

High Down Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109084
Local Authority	North Somerset
Inspection number	377869
Inspection dates	22–23 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Ann Henderson HMI

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	356
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Joanna Pritchett
Headteacher	Jon Wood
Date of previous school inspection	19–20 May 2009
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Age group	7–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. They observed teaching and learning in 31 lessons or part lessons taught by 14 teachers and held meetings with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the school development plan, its self-evaluation, tracking information on pupils' attainment and progress, documentation related to the safeguarding of pupils, curriculum documentation, minutes of the governing body's meetings, staff and pupil questionnaires, and 157 questionnaires from parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How well teachers use assessment information to improve learning, particularly to support boys and more-able pupils.
- Whether the level of expectation and challenge is sufficient to enable all pupils to make at least good progress, particularly in writing.
- The effectiveness of the curriculum in promoting good achievement.
- The effectiveness of partnerships to promote learning with particular regard to ensuring equality of opportunity for all pupils.

Information about the school

High Down Junior School is larger than the average junior school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities supported at school action is broadly in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, is below the national average. The majority of these pupils have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties or speech, language and communication needs.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

High Down Junior School provides a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils. It has a number of strengths and some outstanding features. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and their attendance is high. In this nurturing environment, pupils feel safe and confident, and this underpins their good behaviour. They have an excellent understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle, and take part in the many extra-curricular clubs and sports provided by the school and its partners. Good quality care, support and guidance ensure that all pupils feel valued and the needs of the most vulnerable pupils are met effectively. Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils contribute fully to the life of the school through the school council. The house captains make a very positive contribution to the routine and the developments of the school.

Most pupils enter Year 3 with above-average attainment. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make satisfactory progress, and by the time they leave school in Year 6, their attainment remains above average. There is no significant difference between the attainment and progress of boys and that of girls. The curriculum is good because it provides pupils with rich and varied experiences which promote enjoyment and motivate them to learn. Although teaching is satisfactory overall, the teaching seen in a number of lessons was good and there was some that was outstanding. However, the overall quality of teaching is not yet good enough to secure at least good progress for all pupils, particularly in writing. Although some use is made of pupil targets, these do not provide pupils with sufficient information about their next steps in learning. In addition, there is a need for teachers to use questioning effectively to provide additional challenge, particularly for more-able pupils, and to ensure that work is matched to the learning needs of all pupils.

The headteacher provides purposeful leadership and has introduced a number of new initiatives which have been welcomed by most parents and carers. The returned parents' and carers' questionnaires indicate that the very large majority agree that the school is well led and managed. The headteacher has succeeded in uniting senior leaders and staff in a common purpose, to further drive improvement. Careful, honest self-evaluation and rigorous monitoring of pupils' progress has enabled senior leaders to identify underachievement. The recently introduced meetings to discuss pupils' attainment and progress are holding teachers more accountable for the progress of their pupils. The governing body provides effective support and challenge. This, together with the improvements in safeguarding, and community

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cohesion since the last inspection, demonstrates that there is a good capacity to sustain further improvements.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress, particularly in writing, and ensure all pupils make at least good progress by:
 - ensuring teachers use assessment of what pupils know and understand to plan work that accurately matches the differing needs and abilities of pupils
 - making certain there is sufficient challenge for all groups of pupils, but particularly the more-able, in planned activities
 - providing sharply-focused individual targets for pupils, to promote learning and help them to monitor their own progress
 - sharing good practice within the school, to enable all teaching to match the very best.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils develop mature attitudes to learning, concentrate well, work diligently and persevere in lessons. Pupils' behaviour is good, which is beneficial to their learning. They cooperate together well, listen carefully and share resources. In the good lessons, pupils demonstrated high levels of interest and enthusiasm, with many eager to answer questions. In lessons where pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, have plenty of opportunities for practical and collaborative work, they learn well and make good progress. For example, in a Year 5 class, pupils were sharing the letters they had written, linked to the story of *'Friend or FoE'* by Michael Morpurgo. Pupils engaged well in this activity, critiquing each other's letters constructively, and coupled with well-adapted questioning by the teacher, they focused well and made good progress.

Pupils make a good contribution to school and the wider community. Their response to a questionnaire about activities on 'FAB Fridays' enabled them to influence the content and development of this innovative enrichment to the curriculum. Their involvement in the Portishead Carnival and participation in fundraising for national and international charities shows they value not only their own school, but also people in other communities. The leadership and collaborative skills they develop, together with their high attendance and good basic skills, give them a sound foundation on which to build future success in the workplace. Pupils benefit from good opportunities for spiritual and moral development in assemblies, for example when they learn about different faiths. Older pupils enjoyed the opportunities to consider ethical issues through the 'Earthkeepers' project. Pupils are gaining a good

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understanding of different cultures through the school links with Morocco and France.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching has several strengths. Classroom routines are firmly established and relationships are good. These factors ensure lessons get off to a brisk start and this good pace is generally maintained throughout lessons. Pupils respond well to paired activities, which sustain their concentration, promote independence and develop their speaking and listening skills effectively. Teachers use new technology well to motivate pupils and enhance their learning. Most teaching enables pupils to reflect and take their learning forward through regular reference to learning objectives and success criteria. Some planning does not make enough use of prior assessment information to match the work to the needs of all groups of pupils. Opportunities are sometimes missed to develop pupils' learning when teacher questioning lacks sufficient detail, variation or challenge. Detailed marking, using highlighters in green and yellow, provides pupils with good information on how to improve their work. However, it provides better guidance in writing than in mathematics.

The curriculum provides a good balance of interesting themes, which are enriched by a comprehensive range of visits and clubs. The school offers good opportunities for pupils to develop their information and communication technology (ICT) skills. Good links with the local secondary school present pupils with access to specialist teaching in ICT and technology. Pupils benefit from a wide range of enrichment activities.

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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Local artists and poets have visited to widen pupils’ experiences. Pupils participate enthusiastically in sporting and musical competitions.

The school works successfully to ensure the personal and social needs of pupils are met. The improved relationships with the feeder infant school and good transition arrangements ensure Year 3 pupils settle quickly into their new surroundings. These good arrangements continue throughout the school and beyond to the next phase of secondary education. Well-matched provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities enables them to make satisfactory progress. There are clear and well-understood procedures for dealing with any rare examples of inappropriate behaviour. Measures to maintain excellent attendance rates are successful.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
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?

The headteacher’s clear ambition and strong aspirations underpin recent developments. Sensible decisions have been taken to extend accountability by providing senior leaders with opportunities to take responsibility for each aspect of the school development plan. These have got off to a promising start, but have yet to maximise the impact on pupils’ learning and achievement.

The governing body has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. It has been particularly effective in ensuring that systems for child protection are based on current requirements. All staff have suitable up-to-date training to fulfil their roles and responsibilities in keeping pupils safe. The school’s promotion of equality of opportunity is no better than satisfactory as its good work on supporting pupils pastorally is not yet matched by outcomes in pupils’ achievement. The most-able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged by their work and they form a significant proportion of the school’s population. The promotion of community cohesion has improved since the last inspection and is now good.

Good partnerships with parents and carers, and a wide range of local partnerships, enhance the provision for pupils, making a strong contribution to their enjoyment of learning.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
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	3
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	3

Views of parents and carers

A higher-than-average number of parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaire. Parents and carers are very happy with the school. A very large majority of their views are positive. They confirmed their support for the school and were particularly pleased with regard to the care and support provided for pupils. A few expressed concerns about the way the school deals with behaviour and some felt that the school does not take account of their suggestions and concerns. Inspectors observed behaviour in lessons and around the school, held discussions with staff and pupils, and scrutinised the school's records, but they found no evidence to endorse these concerns during the inspection. A very small minority raised concerns with regard to the progress their children are making; inspectors found progress to be satisfactory overall. Areas for improvement have been identified with regard to improving the progress pupils make in lessons.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at High Down 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 157 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 356 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	74	47	74	47	6	4	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	83	53	71	45	2	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	38	24	96	61	14	9	3	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	37	24	83	53	20	13	6	4
The teaching is good at this school	43	27	95	61	8	5	2	1
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	57	36	76	48	20	13	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	57	36	87	55	11	7	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)	65	41	74	47	6	4	1	1
The school meets my child’s particular needs	47	30	82	52	18	11	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	42	27	77	49	20	13	3	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	43	27	80	51	12	8	3	2
The school is led and managed effectively	69	44	72	46	11	7	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	60	38	77	49	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



24 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of High Down Junior School, Portishead BS20 6DY

Thank you for welcoming us to your school, and special thanks to those of you who took the time to talk to us. We found you extremely interesting to talk to and very polite and helpful. You spoke enthusiastically about your school and how much you enjoy learning. Yours is a satisfactory school.

These are some of the things the school does really well.

- Your attendance is high.
- You have an excellent understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle.
- All the adults in your school take good care of you.
- You feel safe in school and know there is always someone to talk to if you have a problem.
- You make a good contribution to your school and the wider community.
- Your behaviour is good.

We have asked the school to work on one thing to make your school even better.

- Improve the progress you are making in lessons, by using the assessments teachers make of your learning in lessons to challenge you in your next steps in learning, and make sure you always know how you can improve your work through the targets set for you.

It was a real privilege to visit your school. Continue to work hard and, most of all enjoy your learning! Thank you again for your help.

Yours sincerely

Ann Henderson
Her Majesty's Inspector

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