

Hobletts Manor Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117097
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	358080
Inspection dates	17–18 May 2011
Reporting inspector	David Shepherd

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	216
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Neil McGuinness-Smith
Headteacher	Sally Short
Date of previous school inspection	10 October 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors who observed 16 lessons led by eight different teachers. Meetings were held with the senior staff, a group of pupils and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at safeguarding documentation and the school's analysis of its data. Questionnaires from 50 parents and carers, 26 staff and 96 pupils were received and analysed.

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

- Why has attainment in mathematics in Year 6 declined during the past three years?
- Why do boys not perform as well as girls in English in Year 6 and is this replicated in other year groups?
- How consistent are teaching and assessment throughout the school?
- What is the impact of the monitoring carried out by senior and middle leaders on pupils' progress and attainment?

Information about the school

This school is smaller than the average primary and draws its pupils from the local area. Most pupils are from a White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average, as is the proportion speaking English as an additional language. An average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities; the proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs is also average. A higher than average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. More pupils join or leave the school at times other than the usual points of transfer than in most schools. The school has gained Healthy Schools status and the Activemark award.

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

Hobletts Manor Junior School provides its pupils with a satisfactory education. Pupils make satisfactory progress because teaching is satisfactory overall. However, there are some good features in the school's work and, in particular, good care, guidance and support mean that pupils enjoy school, feel safe, get on well together, behave well and play a considerable part in enabling the school to run smoothly.

Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 is average in English and mathematics. The school made raising attainment in mathematics a priority during the past year and has succeeded in halting the decline in mathematics. However, overall, boys do not make as much progress as girls in writing. This is because there are not enough opportunities to write in subjects that appeal to many boys, such as in science, geography and history.

Relationships between pupils and adults are consistently good, and this is a key feature of lessons. As a result, pupils try hard to please staff. Teachers ask probing questions that encourage pupils to think carefully and develop independence in their learning. Pupils receive good feedback about their work when in groups supervised by an adult, but this is not always the case when they are working independently. Misunderstandings are not corrected quickly enough in these groups. Inconsistencies remain in the quality of teaching and use of assessment across the school. The purpose of lessons is included in planning, but what pupils at different levels of ability are expected to learn is not. The result of this is that pupils are not always set challenges appropriate to their abilities. Marking is encouraging but does not always provide enough guidance for pupils, and where next steps are indicated pupils are not always given enough time to respond to suggestions made. This means that sometimes marking does not lead to improvement. The curriculum is satisfactory and is enriched by a wide variety of visitors to the school and visits to places of interest.

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school, which is shared by the senior staff. Senior staff and middle leaders are developing the skills necessary to carry out their roles but their opportunities to monitor progress and attainment in their areas of responsibility are limited. The result of this is that not all are having a strong enough impact on learning. The governing body is keen and supportive. Self-evaluation is broadly accurate and appropriate priorities for development are identified. This, along with the positive relationships throughout the school and the school's success in raising attainment in mathematics, demonstrates the school's satisfactory capacity to sustain further 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?

- Improve boys' progress in writing by providing more opportunities to consolidate and extend their writing skills in different subjects.
- By April 2012, improve the quality and consistency of teaching and assessment so that at least 80% of lessons are good by:
 - identifying what pupils of different abilities are to learn in lessons
 - correcting misunderstandings during lessons, especially of pupils working independently
 - ensuring that marking indicates the next steps in learning, and providing pupils with opportunities to correct their mistakes.
- Ensure that monitoring and evaluation by senior and middle leaders lead to accelerating progress and rising attainment across the curriculum by:
 - training senior and middle leaders in the skills of monitoring and evaluation
 - providing regular opportunities for senior and middle leaders to monitor and evaluate progress and attainment in their areas of responsibility.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, given that they start in Year 3 with skills that are broadly average and make steady progress to reach average standards in their Year 6 tests. Pupils enjoy their work. For example, in Year 6, pupils were fully engaged in writing a play script about Guy Fawkes and the Gunpowder Plot. They worked enthusiastically as they challenged themselves to achieve their personal targets. In Year 4, pupils worked industriously planning how to link sentences together as they wrote about the biblical story of Moses and the crossing of the Red Sea. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress because they have appropriate support to ensure they can engage with the work. Teaching assistants are careful to make sure pupils do not rely on them too much and are properly challenged. The very small minority of pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress because they are acquiring the skills of speaking, reading and writing in English well.

Reflecting the school's Activemark, pupils enjoy physical activities in lessons, at lunchtimes and at playtimes, and these help to promote their healthy lifestyles. They understand the importance of eating healthily, but do not always choose to eat healthy foods. Pupils feel safe in school. Their behaviour is good. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and local communities. For example, they take on responsibilities in their classrooms and around school, some act as play leaders at break times and they have raised money for a wide range of charities at home and abroad. Elected pupils represent their peers on the school council. Pupils reflect thoughtfully upon some of the broader issues in life, such as what is precious to them. Attendance is improving and is now average. This reflects pupils' increasing enjoyment of their education. Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for their future education because of their average attainment and good personal development.

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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	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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	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?

Teachers' planning and classroom organisation are effective in enabling lessons to flow smoothly and the purposes of lessons are generally made clear to pupils. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to work in groups and this promotes their skills in speaking and listening well. Pupils are encouraged to review their work, but this is not as effective as it might be because of a lack of guidance given about what pupils at different levels of ability should be looking for in judging the success of their work. Teachers and teaching assistants support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities satisfactorily on an individual and/or group basis and this helps these pupils in their understanding of particular aspects of their work. The content of lessons is often very interesting and this encourages pupils to work hard, although their work is occasionally untidy.

Provision to promote pupils' personal development is included effectively throughout the curriculum. Enrichment activities are varied and visits to places of interest and visitors to the school are popular with pupils. Themed weeks, such as International Week, and specialist tuition in sports and music are strengths of the curriculum. Pupils' reading skills are reinforced regularly in learning across the curriculum but not enough opportunities are provided for extended writing in a few classes.

Good arrangements for pupils joining the school ensure that they settle quickly. As one parent wrote, 'My daughter recently joined the school and all the staff have made the

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transition comfortable and smooth and I cannot thank them enough'. In replies to their questionnaires, most pupils responded that they were looked after well by staff. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are provided with suitable activities to meet their needs. The school enlists the support of appropriate agencies and works well with parents and carers to meet pupils' particular social and emotional needs. Procedures for promoting attendance are effective. Transition arrangements are good from the infant school and from Year 6 to secondary school.

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 headteacher has a clear vision for the school that is shared by the senior leadership team. There is a strong sense of teamwork where everyone is pulling together to achieve goals because the headteacher and senior leaders have soundly instilled a sense of ambition and drive to further improve the work of the school. The school identifies appropriately the strengths and weaknesses of teaching and learning and incorporates the areas for development into plans of action. For example, weaknesses in problem solving that were causing a decline in mathematics were addressed through staff training. The plans for improvements in reading, writing and mathematics are proving more effective than those in other subjects because their impact is clearly quantified.

The school has satisfactory relationships with parents and carers. Initiatives such as the half-termly report about their children's progress, homework activities, courses provided through 'Extended Schools' and the use of questionnaires all help to promote this positive relationship.

Governance is satisfactory. The governing body is ambitious for the school to do well. It knows the school's strengths and weaknesses, has identified its priorities and recognises that it needs to become more proactive in monitoring the work of the school. Safeguarding procedures are good. All the parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire feel their children are safe in school. Staff are rigorously vetted and trained regularly in child protection procedures. Links with the local authority, medical services and local schools help to promote effectively the personal development and well-being of pupils, but have not had such a strong impact on pupils' attainment.

The school soundly promotes equality for the different groups of pupils in the school. Through satisfactory analysis of their progress it has identified and started to address boys' slower progress in writing. Any racist behaviour and discrimination is tackled effectively. Community cohesion is satisfactory. Pupils have an extensive knowledge and

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understanding of their local community but their understanding of the wider international communities is less well developed.

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

The views of parents and carers given in their responses to the questionnaire were largely positive. Parents and carers say that their children enjoy school and are kept safe. They consider teaching to be good and meets their children's needs. They think leadership and management are good. One wrote, 'I am very pleased with the school and my child is very happy and loves going to school.'

A few parents and carers wrote that their children were not making enough progress and there is a lack of consistency in teaching between classes. A few also felt that behaviour was not always managed well. Inspectors found that there were differences between some classes in the quality of teaching and learning, and this is why some pupils do not always make enough progress. The school includes some pupils with challenging behaviour and, during the inspection, these pupils were managed well. Inspectors recognise the points raised by a few parents and carers and a minority of pupils that behaviour may not always be as good as it was during the inspection, but they also looked at school records in coming to their judgement.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hobletts 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 50 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 216 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	25	50	22	44	1	2	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	31	62	19	38	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	25	50	18	36	5	10	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	34	26	52	5	10	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	20	40	27	54	2	4	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	20	40	23	46	5	10	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	16	32	30	60	3	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)	15	30	25	50	6	12	2	4
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	38	26	52	3	6	2	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	20	40	21	42	5	10	4	8
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	32	27	54	6	12	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	19	38	26	52	2	4	2	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	23	46	21	42	5	10	1	2

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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 31 December 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 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.



19 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hobletts Manor Junior School, Hemel Hempstead HP2 5JS

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed meeting and talking to you. Your school is currently providing you with a satisfactory education. This means that there are some things that your school does well and others that need some improvement. We found that your school has some important strengths. Here are some of the best things we found.

You told us you enjoy school and your attendance is improving.

You feel safe and understand the importance of taking exercise.

You are well behaved and get on really well with each other.

You make a good contribution to the school.

You enjoy visits to places of interest and visitors to the school.

You like your teachers and teaching assistants and try your best to please them.

Your teachers and teaching assistants look after you well.

We have asked your headteacher, teachers and the governing body to do these things to make your school better.

Provide you with more opportunities to write in different subjects to help you improve your writing.

Make sure all teachers identify what different groups are to learn each lesson.

Let you know consistently how well you are doing during lessons, tell you clearly what you need to do next to improve, and give you time to carry out the improvements suggested in marking.

Check on how well you are learning in all subjects.

All of you can help by continuing to work very hard.

Yours sincerely

David Shepherd

Lead inspector

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