

# The Hermitage Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	125022
<b>Local authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	381026
<b>Inspection dates</b>	2–3 July 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Mike Capper

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	350
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mike Rudd
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kerry Knight
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 September 2008
<b>School address</b>	Oakwood Road Woking Surrey GU21 8UU
<b>Telephone number</b>	01483 472047
<b>Fax number</b>	01483 799627
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<b>Age group</b>	7–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	2–3 July 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	381026



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## Introduction

Mike Capper	Additional Inspector
Christine Mayle	Additional Inspector
Michael Elson	Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed 23 lessons taught by 13 teachers. Discussions were held with parents and carers at the start of the school day, and with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. The inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection, observed the school's work and looked at school documentation, including teachers' planning, assessment information, safeguarding policies and samples of pupils' work. Inspectors analysed 47 questionnaires from parents and carers.

## Information about the school

This junior school is larger than the average-sized school. Most pupils come from the local community. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The vast majority of the pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported by school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is above average. The school includes 'The Orchard', a specialist centre for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. At the moment, there are 14 pupils in 'The Orchard', who all have a statement of special educational needs.

The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Since the previous inspection, there have been several changes in the senior leadership team, including a new headteacher who was acting headteacher for an extended period before being appointed permanently in May 2011.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>

## Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. Pupils develop good social skills and thoroughly enjoy school. The school is not yet good because there are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and in pupils' progress, especially in writing. Leaders are ensuring that pupils' attainment is rising quickly following a sharp dip after the previous inspection but not all are fully involved in driving improvement. The headteacher has improved the use of data to check pupils' progress but this is not yet sufficiently focused on how well different groups are learning. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Their attainment is broadly average by the end of Year 6. In English, pupils do slightly better in reading than writing. The school has successfully improved attainment in reading but letter sounds and punctuation are not taught systematically and there are limited opportunities for pupils to write at length so that they can improve their skills. Pupils in 'The Orchard' make good progress because their needs are met well.
- The quality of teaching is improving. More is good, although too much is still satisfactory. Teachers make learning interesting but expectations are not always high enough and work does not always provide the right level of challenge for all pupils.
- Pupils feel safe and behave well. They have positive attitudes towards learning, are keen to do their best and are sociable and articulate.
- The management of performance and the leadership of teaching are satisfactory. There is a good drive for improvement, and remaining pockets of underachievement and inconsistencies in teaching are being tackled robustly. Middle managers have limited opportunities to visit lessons in order that they can help senior leaders to improve teaching. The governing body is supportive but does not monitor the work of the school closely enough to be able to provide challenge where needed.

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Move remaining satisfactory teaching to good by ensuring that teachers always expect enough of pupils and provide the right level of challenge for all.
- Improve pupils' writing by:
  - ensuring that phonics (letter sounds), spelling and punctuation are taught systematically
  - giving pupils more opportunities to write at length.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
  - making sharper use of data on pupils' achievement to check the progress of different groups
  - giving middle managers more opportunities to visit lessons so that they can support senior leaders in improving teaching
  - ensuring that governors play a bigger part in monitoring the work of the school and providing challenge.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Most parents and carers are pleased with their children's progress, although some report that it is not always good enough. Inspectors found that pupils' progress is improving but, while never less than satisfactory, it is not yet consistently good.

Pupils' attainment on entry varies significantly from year to year depending on how many pupils with a statement of special educational needs have started in 'The Orchard', but most are working at nationally expected levels when they start school. Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6, which fell sharply immediately after the previous inspection, is now improving quickly. While not yet fully back to previous levels, it is now broadly average overall, including in reading, reflecting satisfactory progress over time. Remaining pockets of underachievement are being tackled and any pupils who had fallen behind in the past are being given well-focused extra support to help them catch up.

Pupils' attainment is rising because progress in lessons is now consistently satisfactory or better. In a literacy lesson, pupils made steady progress in learning about the features of a play script. They worked hard but most had the same task, slowing the pace at which skills improved. In a numeracy lesson, pupils enjoyed using computers to find out about the Olympic village but there was insufficient focus on mathematical skills and some pupils spent too long copying text from the screen. Pupils make the best progress in lessons where work is pitched at just the right level for all. For example, in a numeracy lesson, there was good challenge, with pupils acquiring new skills at a good pace as they tried to recognise different number patterns.

There are no significant differences between the progress of different groups,

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including boys and girls. Over the last year, the school has successfully improved boys' attitudes towards literacy. Pupils have many opportunities to read to adults in lessons and this, along with a focus on buying boy-friendly books, has helped to raise attainment for both boys and girls. In literacy lessons, pupils enjoy writing, but their punctuation and spelling, as well as their knowledge of phonics, lacks accuracy because these skills are not always taught systematically enough.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are taught in 'The Orchard' make consistently good progress and achieve well in lessons. There is a highly effective focus on teaching basic skills, both social and academic, ensuring that needs are met well. Other disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in lessons, but there are occasions when they are too reliant on adult support to complete work successfully.

### **Quality of teaching**

The focus of the senior leadership team on developing teaching means that it is improving quickly, although the inspection found that there are still inconsistencies. Parents and carers are mainly positive about teaching and feel it is improving although they also identify that the quality varies across the school.

Teachers plan thoroughly for lessons and give pupils good opportunities to learn about cultural diversity and to develop key social and moral skills such as teamwork and respect for others. Pupils say that they enjoy lessons and the practical nature of many activities, especially in history and science. Curriculum planning soundly supports the development of basic skills, although there are too few opportunities for pupils to write at length so that they can practise and improve their skills more quickly.

Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well most of the time and successfully link subjects together so that learning is purposeful. For example, Year 6 pupils successfully applied their mathematical and scientific skills to make a parachute to carry an egg. Throughout the school, teachers assess pupils' learning accurately and, where teaching is good, they use this information carefully to plan what to teach next. This good practice is not seen in all lessons, and there are too many occasions when teachers do not expect enough of all pupils because work is not matched sufficiently to every pupil's needs. Marking and the use of targets has improved since the previous inspection. Consequently, pupils are becoming clearer about the next steps in their learning, although this is not yet consistently strong in all classes.

The teaching of pupils in 'The Orchard' is good. Assessments are very detailed and adults are very skilled at breaking new skills or knowledge down into small steps. Very good account is taken of the need to make learning practical. Pupils get ample opportunities to build on their learning both when working in 'The Orchard' or working alongside other pupils.

The teaching of other disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is

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satisfactory. Pupils are fully included in activities and are supported effectively by teaching assistants, but there are occasions when their work is too hard and they need adult support to complete it.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

The school provides a safe and orderly community for pupils to work in and this contributes to their good enjoyment in lessons. Most parents and carers recognise this and they are confident that their children feel safe. Typical comments from parents and carers include: 'My child is happy and enjoys school' and 'Our child's confidence and self-esteem have grown.'

Pupils' behaviour is typically good and this means that there is a good pace to learning in most lessons, although just occasionally a few pupils do not listen well to the teacher because expectations have not been made clear enough. Pupils cooperate well when talking to each other about their learning or when involved in activities such as making 'Lotus Flowers' in a religious education lesson. Older pupils keenly take responsibility and they show good independence when, for example, giving guided tours to new pupils on their induction day.

Pupils feel safe and say that bullying, in whatever form, is rare and is dealt with quickly by school staff. Pupils show a good awareness of the dangers of using the internet and are clear about what they should do to avoid cyber-bullying. Pupils with identified behaviour difficulties quickly improve their social skills. They have clear targets, and surreptitious support ensures that they usually reach them. Pupils show great sensitivity to the needs of each other. It is a delight to see the way that pupils from 'The Orchard' work alongside others so happily in the afternoon.

### **Leadership and management**

The school is improving quickly after a period of significant change in staffing. This slowed the pace of change but new leaders have acted decisively to improve teaching and pupils' learning. These improvements are secure and are being sustained over time. Parents and carers are pleased with recent developments, with their views summed up by comments such as 'The school is improving dramatically.'

New leaders have demonstrated that the school has the capacity to improve further through their successful actions to tackle the backlog of underachievement. In mathematics, a focus on giving pupils more opportunities to apply their skills in lessons has helped to raise attainment. Boys' attitudes towards reading have improved through activities such as 'The Book Squad', which have given pupils a say in what sorts of books the school should buy. Again, the effect on attainment has been highly positive and for the first time in several years, boys and girls are making broadly similar progress in reading, with pupils' attainment in the current Year 6 being the best for several years. Key issues from the last inspection have been tackled, strengths in pupils' behaviour and safety have been successfully built on and improvements in provision in 'The Orchard' have been managed well.

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Development planning identifies the right priorities and is based on thorough self-evaluation. Performance management and the focused use of additional training is helping to improve teaching, and the amount of good teaching is rising, although senior leaders know that there is still too much that is satisfactory. Middle managers are not sufficiently involved in improving teaching because the headteacher takes on too much monitoring of lessons rather than delegating more to others. The governing body ensures safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements but is not sufficiently involved in monitoring the work of the school so that its members can play a bigger part in driving improvement.

The school tackles discrimination well. Pupils from different backgrounds work together happily and are able to take part in all activities. The headteacher has introduced very thorough procedures for tracking pupils' progress, although the system is not yet refined enough to enable the progress of different groups to be checked easily so that the school can respond even more quickly to dips if they arise.

There is a broad and balanced curriculum and it promotes successfully pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school- and eco-councils help pupils to learn about citizenship. Activities such as the links with a school in America contribute well to their cultural awareness.



## 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



4 July 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of The Hermitage Junior School, Woking GU21 8UU**

Thank you for being so welcoming and helpful when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you about your work and hearing some of you read. We found that your school is providing a satisfactory education. This means that it does some things well, but there are also some areas for improvement.

#### **These are some of the things we liked most about the school.**

- You make good progress in the 'The Orchard', where you are taught well. It is great that pupils from 'The Orchard' and other classes work together so happily.
- You told us that you enjoy school, and we could see that you behave well and are keen to do your best.
- You are kept safe and take good care of each other. All adults in school are caring, and they give you suitable help if you have worries.
- The school provides lots of interesting activities for you to take part in.

The school's leaders are doing the right things to make it even better and are clear about what is not good enough. They know that there is not yet enough good teaching to ensure that you make good overall progress.

#### **This is what we have asked your school to do now.**

- Make sure that teachers always expect enough of you in lessons and that you are challenged well enough.
- Teach letter sounds, spelling and punctuation more thoroughly and give you more chances to improve your skills by writing at length.
- Strengthen the role of the governing body and teachers who are in charge of subjects as well as the use of teacher assessments to check that you are all doing well enough.

You can help your teachers by continuing to work hard and making sure that you always listen to your teacher. We hope the Year 6 performance went well.

Yours sincerely

Mike Capper  
Lead inspector

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