a relatively early stage. Personal and social education uses social and emotional aspects of learning materials to develop pupils’ skills of empathy and understanding another person’s point of view, and this is reflected in their personal development.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Although staff numbers are small, the wide-ranging expertise and professional experience is shared well. Adults clearly feel that their contribution is valued. The headteacher provides good leadership and together with the staff is committed to the Every Child Matters agenda; ensuring pupils achieve and develop their potential but also enjoy their learning through a creative curriculum. This commitment, plus the headteacher’s skill at including everyone, also drives the inclusive nature of the school and its effective promotion of equal opportunities.

Governors have played a key role in strategic leadership. As one governor pointed out, ‘The school is still open. It is well resourced and viable and morale is good.’ The governing body has been prepared to face up to difficult decisions, for example redundancy, and seek new ways to promote growth. Just under half of parents are also governors, who visit daily and are very involved in the life of the school. Other governors are active members of the village community. The governors take their role regarding the safeguarding of pupils very seriously and arrangements are good.

The school has a highly positive relationship with parents, consults them regularly and the partnership helps foster pupils’ learning. There are a number of good features in the school’s promotion of community cohesion. The school is acutely aware of its responsibility in being the focus of the local community and has undertaken an extensive audit of its provision detailing what it has done to extend pupils’ experience nationally and globally and what it plans to do in the future. Nevertheless, extending and broadening pupils’ experience of the wider world remains an ongoing priority, identified as such by the school.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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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	2
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

Children make good progress. Achievements vary, but are generally above what is expected for their age. Older children are very caring of the younger children, for example, when they partner them in activities. This helps to ensure that the Reception children are very much part of the school community. As a result, they are very mature in their behaviour and confident to contribute, for example, in assembly. Importantly, on such occasions, older pupils listen and value what they have to say. Relationships between children and staff are very good and there is a good number of adults to work with the children.

Planning is informed by detailed observations and photographs which are used to build up a record of an individual’s learning journey. In a teacher-led activity, children made sugar mice linking in to their pets theme. Good attention was paid to the promotion of hygiene, with handwashing and antiseptic gell. In the lesson, children’s independence was promoted well, although at other times there was a degree of ‘mothering’ by school staff. For example, adults unnecessarily zipping up children’s anoraks. Although not seen during the inspection, children plan their own activities to support their learning. Activities link both the indoor and outdoor areas and use appropriate resources. Adults listen to children and promote language skills well. Promotion of nursery provision and to develop the outdoors area further is a priority in this year’s school improvement plan. The Stay and Play session, facilitated by a trained nursery teaching assistant, provides a good opportunity to promote play and active learning for very young children, and social and peer support for parents and carers.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

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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

All parents strongly agreed that they were happy with their child’s experience at the school. Two parents wrote comments stressing the positive changes in their child’s attitudes, since moving to the school. Another parent wrote, ‘They [school staff] know how to be flexible to meet a wide range of different needs such that each individual in their community is given the best they can offer....The school has offered us just the right amount of flexibility and support to suit our family’s unique needs with combining home and school.’ There were no comments expressing concerns.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hollinsclough CoFE (VA) 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 10 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 9 pupils registered at the school.²

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	9	90	1	10	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	9	90	1	10	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	8	80	2	20	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	10	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	9	90	1	10	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	9	90	1	10	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	9	90	1	10	0	0	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)	8	80	2	20	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	9	90	1	10	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	8	80	2	20	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	9	90	1	10	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	9	90	1	10	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	10	100	0	0	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%.

² The responses from parents included one from a parent whose child attends on a flexi-school basis.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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.



8 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hollinsclough CofE (VA) Primary School, Buxton, SK17 0RH

Thank you for making me so welcome in your school. I enjoyed my two days with you very much. I thought I would share with you my findings.

This is a good school where you make good progress and achieve well. You do many exciting activities and this means that you enjoy learning. The school helps you grow up extremely well. I was very impressed how friendly, welcoming and well behaved you all were, and how well you look after and support each other. You clearly feel exceptionally safe at school. All adults care about you a very great deal and want you to do well and, because you and the adults work together so well, you help create a very special 'family' feel to the school.

I have asked the headteacher to do three things to help improve the school even more. The headteacher is so very busy so that taking time out to stand back and look at how well the school is doing can seem like a luxury. I have asked her to schedule time in the school calendar when she can focus on and judge how effective aspects of the school are, using other people to help gain a clear view. I have also asked her to build on the links she is making in this and other countries so that you gain a broader view how other people live and work. Finally, I asked her to extend the use of the specialist assessment to cover other subjects so that staff are very clear what the next steps are in their planning and you build on your skills in subjects like history and geography. I am sure that you too will play your part in helping the school to develop by continuing to work hard and maintaining your enthusiasm for learning.

All good wishes for your future school careers.

Yours sincerely
Roderick Passant
Lead inspector

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