

The Howard Junior School, King's Lynn

Parkway, Gaywood, King's Lynn, PE30 4QJ

Inspection dates

5–6 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils, including those who have special educational needs, achieve well. By the time they leave standards in English and mathematics are broadly average and pupils exceed the progress expected of them.
- Pupils who attend 'The Hive' benefit from exceptional provision and make outstanding progress, often in a very short time.
- The work set for pupils is invariably well suited to their needs and to the stage they have reached. Lessons often capture pupils' enthusiasm and interest.
- Pupils feel safe, are rightly proud of their school and of their achievements and behave exceptionally well. They work hard during lessons and contribute with great enthusiasm to all aspects of school life.
- Since the last inspection the highly effective leadership of the headteacher, in partnership with the governing body, has brought about significant improvements in teaching and achievement as well as in many other aspects of school life.
- The school provides pupils with an outstanding range of additional activities, after school clubs and educational visits.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There are still a small number of lessons in which teaching requires improvement.
- At times, teachers do not give sufficient attention to developing pupil's mental and oral skills in mathematics.
- The proportion of pupils attaining at higher than expected levels, while improving year-on-year, still lags behind that found in most schools.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 16 lessons or parts of lessons. They were accompanied by the headteacher on nine of the observations.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, parents, pupils and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at the work in pupils' books and discussed it with them. They also listened to pupils in each year group reading.
- Inspectors took into account the school's information about pupils' attainment and progress, its self-evaluation and plans for future improvements. Inspectors also looked at a range of documents and policies concerning school management and keeping pupils safe.
- Inspectors considered the 19 responses to the online survey (Parent View) and the 13 responses to the staff questionnaire. They also considered the results of the school's own recent survey of parents' views.

Inspection team

Godfrey Bancroft, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Piers Rangers

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from other ethnic backgrounds and the proportion who speak English as an additional language are below average, but are rising steadily each year.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who special educational need supported at school action is almost twice the national average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or by a statement of special educational need is almost four times the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by additional government funding through the pupils premium, including those known to be eligible for a free school meal, is more than double the national average.
- The school does not currently have any pupils who are taught away from the school site at alternative provision.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for the pupils' attainment and progress.
- The governing body, on behalf of the local authority, manages a special resource base, 'The Hive', which makes short term provision for pupils from other primary schools who have a range of learning difficulties. These include dyslexia, epilepsy, global delay and speech and language difficulties. 'The Hive' is able to provide for up to ten pupils at any one time, usually for a period of two terms, after which they usually return to their 'home' school. Of the ten pupils currently attending, the age range covers pupils from Year 1 to Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching, in the small number of lessons which currently require improvement, becomes at least good by:
 - matching learning activities precisely to meet the needs of pupils across the full range of abilities
 - increasing the pace of lessons, so that pupils learn more
 - making sure that pupils are fully aware of how to make their work even better.
- Improve pupils' mental and oral knowledge and skills in mathematics by:
 - teaching these skills more frequently to each age-group
 - giving pupils more time to think about and discuss their answers
 - asking pupils to explain their thinking when they give their answers to mathematical questions.
- Raise the proportion of pupils who, by the time they leave at the end of Year 6, are attaining at higher than the expected levels by:
 - ensuring that potentially higher attaining pupils are identified at an early stage
 - making certain that progress does not slacken at any point and exceeds expected rates in all year groups.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- When pupils start in Year 3 their attainment is below and, in some years, well below the national average.
- Pupils who attend 'The Hive' make rapid progress, often in a remarkably short time. They settle in quickly and make exceptional gains in confidence which helps them to overcome the considerable challenges to learning that many of them face.
- In most year groups, pupils' progress is currently exceeding the expected rate. This enables them to catch up with pupils of a similar age in other schools. Consequently, by time they leave at the end of Year 6, standards in English and mathematics are broadly average. This pattern of good achievement is now well established.
- Currently, the only year in which progress does not exceed the expected rate is Year 5. Even in this year pupils' progress does not fall below the expected rate.
- Pupils acquire basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics well. Many pupils enjoy reading for pleasure and make excellent use of the school's attractive library. However, there is a tendency for standards in mathematics to lag a little behind those in reading and writing. The proportion of pupils who attain higher than expected levels in mathematics is lower than found in most other primary schools.
- Pupils make exceptional progress in acquiring and applying the basic skills of information and communication technology. For example, older pupils produce their own websites and are confident to use computer presentations in lessons and assemblies.
- Many pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs make excellent progress. Those pupils who are known to be entitled to the pupil premium do better than pupils in other groups. These pupils are at least two terms ahead of similar pupils in other schools in both English and mathematics and, in some cases a year ahead.
- Pupils who come from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language settle in quickly and thrive, often making significant gains in their progress.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is good and enables pupils to make good progress. During the inspection some outstanding teaching was observed, including teaching in 'The Hive'.
- The teacher and teaching assistants in 'The Hive' are highly skilled and very knowledgeable about the learning needs of each pupil. Each receives a programme of activities matched precisely to his or her learning needs. These often take the form of short bursts of activity and frequent changes of topic, enabling pupils to concentrate, revisit activities, build on their previous learning and, in many cases, make exceptional progress.
- Teachers in the main school invariably make lessons interesting and capture pupils' considerable enthusiasm for learning. They also, in the vast majority of lessons, ensure that activities are tailored closely to the stage that pupils have reached and to what they need to do to progress to

the next stage. In outstanding lessons the pace of learning and progress is rapid and pupils are inspired to do their very best. In these cases it is not unusual for pupils to thank their teachers for the lessons they have taught.

- There remain a small number of lessons in which teaching requires improvement and the pace of pupils' progress slows down. In these lessons work does not consistently meet the needs of all pupils; most usually the needs of the most able and teachers do not ensure that pupils are fully aware of how to improve their work.
- The basic skills of reading and writing are taught effectively. Teachers make excellent use of information and communication technology. They ensure that pupils have frequent opportunities to use computers and other electronic devices to enhance their learning; a strategy which appeals greatly to the majority of pupils and fits well with their preferred way of learning.
- In most lessons the basic skills of mathematics are also taught effectively. However, there are times when insufficient attention is given to promoting pupils' mental and oral skills or to creating chances for them to extend their understanding by discussing and explaining their thinking.
- Pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs and those who benefit from the pupil premium are supported exceptionally well. Both groups of pupils receive excellent support from highly skilled teaching assistants. They also greatly appreciate the ways in which their achievements and efforts are recognised and celebrated. This, in turn, inspires them to do their best.
- The assessment of pupils' attainment and progress is accurate and frequent. The majority of pupils know exactly what level they have reached and precisely what they need to do to maintain their progress. Even so, there are isolated instances in some lessons when teachers do not check closely enough to be sure that pupils understand fully the next steps in their learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils, including those who are taught in 'The Hive', are rightly proud of their school and of their achievements. They appreciate the consistent celebration of their efforts and successes which does much to develop their confidence and self-esteem. One pupil reflected the views of many when she said, 'This is just the best school. It is filled with wonderful teachers who help you out and make learning fun.'
- Pupils make an impressive contribution to all aspects of school life. They are mature, courteous and well-mannered. They are delighted to lead assemblies, participate in the school's highly successful productions and to take part in the wide range of clubs and additional activities. Pupils are proud to part of the school council, the eco council and willingly fulfil roles such as playground peacemakers.
- Pupils have absolute confidence in the adults in the school. They are full of praise for the help they receive to make progress in their learning. Many pupils can explain in detail how well they are getting on. Pupils are also confident that should they have any problems they can turn to any of the adults knowing they will be listened to and supported with sensitivity.
- Behaviour during lessons and around the school is outstanding. Pupils show great respect and support for each other. When one of their peers does well spontaneous celebrations are par for the course. The school is highly successful in reducing the number of exclusions and such events

are extremely rare.

- Pupils say they feel safe and are confident to come to school; a view that is affirmed by their parents. Pupils are also well informed about how to stay safe when they are not at school. Pupils recognise bullying in its various forms and understand the negative effect that all forms of bullying can have. They say that bullying is extremely rare and that isolated incidents are resolved amicably by adults or by pupil mediators. Pupils are particularly well informed about the potential threats posed by misuse of the internet.
- Attendance is broadly average. For many years, up to 2011, it was below average. School leaders have been highly effective in bringing about improvements, mainly by making the school an attractive and enjoyable place to be.

The leadership and management

are good

- The highly effective leadership of the headteacher, in partnership with the governing body, has overseen improvements in all aspects of the school's work. Since the last inspection attainment, pupils' progress and the quality of teaching have all improved. This track record of promoting improvement gives ample indication of the school's capacity to continue to improve in the future.
- The leadership and management of 'The Hive' are outstanding. 'The Hive' is held in high regard for the quality of its work in providing support and guidance for other schools in meeting the needs of pupils who have moderate and, in some case, multiple learning difficulties.
- Arrangements to promote and reward the work of teachers and those with additional responsibilities are used effectively to bring about school improvement and to sustain pupils' good progress. Staff at all levels benefit from good opportunities for their continued professional development. The work of the subject leader for English and of the special educational needs co-ordinator is particularly effective in bringing about school improvement.
- The school's self-evaluation is accurate and shows that school leaders have an ambitious, but realistic, view of how well the school is performing and of what needs to be improved. The targets set for pupils' attainment and progress are appropriately ambitious and challenging.
- Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress and are fully involved from the earliest stage in the event of any problems arising. The majority of parents are pleased with the quality of the school's work and with the progress their children are making.
- The school provides pupils with a range of subjects and other activities that meet their academic and personal needs well. By ensuring that pupils are confident and happy the school helps them to thrive. Pupils also benefit from and greatly appreciate the excellent range of additional activities, such as drama, music, sports clubs and educational visits. Pupils are particularly proud that their achievements are recognised by a range of rewards and celebrated by organisations, such as the 'Children's University.'
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Pupils greatly enjoy participating in assemblies. They contribute to various charities with great generosity. The beliefs and traditions of pupils who come from minority ethnic backgrounds are celebrated and valued.
- The local authority has recognised the sustained improvements that school leaders have brought about. They see the school as one that can stand on its own two feet. Even so, valuable support

is provided in helping the school to evaluate the quality of its performance and enabling the headteacher to share ideas with other headteachers.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body does a good job. Many governors are frequent visitors to the school. They are highly supportive and knowledgeable about all aspects of the school's work, including the quality of teaching and how well pupils are making progress. Governors fulfil their essential duties well. They oversee the school's successful commitment to making sure that pupils have equal opportunity of access to all the school's activities and that no pupil is discriminated against. Arrangements to safeguard pupils meet requirements. Governors are involved fully in checking and asking questions about the quality of the school's work. They also make sure that the headteacher and other staff are rewarded appropriately for the quality of their work. Governors are particularly skilful at making sure the school's budget is used wisely. For example; they are fully aware of the valuable impact on pupils' learning made by the purchase of attractive and up to date information and communication technology equipment. Governors keep a close watch on the use of special funding, such as the pupil premium. They have observed at first hand how the additional support it has provided for individual pupils and opportunities to work in small groups are helping them to thrive. They have also sanctioned the use of the pupil premium so that pupils can go on educational visits and to promote special talents, such as playing a musical instrument.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	120878
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	401977

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
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	
Number of boarders on roll	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Joan Barber
Headteacher	Gregory L Hill
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2009
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