

Horsell CofE Aided Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125201
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	359861
Inspection dates	6–7 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Carole Skinner

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	358
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lesley Templeman
Headteacher	Jessica Steele
Date of previous school inspection	14 September 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 18 lessons taught by 12 teachers and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and the School Improvement Partner. They observed the school's work and looked at the school improvement plan, pupils' work, assessment information, minutes of governing body meetings and the school's analysis of pupils' progress in each year group. Inspectors also analysed 147 questionnaires completed by parents and carers.

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

- how effectively the school is improving teaching, assessment and the curriculum in order to raise attainment, particularly in mathematics and for more-able girls
- to what extent the school is eliminating inequalities in achievement between different groups, taking into account ethnic groups and pupils of different abilities
- the effectiveness of governance, leadership and management at all levels in tackling identified areas for improvement, rigorously monitoring the impact of initiatives and taking decisive action to reverse the downward trend in attainment and achievement.

Information about the school

Horsell Church of England Aided Junior School is much larger than the average junior school. It is situated in an area of mainly private housing but also draws a small proportion of pupils from other areas of Woking. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. Pupils come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is similar to the national average, as is the percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The latter group consists mainly of pupils with specific or moderate learning difficulties or speech, language and communication needs. Since the previous inspection there has been a change of headteacher and deputy headteacher. The school has achieved Activemark Gold status and the Healthy School award. Breakfast and after-school clubs are run by a private provider and did not form part of this inspection.

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?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

4

Main findings

In accordance with section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

Since it was last inspected, the school has been through a period of significant upheaval, due to a major building project, roofing problems and changes in its leadership and management. During this time, there has been a marked decline in pupils' attainment and achievement. Although the standards achieved in national tests have remained above the national average, they have fallen significantly from the high levels achieved three years ago. A recent focus on improving pupils' writing skills helped to boost attainment in the Year 6 English tests in 2010, but there was a further dip in mathematics, where girls, in particular, underachieved. The more-able pupils are not challenged sufficiently as they move through the school. As a result, too few reach the levels they are capable of achieving by the time they leave. Overall, pupils do not make enough progress during their time in the school and achievement is inadequate. By contrast, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because they receive specific support in lessons and through additional tuition in small groups.

Parents are very appreciative of the way the school cares for their children and keeps them safe from harm. These are among the school's strongest features, all of which confirm that it is very successful in promoting pupils' personal development and well-being. High attendance, good behaviour and pupils' very positive attitudes to learning help to create a calm and productive working environment. The school's strong Christian ethos underpins pupils' good spiritual, moral and social development. A wide range of sporting activities and a strong focus on healthy eating help pupils to stay fit. Participation in an exciting variety of musical events, visits and links with the local community and schools in other parts of the world greatly enhance pupils' cultural awareness and help to prepare them well for future life.

The contrast between pupils' academic performance and their good personal development has arisen because the school's leadership and management have not taken sufficiently prompt and decisive action to halt the decline in achievement that began in 2008. While it is likely that staff changes and accommodation issues have played a part, there are, nevertheless, key weaknesses in the procedures for tracking pupils' progress and the way senior leaders interpret and use assessment data to drive improvement across the school. While the teaching observed during this inspection was all at least satisfactory, with some examples of good and outstanding practice, there are inconsistencies between classes and not enough consistently good teaching to enable pupils to make up lost ground. This is

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because teachers are not made fully aware of the shortfall in pupils' learning in relation to their starting points and consequently do not always set sufficiently challenging work. In addition, too many new systems and initiatives have been introduced over a relatively short period to allow teachers the time to embed them fully and review their effectiveness. Most staff with leadership responsibilities are in the early stages of developing these roles and have too little influence on determining priorities and monitoring the impact of the school's work. The school's self-evaluation is over-generous in a number of areas. For these reasons the school's capacity for sustained improvement is inadequate.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress in order to raise their attainment in English and mathematics by:
 - ensuring that the more-able pupils are always given work that challenges and extends them
 - analysing the reasons why girls underachieve in mathematics and implementing consistent teaching strategies that build their confidence and understanding
 - giving pupils more opportunities to write at length independently in order to improve the fluency of their writing.
- Ensure that teaching is consistently good in all year groups by:
 - ensuring all teachers take responsibility for assessing pupils' progress regularly throughout the year and making sure they are on track to meet challenging targets in relation to their initial starting points
 - checking the accuracy of teachers' assessments so that there is whole-school agreement about levels of attainment and what constitutes good and satisfactory progress
 - eliminating inconsistencies between classes and year groups so that all groups of pupils are given work that challenges and extends their thinking.
- Increase the effectiveness of leadership, management and governance in driving improvement by:
 - evaluating all aspects of the school's work with greater rigour
 - giving senior and middle leaders more autonomy and accountability for driving improvement and monitoring pupils' progress
 - involving teachers in checking their pupils' progress from term to term and taking swift action to tackle early signs of underachievement
 - ensuring that the school improvement plan includes precise actions, timescales and measurable targets for improvement so that staff and governors can evaluate the impact of actions taken.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**4**

Attainment on entry to the school is high. Over the past few years pupils in Years 3 and 4 have not built sufficiently well on their existing knowledge and skills. Inconsistencies in the rate of progress between classes, year groups and different groups of pupils have left

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teachers in Years 5 and 6 with too much to do to make up the deficits in learning, especially for the more-able pupils, who do not have a secure grasp of higher order skills in writing and mathematics. For example, in a good literacy lesson in Year 6, pupils were able to articulate their ideas confidently but many struggled to translate this into well-constructed, flowing prose when working independently. Effective support from teaching assistants and carefully planned small-group learning opportunities ensure that pupils with specific and moderate learning difficulties make good progress and attain higher standards than their counterparts nationally.

Girls, especially the more-able, do not reach their full potential in mathematics because they often lack confidence in their own ability. Lesson observations show that pupils' understanding of mathematical concepts is sometimes insecure because learning has not been built on solid foundations. This was evident when a group of Year 6 pupils were confused about how to calculate angles. In another Year 6 mathematics lesson, insufficient challenge for the more-able pupils led to their completing tasks quickly and easily. By contrast, pupils in a Year 5 lesson made excellent progress in working out fractions of numbers because the teacher adjusted the tasks effectively to take account of pupils' misconceptions and used these to move learning forward. When pupils thoroughly understand and are challenged by their work, enjoyment levels rise and they are well motivated to learn.

Pupils take part with great enthusiasm in the wide range of clubs and other activities that the school provides. They enjoy taking responsibility, for example as school councillors, prefects and house captains, and older pupils run activities for younger ones during breaks. Behaviour in lessons is consistently good and often exemplary, but a few pupils expressed concerns about the behaviour of others at playtime. Through 'Operation Greenfingers', pupils are developing a good awareness of the importance of recycling and composting. The 'Allotment Club' takes pride in growing its own produce. Close links with the church and local community make an important contribution to pupils' all-round development.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
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
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

The curriculum, which until recently was planned mainly around content in each subject, is currently being reviewed in order to place greater emphasis on the teaching of basic skills through cross-curricular approaches to learning. For example, Year 4 pupils combined learning in history, design and technology, English and mathematics as part of their topic on the Tudors. Although there are signs of improvement in pupils' achievement in writing, there are still too few opportunities for pupils to write independently and at length. Often, teachers limit the scope of writing by giving pupils a framework to follow. In mathematics, pupils are taught in ability sets within each year group, which is enabling teachers to meet pupils needs more effectively. However, in some lessons, the planned activities are not sufficiently fine-tuned to ensure learning builds effectively on pupils' existing knowledge and skills or to enable them to make up lost ground.

New assessment procedures have been introduced that are helping teachers to acquire a sharper understanding of each pupil's level of attainment. Teachers are beginning to use this assessment information more effectively when planning work for pupils on a day-to-day basis. This does not sufficiently take into account how much ground pupils may have lost in previous years, so teachers do not build in sufficient additional challenge to compensate for this. Some teachers make effective use of pupils' targets to focus their learning in lessons but this is too inconsistent. There is also too much variation in the usefulness of teachers' marking in showing pupils the next steps in learning. In the good

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lessons, teachers keep pupils tightly focused on the purpose of the learning and check their understanding at regular intervals. Where this does not happen, progress is less secure.

Pupils with behavioural difficulties are well supported in lessons by teaching assistants who encourage them and remind them of the expectations in their 'behaviour plans'. Adults care for pupils very well and keep them safe from harm. Effective liaison with external agencies ensures good support and guidance for pupils who are potentially vulnerable and those with specific additional needs.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	4
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher effectively promotes an ethos of care and has a clear vision for promoting pupils' independent learning skills and all-round development. The governing body is rigorous in ensuring that all staff are suitably vetted and appropriately trained and equipped to deal with child protection issues. Robust health and safety measures and risk assessments ensure that pupils are kept secure. Governors and senior leaders promote community cohesion effectively through effective partnerships with both the local community and those further afield, such as links with schools in China and Madagascar. An action plan is in place to further extend this work.

Senior leaders have not been quick enough in tackling the root causes of underachievement and halting the decline in attainment, particularly in mathematics. The procedures whereby senior leaders monitor the progress of individuals and groups of pupils towards challenging targets are inadequate. Pupils' progress is not tracked carefully enough from term to term to identify any who are not on target. As a result, end-of-year assessments in each year group revealed too many pupils who had made insufficient or barely satisfactory progress during the last school year. The school improvement plan lacks precision about what the school needs to do to make significant progress, for example in accelerating progress for girls in mathematics. It does not contain sufficiently sharp and measurable targets and timescales by which the governing body and senior leaders can judge the success of initiatives. There is a lack of robust and rigorous analysis of the progress made by different ethnic and ability groups. As a result, there are inequalities which the school has not tackled with enough rigour. The governing body has a visible presence in school and has vigorously challenged senior leaders to improve pupils' achievement. Governors are aware that recent improvements are not yet securely embedded throughout the school. However, they are not always given full explanations of the extent of pupils' underachievement.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	4
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Views of parents and carers

Approximately 40% of parents responded to the inspection questionnaire. Most of these parents have positive views of the school. Of those who expressed concerns about their child's progress, most felt that this was because of insufficient challenge. Inspectors found that for some pupils, particularly the more-able, there is insufficient challenge. During the inspection, pupils behaved well.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Horsell Church of England Aided Junior 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 147 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 358 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	62	42	79	54	4	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	75	51	66	54	0	0	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	24	16	94	64	16	11	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	29	20	87	59	15	10	3	2
The teaching is good at this school	37	25	94	64	3	2	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	36	24	88	60	17	12	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	42	29	92	63	4	3	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)	57	39	75	51	3	2	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	28	19	92	63	13	9	3	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	30	20	91	62	17	12	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	17	92	63	13	9	4	3
The school is led and managed effectively	36	24	82	56	10	7	3	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	46	31	83	56	9	6	2	1

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 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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 October 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Horsell Church of England Aided Junior School, Woking, GU21 4TA

Thank you for your warm welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and looking at some of your lessons. We found out that the school does some things well:

- attendance is excellent and pupils work hard
- teachers look after you and keep you safe
- you enjoy being at school and develop into well-rounded young people
- you take your responsibilities for different jobs seriously and behave well
- you have a good understanding of how to keep safe, fit and healthy
- the school provides you with a good variety of opportunities to take part in sports, musical activities and visits that enrich your learning.

By the time you leave, your attainment is above average. However, many of you are capable of making faster progress as you move through the school, especially in writing and mathematics. Those of you who find learning easy are not always given work that challenges you and the girls do less well than the boys in mathematics.

The people who run the school are not keeping a close enough eye on the progress you make each term, so some of you fall behind where you should be by the end of each year.

We have judged that your school needs 'special measures' and have asked the staff and governors to take urgent action to bring about the following improvements:

- help those pupils who are falling behind to make faster progress so that they reach higher standards by the time they leave.
- make sure the teaching is consistently good in every class and that teachers and senior leaders check pupils' progress very carefully from term to term.

The school will be given extra support to make sure that it improves more quickly than it has been doing recently. Inspectors will visit the school regularly to check how well you are doing. You can all help by continuing to behave well and working hard.

Yours sincerely

Carole Skinner
Lead inspector

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