

Hertford Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114383
Local Authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	378849
Inspection dates	13–14 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Michael Pye

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	153
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Wenda Bradley
Headteacher	Joan Marshall
Date of previous school inspection	14 May 2009
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Age group	7–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 10 lessons and visited two other part-lessons involving a total of seven teachers. Inspectors spoke to parents and carers and held meetings with members of the governing body, pupils and staff. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at data relating to pupils' attainment and progress. The school's development plan, lesson and curriculum plans, governing body documentation, and policies and procedures, particularly those relating to the health, safety and safeguarding of pupils, were scrutinised. Inspectors also looked at questionnaires returned by staff, pupils and 42 parents and carers.

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

- Whether the school's targets for improving pupils' attainment and progress are challenging enough.
- The extent of pupils' progress, particularly in Year 6, in English and mathematics.
- Whether the curriculum and teaching are meeting the needs of pupils of different abilities in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT).
- The quality of leadership and management at all levels and whether the school demonstrates a capacity to improve.

Information about the school

Pupils in this smaller-than-average junior school come predominantly from a White British background. The largest minority ethnic group consists of pupils from other White heritages. The proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language is well below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The main group consists of pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is average. This is unusual because in the recent past, the number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need, has been well above the national average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. Above average numbers of pupils enter or leave the school other than at the usual times. The school has gained national Healthy School status and the Artsmark award.

The school runs a breakfast and after-school club on the school site and these were visited during this inspection.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in pupils' rates of progress, their levels of attainment, the curriculum and the quality of teaching.

Pupils' attainment is low and their progress is inadequate. This includes pupils for whom English is an additional language. However, there is evidence of improving progress arising from the introduction of challenging 10-day targets and half-termly progress meetings. These enable the school to provide support and guidance more quickly for those pupils who are not making sufficient progress. These strategies are increasingly successful in delivering at least satisfactory progress.

Teaching over time is inadequate because it does not consistently secure sufficient progress for enough pupils. Not all teachers have high enough expectations of the quantity and quality of pupils' work: the challenge and pace of learning are insufficient in too many lessons. Teachers do not check frequently enough how effectively pupils are learning.

The curriculum is inadequate because it does not develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills well enough. Opportunities for pupils to use their basic skills in all subjects are not maximised. There are too few cross-curricular links to make learning more relevant. It is too early to see the full impact of recent changes on bringing about improvements.

Parents and carers who completed questionnaires expressed their support for the school. One parent/carer reflected the views of many when writing, 'This school makes learning fun. The teachers are very enthusiastic and go to great lengths to help the children and address their needs.' Links with parents and carers are good, with the use of a wide range of modern technology complementing a traditional 'open door' approach to clear communication.

Many aspects of pupils' personal development are satisfactory or better. Pupils are active at break times and enjoy regular physical education lessons. Their knowledge of how to stay healthy is good and reflects the work associated with gaining the national award. Although the school has done much to try to improve attendance

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rates, including text messaging, many parents and carers continue to take holidays during term time so attendance is low.

The headteacher has introduced changes that are beginning to have a positive impact on improving pupils' attainment and progress. At the whole-school level there is an embedded cycle of monitoring, with robust evaluation of progress data. Self-evaluation is accurate. Leaders have identified the right issues for improvement and there are increasing levels of accountability for staff. The school development plan focuses on annual targets, such as improving teaching and pupils' attainment and progress. Subject action planning, however, has some shortcomings; some monitoring is insufficiently rigorous so, consequently, actions for improvement are too general. However, improvements are taking place and the pace of change is accelerating. The governing body carries out its statutory duties and governors make regular visits to the school. Governance is satisfactory. These factors demonstrate a satisfactory capacity to sustain improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' attainment and progress through substantially increasing the proportion of good lessons by:
 - ensuring all teachers check regularly during lessons that pupils have understood the work and are engaging with their learning
 - ensuring that the pace of learning is consistently good throughout lessons
 - making sure teachers provide challenging work that matches the needs of pupils of all abilities
 - making sure teachers have high expectations of the quality and quantity of pupils' work.
- Sharpen the skills and knowledge of subject leaders by:
 - ensuring that through rigorous monitoring, they gain a detailed knowledge of pupils' attainment and progress in their subject area across the school
 - making sure that subject development plans use specific success criteria which allow the impact of actions taken to be measured easily
 - ensuring action plans show clearly where their subject supports whole-school priorities.
- Build further on current efforts to improve attendance.
- Enhance the impact of the curriculum on pupils' learning and progress in literacy and numeracy by:
 - developing more cross-curricular links that make learning relevant for pupils
 - ensuring that opportunities are maximised to reinforce pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in all subjects.

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Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

4

Pupils enjoy their learning but their achievement over time is inadequate. Attainment at the end of Year 6 in 2011 was well below average. Given their below average entry levels, this constitutes inadequate progress for pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who arrive at other than the usual times. Inspection evidence shows that pupils' current rates of progress are improving and in the lessons observed they made satisfactory progress overall. However, low attainment and attendance rates mean pupils are inadequately prepared for the next stage of their education.

Pupils' behaviour during the inspection was satisfactory. Pupils respect each other. For example, Year 6 pupils in an English lesson listened carefully to each other's suggestions for words that express feelings. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities, such as charity fund-raising, and make a sound contribution to the community. School councillors take some meaningful decisions about school life. Eco-councillors carry out their work with enthusiasm, including helping on the allotment. However, opportunities are missed to involve pupils further in contributing to the wider community.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils understand the difference between right and wrong. They adapt well in different social situations, such as the dining room or when outdoors. Good spiritual development is evident, for example when one pupil said, 'We take good care of the chickens and yesterday I gave them a hug. It's a good place to relax too.' Pupils have some knowledge of life in other cultures, for example in China, but their knowledge of diverse cultures is limited because opportunities are missed to extend their multicultural understanding.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	4
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
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

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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The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Lesson observations during the inspection show that there has been an increase in the proportion of good lessons. However, teaching over time has not ensured that pupils make at least satisfactory progress. There are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching relating to lack of pace, the use of ongoing assessment in lessons, and in teachers' differing levels of expectation. On occasion, the quick, sharp start to lessons is followed by a dip in pace and a loss of concentration by pupils, and so their progress slows. There are examples of work that challenges pupils of different abilities but this better practice is inconsistent. In the most effective lessons, particular attention is paid to explaining what pupils need to do to achieve the learning objectives, and teachers make good use of resources. This was evident in a Year 4 history lesson, where effective use was made of ICT to show household artefacts. This maintained pupils' interests and built well on learning about a Tudor house. Similarly, in a Year 3 mathematics lesson, hoops on the floor allowed pupils to place various shapes in a Venn diagram.

An established assessment cycle provides a good range of progress tracking data. However, not all teachers use this information to plan suitable learning for pupils of different abilities. During lessons, not all teachers check on pupils' understanding. Consequently, it is difficult for teachers to identify whether pupils have achieved the learning expected of them, and to change direction if necessary.

The curriculum provides satisfactory enhancement opportunities, such as table tennis and the Year 6 residential trip, but has made an insufficient overall contribution to pupils' learning. There are too few opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills in different subjects and links between subjects are not well established. The school environment is bright and welcoming, with artwork showing the positive impact of the national award. Pupils now benefit from more motivating topics. Their interest is captured by exciting 'hooks' such as the visit by a Roman soldier and trips out. Where this happens, cross-curricular links and support for literacy and numeracy are developed, and pupils' level of engagement is better. However, the full impact of these changes is not evident across the school.

Care, guidance and support for pupils are satisfactory. There is good pastoral care, especially for those who find school life challenging. The school is well prepared to seek external support for pupils and families in need. Adults know the pupils well and the school can point to numerous examples of how barriers to learning have been ameliorated for pupils. Tracking the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is secure but there are too few checks on the impact of

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interventions with this group of pupils. Induction into the school is praised by parents and carers. One summed up the thoughts of others by stating that there was ‘lots of great preparation work from infant into junior. My son went to the junior school, was allocated a buddy and had his questions answered by Year 3 pupils.’ Pupils in the breakfast and after-school clubs settle well and enjoy what is provided for them.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and senior managers have effectively shared their commitment to improvement with staff and advances can be seen. There is a sense of common purpose amongst staff. The impact is best seen in the improving progress pupils make and the setting of challenging targets. Regular monitoring of lessons is improving the quality of teaching. The school recognises that there is still some way to go to ensure all pupils receive good teaching and can achieve well. Lesson evaluations are detailed but focus too little on the quality of learning, particularly of different groups of pupils. A highly focused and rigorous analysis of the quality of writing across the school provides an example of the increased activity of subject leaders in improving the provision. However, not all subject leaders possess the necessary skills to carry out their monitoring and evaluation roles and to write sharply-focused action plans.

The governing body shares the commitment to improvement and new governors are undertaking induction training in order to sharpen their skills. The governing body has sound systems in place to oversee health and safety, and other child protection policies and procedures. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are satisfactory and meet statutory requirements. The school has detailed risk assessments in place. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory, with few gaps between the progress of different pupil groups. Partnerships, such as with the local cluster of schools, have brought benefits to the personal development of pupils through, for instance, sporting links, but the impact on attainment and progress is not as strong. There are some positive links to the local church and pupils prepare food for some people in the community. However, community cohesion is satisfactory because the school has only embryonic links with contrasting schools nationally and internationally.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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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	2
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Views of parents and carers

The number of questionnaires returned is broadly average for a school of this size. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who returned questionnaires believe that their children enjoy school. A very small minority express some concern about pupils’ behaviour. Inspectors judged behaviour to be satisfactory during the inspection. A further small minority had concerns about the rate of their children’s progress. Inspectors judged progress to be inadequate but improving. A few parents and carers had concerns about the extent to which the school helps them support their children’s learning. Inspectors judged care, guidance and support as satisfactory. The very large majority are happy with their children’s experience at the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hertford 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 42 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 153 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	28	67	13	31	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	33	79	6	14	1	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	27	64	12	29	2	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	22	52	16	38	3	7	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	25	60	14	33	3	7	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	25	60	9	21	7	17	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	30	71	10	24	2	5	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)	28	65	13	30	0	0	1	2
The school meets my child’s particular needs	24	57	14	33	3	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	38	20	48	1	2	3	7
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	52	18	43	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	26	62	12	31	4	7	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	27	64	13	31	2	5	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	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.

17 October 2011

Dear Pupils



Inspection of Hertford Junior School, Brighton BN1 7FP

You may remember our recent visit. You were eager to tell us about your school and we listened carefully to what you had to say. We found that changes made by the school, such as better lessons, are improving things but that your progress and the level of work by the end of Year 6 is not good enough. We have therefore judged that your school needs a notice to improve, which means that it will be visited again by inspectors to see how well it is progressing.

There are some things that we judged as highlights. Your knowledge of how to stay healthy is good, and we are pleased to see that you make the most of breaktimes to be active. The school has wonderful grounds and we like the way you work in the allotment, care for the chickens and cook fresh food. The school has made good links with your parents and carers. The use of modern technology such as texts and email helps to keep good communications going with your families. The school wants your parents and carers to ensure that some of you attend more regularly and we have asked the school to continue to work hard to improve your attendance. You can help by reminding your parents and carers about this.

Your headteacher and all the other adults want things to improve. We have asked the school to:

- make sure that more of your lessons are good and move at a brisk pace
- ensure teachers have high expectations and give you work that challenges you all
- make sure you can practise your literacy and numeracy skills in all subjects
- create more links between subjects to make learning more relevant for you
- ensure teachers who lead subject areas develop their leadership skills.

Thank you again, and I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Michael Pye
Lead inspector

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