

Herne Bay Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118852
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	358459
Inspection dates	3–4 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Kevin Hodge

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	488
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Martin Crowther
Headteacher	Jonathan Dunn
Date of previous school inspection	17 June 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 22 lessons or part lessons taught by 17 teachers. Meetings were held with senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body, and several groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, and scrutinised the school's development plan, information on pupils' progress, pupils' work, minutes of governing body meetings and school policies. They also analysed questionnaires completed by 347 parents and carers, 88 pupils and a small number from staff.

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

- Whether recent rises in pupils' attainment, particularly in mathematics, and for the most able, are being consolidated.
- What might still need improving in teaching to help maintain pupils' gains in their learning and enjoyment?
- Whether senior leaders are effective in improving provision to ensure outcomes for pupils are good.
- How well the school promotes community cohesion, particularly at the national and global level.

Information about the school

This much bigger than average sized school comprises pupils who are mainly from White British backgrounds, and there are very few who have a minority ethnic heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than the national picture. During the past 18 months there have been some staffing changes with almost a third of teaching staff being new to the school since the last inspection. There are breakfast and after-school clubs which are managed by the governing body. The school has received a number of awards reflecting its commitment to promoting active lifestyles and environmental awareness.

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

Herne Bay Juniors is a good school. Pupils' mature and sensible attitudes make a significant contribution to the happy atmosphere and their good achievement. Pupils ♦ talk readily about the positive aspects of the school. Relationships for the vast majority are harmonious, resulting in good behaviour and enthusiastic attitudes to learning. Good levels of care, guidance and support, particularly for vulnerable pupils and their parents or carers, mean pupils feel secure and confident in the school. As some pupils said: 'If you make good choices it helps you become a better person.'

Pupils like the range of responsibilities they have which contribute to their sense of school and local community. This awareness is not sufficiently extended to knowing about those from differing backgrounds, beliefs or faiths in other parts of the United Kingdom or beyond. This limits the school's impact on promoting community cohesion. Although pupils say they enjoy attending, a small number of pupils find attending regularly more difficult, which means that attendance, although improved, is average rather than better. Recent initiatives such as breakfast and after-school clubs, and more information and support for parents and carers are appreciated by them all.

These good outcomes aid pupils' learning and last year's dip in attainment in national tests results and some uneven progress in some year groups are being remedied quickly. Pupils reach above average levels of attainment in some aspects such as reading, and speaking and listening. Their confidence to write means they produce some thoughtful and imaginative writing at times and within different subjects. Higher attaining pupils achieve well as their thinking is stretched with activities matched to their abilities. Pupils' artistic, musical and practical abilities also develop well, often reaching levels better than expected. In mathematics, pupils' basic number work and calculation skills develop systematically, but their ability to apply or use their skills in 'real life' contexts or within different subjects is not sufficiently developed. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified quickly and supported with small-group or one-to-one activities. Regular and close monitoring ensures they make good progress along with classmates.

Underpinning the pupils' improved progress is good teaching which is adept in creating the right ethos for learning and in planning for pupils of different ability levels. Despite some recent changes and disruption in staffing, the quality of teaching is relatively consistent through the school. Where lessons are less well taught, teachers spend too much time explaining or 'leading from the front' rather than letting pupils get down to activities, or work more independently. Teaching in mathematics is typically good, with some outstanding teaching seen in Year 6. However, this subject is not always planned to best effect to encourage pupils to apply their skills in meaningful ways or within different

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subjects. Assessment routines are used well to mark work and set targets accurately to help pupils improve their work further.

Senior managers reacted quickly to the dip in the school's performance last year by reviewing approaches to improving writing, and by looking afresh at the curriculum and teaching approaches. Senior leaders deliberately set high standards for other staff and pupils when evaluating the school's work, as they want to keep improving whenever possible. Given the improvements since the last inspection and quick action to remedy drops in performance, the school has a good capacity to improve further. ♦♦♦♦♦

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency of pupils' progress in mathematics during the coming academic year by:
 - ? giving pupils more problem-solving and investigative activities to help them apply their skills
 - ? ensuring that mathematical skills figure more highly in other subjects
 - ? ensuring that staff plan together to make activities more relevant to 'real world' situations.
- Raise all pupils' awareness of others with differing backgrounds and beliefs this coming academic year by:
 - ? developing a link with a school in a contrasting global locality to broaden pupils' horizons ?
 - developing or extending existing links with other schools so pupils can become involved in exchanging views, ideas and experiences about where they live, what they do and what they think is important.
- Consolidate improvements in attendance by:
 - working with those parents and carers who need further support or reminding them about the consequences of persistently not sending their child to school regularly.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The school's good promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral and social awareness leads to their willingness to engage with each other and in activities. This was typified by their enthusiasm to talk about their roles as play leaders, school representatives, or being in charge of giving out play equipment to help enhance the level of games and physical activity at break times. These activity levels complement their good awareness of how to stay healthy through wise eating choices. In class, pupils settle quickly to work, only becoming a little restless if kept listening for too long. Pupils like writing, reading and speak confidently, including those who are new to learning to speak or write English as an additional language. In some Year 4 activities, pupils enjoyed working out which parts of texts had fact or fiction within them, while pupils in Year 5 enjoyed telling the class why their choice of super hero was preferable to those chosen by others. Pupils sometimes make excellent progress, as seen in a Year 6 mathematics lesson where the class were

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really stretched in their thinking. In otherwise typically good teaching, particularly in basic number and shape work, pupils do not always develop their investigative skills enough. Pupils' good sense of community developed well in a Year 6 activity where pupils' ideas of assessing what might be useful initiatives in developing the town were thoughtfully put forward. Those pupils who have particular talents such as musical ability, enjoyed being stretched in their skills. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress, often because of good in-class support, as well as small-group work. While efforts to improve the attendance of a small number of pupils have worked for some, the school recognises this is an area to work on more rigorously for other parents and carers so the school's overall rates can improve further. Pupils' improved level of basic skills, combined with their mature approach to each other and to adults, helps prepare them well for their next schools and later life. ♦♦♦♦

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
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	3
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?

A revised curriculum which is, where appropriate, planned in themes, engages the interests of pupils well. This enables teachers to help pupils develop their thinking, stretch the most able through some good lesson planning, and develop their collaborative skills. English and information and communication technology skills are integrated well within these themes. Activities in mathematics lack the challenge of helping pupils to apply their number skills to solve more complex investigations or in everyday situations. Whole-staff

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planning for these aspects is not as effective. That said, pupils have a secure grounding in their number calculation skills and knowledge-based aspects of the subject. Work is planned for pupils to study others with differing backgrounds or beliefs, but this is not complemented enough by some authentic links with, or studies of, others. A good range of extra-curricular activities ♦ helps broaden pupils' horizons and activity levels. ♦

Teachers use audiovisual whiteboards to good effect, often helping to enliven lessons with illustrations, diagrams or to bring out a particular point. Group work features in many activities, although occasionally teachers' explanations are overly long, which causes some pupils to lose interest a little. In contrast, a Year 5 'Super Hero' day meant few pupils had time for their learning to lag as the range of costumes worn by them, and their teachers, provided lots of discussion points through activities during the day. In one class, teaching skilfully wove the concept of a super hero with discussions about personal qualities and attributes. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and to good effect to give pupils insights into how they can improve their work. Target setting is well established and appreciated by pupils and most parents. Teaching assistants often provide good support, usually by spotting quickly those pupils needing extra help or those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The good levels of care, support and guidance are reflected in a number of ways, including the newly developing breakfast and after-school clubs. Here, pupils enjoy particularly the 'special' of the day. Transition from the infant school has been improved so that most, if not all, pupils make a smooth change over. Links with parents include enhanced facilities such as the provision of a family room, and the appointment of specialised staff to provide support to pupils, parents and carers. Links with secondary schools help pupils in a range of ways to make the move as smooth as possible and to provide opportunities for more-able pupils to be stretched further in their abilities.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The efforts and drive of senior leaders to reverse a dip in national test results in 2009 are working. Staff's increased awareness of what pupils should achieve in each year and class means pupils making slower progress, in writing for example, now make better gains in their learning. In mathematics, a clear action plan is helping direct improvement such as the review of setting. While this seems to work well for the most part, joint planning of what pupils cover is not fully effective. Regular progress meetings better inform staff, pupils and parents about pupils' progress. While pupils' academic needs have been a focus, the school has also improved aspects of its care and guidance to good effect,

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particularly in the way it supports vulnerable families and by providing extended services before and after school, for example. Links such as those with local schools, professionals and the town council help develop pupils' academic and social skills. Senior leaders and staff ensure good levels of equal opportunity by helping to create a harmonious school community where discrimination is not tolerated, resources are distributed fairly and differences in academic outcomes between year groups are reducing.

The governing body ensures that day-to-day recruitment and vetting of staff is carried out well. Security routines are well established, high profile and include regular risk assessments of different activities. The governing body's high profile approach to seeking views of parents via 'focus' groups and in being available at the end of parents evenings reflect governors' ambition of keeping a good overview of how initiatives are working. Although the governing body helpfully attends the school's annual evaluation day, its week-to-week involvement, while regular for some, does not always extend to all governors. The senior leaders, supported by the governing body, ensure that the school's promotion of community cohesion at the local level and within the school is covered well. It is satisfactory rather than good overall, however, as links with others much further away in this country and beyond to broaden pupils' insights are, as the school rightly describes, at a 'fledgling stage'. ♦ ♦

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	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

Views of parents and carers

There was a high return of questionnaires. Many parents and carers returned them without any comments. Those who added their views included positive comments, but there were slightly more where parents voiced concerns or suggested improvements. Positive comments included those highlighting the progress pupils make, the quality of the leadership and individual staff, the happy atmosphere, the range of activities and how

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much their children enjoyed attending. There were no common themes to the issues, suggestions or concerns raised by parents who commented. They ranged from those whose children found the change from the infant school to the juniors difficult, individual concerns about lapses in pupils' behaviour and communication and recent disruptions to staffing causing some children to make slower progress in specific year groups. The school has recently increased the number of ways it communicates with parents and carers, such as sending out text alerts, an improved website and more regular newsletters. Pupils' behaviour was usually good, and excellent on occasions. Pupils' progress is generally good through the school and is improving.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Herne Bay 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 347 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 488 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	169	49	161	46	13	4	2	1
The school keeps my child safe	208	60	133	38	4	1	1	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	142	41	186	54	17	5	7	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	132	38	175	50	30	9	5	1
The teaching is good at this school	159	46	170	49	14	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	152	44	166	48	22	6	1	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	138	40	193	56	12	3	1	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)	142	41	182	52	13	4	1	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	131	38	186	54	18	5	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	111	32	199	57	21	6	3	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	96	28	213	61	18	5	4	1
The school is led and managed effectively	145	42	179	52	12	3	2	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	165	48	163	47	13	4	3	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.



5th November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Herne Bay Junior School, Herne Bay, CT6 5DA

Many thanks for making us feel welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed looking at and hearing about what you like doing. Yours is a good school. We really liked seeing Year 5's 'Super Heroes' (and the teachers) all dressed up and looking good!◆

Here are some of the things we found out.

- You reach the expected standards when you leave, and you achieve well in most aspects of your work.
- You are good at keeping active at playtimes and I know most of you try to eat healthily.
- You behave well and work very hard in lessons.
- You all said you feel very safe as the school cares for you so well.
- The range of things you do, such as musical activities and sports, sounds good.
- The school helps those of you who sometimes find work difficult or have a particular difficulty to achieve well.
- The staff teach you well and the school involves your parents or carers in the life of the school effectively to help it become even better.
- The headteacher, staff and governing body work well together and are quick to spot where improvements can be made.

We have asked the school to do three things to help it improve further.

- Give you more investigative activities in mathematics that will really make you think hard, apply your skills and solve problems.
- Help you learn more about others from different places and cultures in this country and also from much further away.
- Work with a small number of parents or carers to make sure some of you come to school more regularly.

You can help the school continue to improve, so keep behaving well and continue to help each other.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Hodge

Lead inspector

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