

Hazelmere Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114745
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	378918
Inspection dates	7–8 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Michael Sutherland-Harper

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	154
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jacqueline Morley
Headteacher	Jenny Firth
Date of previous school inspection	4 February 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspection team observed 16 lessons taught by six teachers. They held meetings with governors, staff and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books, the school improvement plan, assessment data, monitoring and evaluation records, arrangements for safeguarding and school policies and procedures. In addition to replies from staff and pupil questionnaires, questionnaires from 81 parents and carers 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.

- How well are pupils progressing in mathematics, especially boys and the more-able, following recent school work in this area?
- How effectively and consistently does teaching now meet the needs of all groups of pupils and ensure that they are sufficiently challenged?
- How well leaders and managers, including governors and middle managers, monitor and evaluate to ensure that standards are improving?
- How effectively are school developments in marking and assessment strategies contributing to pupil progress?

Information about the school

Hazelmere Junior School is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The very large majority of the pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is nearly double the national average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below national averages, while the proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language is in line with national averages. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs and/or disabilities, is above the national average. The school has gained the Healthy Schools status and 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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The school provides a good quality of education. Pupils are making good progress as a result of good teaching and effective care, guidance and support which is focused on raising attainment across the school. Staff work carefully to develop each individual. One parent summed this work up: 'The school celebrates positive points and works effectively to iron out any negatives.' The school is improving because leaders and managers, the governing body and other staff are working closely together to drive the school forward.

Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Pupils enjoy good relations with each other and with adults. Pupils feel safe. They know that adults will help them to sort out any difficulties and that there is always someone to whom they can speak about those difficulties. Pupils are clear about how to stay fit and healthy, including through what they eat and drink. Attendance levels are above average.

Attainment is rising steadily after carefully planned work to improve provision and an increased role for subject leaders in taking learning forward. The quality of teaching has risen as a result of a whole school focus on teaching skills. Sharing of best practice between teachers in order to take teaching to the highest level is at an early stage of development. Targeted work on effective delivery of mathematics is improving results in this area and ensures that all groups of pupils, including boys, the more-able and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are making good progress. Opportunities for pupils to consolidate their skills by applying mathematics in a variety of practical situations familiar to them are more limited. Thoughtful use of the large number of support staff ensures that the needs of all groups of pupils are effectively met. The curriculum is being carefully tailored to ensure that it incorporates challenge for all groups and that there are good opportunities for pupils to use their imagination between and across subjects. Assessment and marking procedures have been refined in line with the school's increased emphasis on continual monitoring and tracking of progress. Pupils know their targets and understand how to achieve them but they are not always involved in setting those targets or identifying the areas they feel they need to develop.

The headteacher has worked closely with the governing body and staff, including middle managers, to create team spirit and to determine how the school can best move forward. Both the governing body and middle managers have supplemented this with detailed action plans. These plans are based on a thorough analysis of data and ongoing monitoring procedures. The governing body offers good and

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increasingly informed support and challenge to the school. Rigorous self-evaluation identifies areas requiring improvement. The school's capacity for sustained improvement is good because self-evaluation is accurate, attainment is now rising as a result of improved teaching and learning and team work is effective across the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment levels to good or better by July 2013 by:
 - extending opportunities for pupils to apply mathematical skills in a variety of practical situations
 - sharing of best practice across the school to ensure that all teaching is consistently good or better.

- Refine assessment procedures to ensure that all pupils are clear about how to achieve the next steps in their learning by:
 - involving pupils in identifying areas for development and setting next targets.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils enter the school with levels of attainment below those expected for their age. All groups of pupils, including boys, the more-able and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress with their learning as a result of rising expectations and careful review of their progress from day to day and over time. Outcomes in mathematics have improved because the school has refined delivery of mathematics through setting across year groups. Further work on improving reading skills through the use of very effective questioning techniques in guided reading sessions has extended pupil development. Writing skills are enhanced by an emphasis on use of the imagination such as shown in a Year 3 English lesson. When pupils were asked to describe how they might be moving about in a hitherto unknown landscape, what conditions could be like and what slithering felt like, no limit was placed on the possibilities for response. As a result, pupils rose to the challenge and came up with original and inventive responses. Support in all subjects is carefully targeted through improved planning procedures and termly pupil progress meetings. All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are increasingly able to do good work independently because support provided aims at building individual confidence.

The importance of good behaviour is emphasised across the school and was clearly demonstrated in an excellent assembly where close attention to instructions from the leader enabled pupils to perform a complicated part song to the highest standards. Pupils have a keen awareness of how they are expected to behave and how to stay safe. They take care to look after their peers in class and around the school site. Year 6 pupils are linked up with pupils in Year 3 to help the younger pupils adjust to life in their new school. Pupils fully understand that the fresh fruit, water and regular

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exercise they have available in school are components of a healthy life style. The school council is enthusiastic about contributing to the school. They take pride in co-ordinating the regular fund-raising for charitable purposes, which has also reinforced links with other parts of the world. Workplace skills are secure, especially as a result of the school’s emphasis on the importance of good attendance, satisfactory but improving attainment in literacy and numeracy and developing skills in information and computer technology. Socially and morally, pupils have a mature understanding of their responsibilities and the consequences of their actions. Pupils have good empathy with others and an accurate understanding of other beliefs. There are increasing opportunities to develop the sense of wonder through open-ended and imaginative tasks. Pupil awareness of different cultures is being enhanced through charity work and an increasing range of visitors but is at an early stage of development.

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	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The very large majority of teaching across the school is good or better. Teachers have good subject knowledge and make good use of electronic technologies and a range of visual resources to deliver lessons. The ongoing focus on mathematics and English has helped to raise standards in these areas. Specialist training in mathematics is under way and this has helped to improve staff confidence levels across the school. A large number of support staff provide careful guidance in lessons to enable all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to work at a more productive rate. Good assessment procedures include

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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effective strategies to extend answers to questions by ensuring that a reason is provided for the answer. Very good encouragement and time for pupils to explain what they were doing and how they got their results, enabled all pupils to make good progress in a Year 5 mathematics class. Open-ended tasks challenge the more-able. In an excellent Year 3 English lesson, good collaboration in groups and challenging time limits, together with a stimulating topic on myths, ensured pupils were thoroughly engaged. However, opportunities for pupils to apply mathematical skills in a variety of practical situations which are familiar to them in everyday life are inconsistently used across the school. Work is thoroughly marked and comments help pupils to understand how to advance the quality of individual pieces. Although pupils are clear about their targets, they are not always as clear about how to reach them because they have not helped to set the targets and identify what they feel are the best ways to attain them.

The curriculum is good. It is being developed to ensure that opportunities for creative responses occur across all subjects and can be linked. The school wants all pupils to remember their schooling because they enjoyed learning. The inclusion of as broad a range of experiences as possible in the curriculum is designed to enhance pupils’ understanding of the world around them. The curriculum has also been re-designed to provide for the range of pupils with highly specific needs. Pupils respond well to enrichment opportunities such as African drumming and pretending to be a Tudor. Inventive pupil work on display all around the school is indicative of that response through its amount and quality. Work in school is now supplemented by further possibilities for project work at home.

Care, guidance and support are good. The school has very good knowledge of pupils and their families. Clear and supportive processes are accompanied by strong involvement in effective local partnerships for health and social care. Identification of potentially vulnerable pupils is a school-wide responsibility; the school is able to cite many examples of help given and its impact on individuals and their progress. Pupils are confident in asking for help and value the advice they receive. The school has extended its work with families to improve learning opportunities. A recent highly successful games afternoon led to enhanced parent/carer understanding of mathematics through working in family groups with their children. Individual education plans are annotated well. Pupils are moved off the special educational needs register as soon as they are deemed ready. Transition arrangements into and out of the school are good and build on existing links with providers.

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

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How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership and management are good. Improved monitoring and tracking procedures and increased communication between staff at all levels, including governors and middle managers, mean that everyone has an accurate picture of how well the school is performing and what needs to be improved. The headteacher has worked with quiet determination to raise standards across the school through clear processes which are regularly reviewed. Roles of middle managers in thematic planning and ensuring standards are maintained have been assisted by a programme of regular, detailed reporting to the governing body.

The school has expanded its work with parents and carers in line with its open-door policy. Parents and carers are welcomed into the school for family learning sessions and laptop computers are made available for work at home so that families can help to effectively support learning and progress. A wide range of partnerships, including the neighbouring academy, the university and local businesses, help the school to provide services and experiences which it might not otherwise be able to offer. For example, students from the university wore and showed national dress, explained their way of life and shared traditional dishes with pupils and staff to enhance understanding of different cultures. The school sees itself as an inclusive community where each individual matters and as such, it works to ensure that opportunities are available to all and that there is no discrimination. Gaps in attainment levels are closing steadily. The school makes good use of its resources to ensure that outcomes are now good, thereby ensuring good value for money.

The effectiveness of the governing body is good. Procedures to challenge and support the school have been refined through further training. The governing body has a good understanding of data and is developing closer links with parents and carers. The governing body has prepared its own action plan to sharpen support and challenge and representatives are now closely linked to individual classes. The governing body ensures that children are safe and that all staff are appropriately and regularly trained in safeguarding procedures. Members of the governing body undertake regular training sessions in aspects of safeguarding with the headteacher. Thorough safeguarding meets all government requirements and is especially strong in child protection and record keeping.

The school has carefully audited its community cohesion strategies and developed its action plan accordingly. The school has good knowledge of its local community, is well known in the community for its musical skills and participates in activities like litter pick and speed reduction. Pupils get on well with each other and regularly support a range of local, national and global charities, some of which, like work with a Thai orphanage, are unique to the school. A good range of visits and visitors help to create an awareness of the school's national context.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

A high proportion of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. The vast majority feel that their children enjoy school and that the school keeps children safe. Parents and carers are also particularly happy with teaching at the school and the ways in which the school enables their children to have a healthy lifestyle. They feel that the school informs them about their children’s progress and helps parents and carers to support their children’s learning. The very large majority feel that the school is well led and managed. A very small minority feel that the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors found that behaviour in and around the school is good and that effective behaviour management systems are in place.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hazelmere 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 81 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 154 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	48	59	32	40	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	45	56	34	42	2	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	33	41	40	49	4	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	34	42	36	44	5	6	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	39	48	37	46	3	4	1	1
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	31	38	42	52	6	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	37	46	41	51	3	4	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)	26	32	47	58	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	23	28	49	60	4	5	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	28	35	36	44	12	15	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	27	46	57	8	10	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	28	35	43	53	5	6	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	37	46	36	44	6	7	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.



9 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hazelmere Junior School, Colchester CO4 3JP

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you, hearing you sing so well and seeing your work on display all around the school. You think that your school is a good school and we agree.

These are some of the best things that we found about your school.

- You are taught well and are making good progress as a result.
- Your behaviour is good because you look after each other.
- You are well supported in your efforts by a large team of support staff.
- Your school keeps you safe and healthy.

To help your school to improve, we have asked the school to make sure that:

- you have more opportunities to apply what you know about mathematics to tasks you might encounter every day
- your teachers share the best ways they teach so that all lessons become even better
- you are more involved in setting your targets and identifying how to reach them so that assessment procedures help you to progress even more quickly.

You can all assist your school to develop by continuing to do your best work, especially in mathematics, and contributing as often as you can in class.

Yours sincerely

Michael Sutherland-Harper
Lead inspector

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