

Diamond Hall Junior School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 108759 |
| Local Authority | Sunderland |
| Inspection number | 356423 |
| Inspection dates | 9–10 March 2011 |
| Reporting inspector | Irene Cochrane |

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

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|--|--|
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 7–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 316 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mrs Margaret Snaitth |
| Headteacher | Mrs Kim Bennett |
| Date of previous school inspection | 13 March 2008 |
| School address | Well Street Sunderland Tyne and Wear SR4 6JF |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons, observed 14 teachers and held meetings with pupils, members of the governing body and staff, and spoke with the School Improvement Partner. They observed pupils at work and looked at the data the school had collected on pupils' progress, the safeguarding procedures, pupils' books and records of the school's monitoring and review. They also considered 137 questionnaires returned by parents and carers as well as analysing questionnaires from pupils and staff.

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

- To what extent the more-able pupils are challenged.
- The impact of low attendance on pupils' ability to develop the knowledge and skills needed for future economic well-being.
- To what extent the impact of curriculum provision for mathematics is effective enough to raise attainment.
- The quality of teaching and learning, particularly the use of assessment to support learning, to determine the success of leadership and management in driving improvement.

Information about the school

This is an above average-sized school. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average and most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly above average. Since the last inspection the school has undergone a significant number of staffing changes. The school holds a number of awards, including Healthy School status and the Arts Mark Gold.

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

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. It has strengths in the good care, guidance and support it provides and in the safeguarding of its pupils. Parents appreciate the good care that is taken of their children and they say that their children are happy to come to school. After a period of significant staffing changes, the headteacher, with the support of the governing body, has stabilised the staffing situation within the school and filled the vacancies in senior leadership positions. As a result, there is a renewed drive towards school improvement.

Pupils make satisfactory progress overall and, given their starting points, their achievement is satisfactory. The rate of progress has been affected by the changes in staffing. By the end of Year 6, attainment is broadly average with pupils attaining higher levels in reading than in writing and mathematics. The headteacher has introduced a range of focused support strategies and a more refined system for tracking pupils' both of which are helping to raise attainment, and assisting more effective planning for future learning. As yet, however, not all staff are making full use of the information from the new tracking system to plan learning for all groups of pupils. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with an improving proportion of good lessons. Although all pupils have targets to aim for, not all pupils understand what they need to do to reach them. In a minority of lessons, tasks lack challenge and so learning slows.

The currently satisfactory curriculum has been reviewed in order to further develop basic skills and engage pupils' interest through themed weeks. A recent focus on mathematics is beginning to increase pupils' enjoyment of the subject and their rate of progress. Pupils appreciate the wide range of musical activities on offer. The vast majority of pupils behave well in lessons and around the school and overall behaviour is satisfactory. Pupils develop a good understanding of the choices required to live healthy lives reflected in the school recently receiving Healthy School status.

Leadership and management are improving quickly. Self-evaluation is accurate and informs school improvement planning. Monitoring systems have a positive impact on assisting leaders to evaluate pupils' progress more accurately and to ensure that pupils move on to their next steps in learning more quickly. The satisfactory progress made against the action identified at the last inspection and evidence of improvements in pupils' attainment, give the school a satisfactory capacity for improvement.

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.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement and accelerate the rates of progress, particularly in mathematics and writing by ensuring that:
 - the use of the new system for tracking pupils' progress becomes fully embedded in the work of the school and that information is always used to plan future learning for pupils of all abilities.
- Increase the proportion of teaching and learning that is at least good by:
 - raising the expectations of staff of what all pupils can achieve
 - ensure teachers consistently provide pupils with clear verbal and written feedback so that they fully understand what they need to do to improve their work
 - maintain a good pace and level of challenge in pupils' learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils enter school with attainment which is below average. By the time they reach Year 6, attainment is broadly average and pupils make satisfactory progress. Achievement is satisfactory. Progress in English has been stronger than mathematics, particularly in reading. Inspection evidence shows that pupils are reaching average standards in Years 5 and 6. Current school data indicate that attainment in mathematics is improving as a result of pupils learning to apply their skills more adeptly to mathematical problems. Current school assessments shows that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are making satisfactory progress as do pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds.

During lessons, almost all pupils respond well to instructions and show consideration and respect to others. They enjoy their learning. For example, pupils showed much enthusiasm and enjoyment when taking part in a writing lesson when they were asked to write a letter from a pirate's point of view of their adventures at sea. They worked well in pairs to share their ideas. In a mathematics lesson observed, pupils worked together in an animated way, moving around the classroom to find the answers for their 'maths challenge'. Pupils generally present their work well and take a pride in it. The vast majority of pupils behave sensibly in and around school. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school and this can be seen in how well they form positive attitudes to learning and in their improved attendance. More regular attendance has meant that few pupils are at risk of falling behind when they are not in school. As a result of close partnership work with outside agencies and families, persistent absences have reduced significantly.

Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of taking regular exercise and of the need for a healthy diet, which is promoted through visits from 'Expo Chef' demonstrating the preparation of healthy meals. The vast majority of pupils feel safe at school because of the good-quality care they receive from staff and they appreciate the use of 'Worry Books' and 'Worry Boxes' where they can share any concerns they have. Displays around school support discussions on safety and a wide range of visitors to the school, such as road safety officers, further promote pupils' understanding. They know that any inappropriate behaviour will be dealt with effectively. Pupils have an awareness of others less fortunate

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than themselves through regular fundraising events, such as participation in the 'Shoe Box' Appeal.

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 | 3 |
| 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 | 3 |
| The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community | 3 |
| 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 | 3 |
| The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 3 |

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?

Following a period of staffing instability, the quality of teaching is improving with almost all teaching being satisfactory and some that is good. Teachers generally manage their classes well and provide pupils with a range of interesting activities. They utilise the skills of teaching assistants appropriately so that pupils with special needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to that of others in the same class. In the best lessons, good planning ensures work is well matched to build on prior learning, teachers give pupils clear guidance on what they have to do and have high expectations in challenging all pupils to make good progress. This is particularly evident in the good progress made by more-able pupils. In less effective lessons, pupils become disengaged when tasks set are not well-matched to their needs, expectations are not high enough and the next steps in learning are not always fully understood. As a result, the pace of learning slows.

Curriculum provision includes an appropriate emphasis on developing the basic skills and includes themed weeks which have a positive impact on engaging pupils' interests. A key focus in mathematics lessons to teach mental calculation skills is evident throughout school with opportunities for pupils to solve practical mathematical problems. Pupils say they enjoy working together to find the answers and this is beginning to have a positive

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impact on improved outcomes. A wide range of opportunities to develop pupils' musical skills is a strength of the school and makes a valuable contribution to pupils' personal development and well-being. Opportunities to take part in after-school sports activities, such as football and gymnastics are appreciated by pupils.

Good care is provided to ensure that pupils are safe in and around school and their views are taken into account regularly. They appreciate the new fencing and secure entrance systems in place. Staff know pupils and families very well through regular liaison and this has a positive impact on pupils' enjoyment in coming to school and improved attendance. Good transition arrangements and well-planned support from teaching assistants, particularly for potentially vulnerable pupils, mean that pupils are confident about moving to secondary school. Pupils from challenging circumstances are well cared for and good use is made of links with a range of external agencies. As one parent commented: 'The school has been brilliant, I think they have gone above and beyond their duties, I can't praise the class teacher enough.' Parents and carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are highly appreciative of the support they receive.

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 | 3 |
| The effectiveness of care, guidance and support | 2 |

How effective are leadership and management?

The newly-formed and skilled group of senior leaders is motivated and fully supportive of the headteacher's direction for school improvement. As a result, the focused monitoring of lessons is improving their quality and raising expectations of teachers, their assistants and pupils. The introduction of a new system for tracking pupils' progress is well-used by senior leaders. It has assisted the school to set more challenging targets and to identify pupils at risk of underachievement more quickly, in order to plan appropriate support. This is having a positive effect on raising attainment, particularly for those pupils with special needs and/or disabilities in lower Key Stage 2, but is not yet used by all teachers to plan further learning opportunities for all pupils. Staffing is now more stable and systems to monitor school priorities have taken on a renewed sense of purpose.

The governing body is very supportive of the school and understands the school's strengths and areas for development. Its members share the same vision for school improvement and take an active part in school life. They have improved their role in monitoring and challenging school priorities, but are still at an early stage of development in evaluating the school's actions. Good safeguarding procedures are securely in place and have a high profile in the daily life of the school. Particular strengths lie in the rigorous administrative systems implemented by the school bursar and involvement of pupils in the production of documentation for all pupils on bullying. Community cohesion is a

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developing area with some strong features in helping pupils find out about a range of cultures such as the work the school does with other countries in Africa and Bangladesh. Policies and practices show that the school tackles discrimination. It aims to promote equal opportunity fully but because some pupils are still making up the ground they lost as a result of the many staffing changes since the last inspection this aspect is satisfactory rather than good.

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 | 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 | 3 |
| 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 | 3 |

Views of parents and carers

A minority of parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaire. The majority who did so was very supportive of the school. Parents and carers commented positively about the care and support the school provides and appreciated that the school keeps children safe. A small minority of parents and carers raised concerns about the management of pupils' behaviour. During the inspection, almost all the behaviour observed was managed effectively and safeguarding systems and procedures were found to be good. A few parents expressed concerns about the progress their children make. The inspection looked carefully at pupils' progress and found that the school could do more to improve the rate of progress of some pupils but overall it is satisfactory.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Diamond Hall 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 137 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 316 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|----|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 58 | 42 | 69 | 50 | 8 | 6 | 1 | 1 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 67 | 49 | 66 | 48 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| My school informs me about my child's progress | 50 | 36 | 77 | 56 | 9 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 47 | 34 | 76 | 55 | 13 | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 46 | 34 | 82 | 60 | 6 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 38 | 28 | 85 | 62 | 12 | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 45 | 33 | 82 | 60 | 8 | 6 | 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) | 45 | 33 | 84 | 61 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 39 | 28 | 91 | 66 | 7 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 39 | 28 | 66 | 48 | 23 | 17 | 6 | 4 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 32 | 23 | 90 | 66 | 9 | 7 | 1 | 1 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 43 | 31 | 81 | 59 | 8 | 6 | 1 | 1 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 58 | 42 | 66 | 48 | 11 | 8 | 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%.

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 | 59 | 35 | 3 | 3 |
| Primary schools | 9 | 44 | 39 | 7 |
| Secondary schools | 13 | 36 | 41 | 11 |
| Sixth forms | 15 | 39 | 43 | 3 |
| Special schools | 35 | 43 | 17 | 5 |
| Pupil referral units | 21 | 42 | 29 | 9 |
| All schools | 13 | 43 | 37 | 8 |

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 August 2010 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 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.

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.



11 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Diamond Hall Junior School, Sunderland, SR4 6JF

Thank you very much for the welcome you gave to me and my colleagues when we came to inspect your school. A particular thank you goes to those of you who filled in the questionnaires or met with us to talk about your school. We would also like to thank those of you who were so keen to explain what you were doing when you were in class. We were impressed by your courtesy and we are pleased to know that you enjoy coming to school.

Your school is satisfactory. It has some parts which are good. Adults care well for you and your school ensures that you are safe, including you in producing Anti-Bullying documentation. Your attendance is improving and you enjoy the wide range of musical activities which your school provides. You enjoy the interesting activities which your teachers plan to help you with your learning.

We have asked your school to help you to improve your work by:

- ensuring all staff use the information they have on how well you are doing to prepare activities which will help you to achieve even more, particularly in your mathematics and writing
- improve some lessons so that you are taught well all the time and achieve the very best outcomes
- making sure that you know what to do to improve your work, because of the written guidance given in your books and verbal feedback in lessons
- helping you to work at a faster pace.

You can help by continuing to work as hard as you can and continuing to attend regularly. Thank you for helping with this inspection.

Yours sincerely

Irene Cochrane

Lead inspector

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