



Horsted Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 118477
LEA Medway
Inspection number 280326
Inspection dates 21 June 2006 to 22 June 2006
Reporting inspector George Logan AI

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Barberry Avenue
School category	Community		Chatham
Age range of pupils	7 to 11		Kent ME5 9TF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01634 861794
Number on roll	237	Fax number	01634 681165
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs N J Beavan
Date of previous inspection	24 January 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Wendy Sykes

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Horsted Junior School serves a large residential estate on the outskirts of Chatham. Most pupils are White British, with a very small number of mixed-race, Asian and Black pupils. Five pupils are at an early stage of learning English. Most pupils enter the school from the adjacent infant school. The school is a designated unit for seven children with physical disabilities and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is higher than average.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory. The school has a more positive view of its performance, but has not fully taken into account recent variations in pupils' progress. That said, this remains a school where mature and well-motivated pupils work very hard, produce a great deal of work across the full range of subjects and attain above-average standards by Year 6. However, school managers do not make sufficient use of available data to establish where pupils do less well, so that action can be taken. As a result, teaching and learning, although satisfactory, are not as effective as they might be. Pupils' achievement across the school has been erratic in the past year, although satisfactory overall. The lack of sufficiently tight targets or the training of pupils to evaluate their work also constrain the pace of progress in, for example, mathematics. Weaknesses in assessment mean that teachers do not match work sharply enough to meet pupils' needs. The school recognises the need for a clearer overview of its performance and is taking action.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Many parents, however, recognise the exceptional support provided for children with identified needs, particularly those with physical disabilities, and for their families. This is a highly inclusive community where pupils are greatly valued as individuals. Pastoral care is outstanding. The emphasis upon pupils' responsibility towards the community and each other contributes greatly to their good personal development. The curriculum is good, with good extra-curricular opportunities.

Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory, as is the school's current capacity for improvement. It provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Analyse data more effectively to ensure that prompt action is taken to deal with inconsistencies in pupils' achievements.
- Set tighter individual and group targets for pupils in writing and mathematics, and develop pupils' skills in evaluating their progress in relation to these targets.
- Take effective action to improve pupils' achievement in mathematics, particularly in relation to the recently identified weaknesses in mental mathematics.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. National test results in 2005 show that standards were above average overall, although well-above-average performance in science masked broadly average standards in English and mathematics. Standards in science in the current Year 6 are similar to 2005. Standards in English and mathematics have improved slightly, but remain broadly average. Pupils in Year 6 are on course to achieve their challenging target in English, but not in mathematics. Recent input to raise standards in mathematics has had limited impact, largely because the school had not

accurately identified the key weakness – mental mathematics. Expectations are high in other subjects. Standards in both art and design and information and communication technology (ICT) are higher than normally found.

Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is generally above average. The overall progress made by pupils in 2005 since entering Year 3 was satisfactory, but significantly better in science than in mathematics. Overall progress in 2004 and 2005 was not as good as it had been in 2003. Current pupils are making satisfactory progress and two thirds of the Year 6 cohort has achieved entry to grammar schools from next term.

Pupils' inconsistent achievement, evident in the past year, arises from ineffective use of data on performance to identify weaknesses. More rigorous analysis has highlighted year groups where pupils' learning is least effective. Teachers are now better placed to tackle these inconsistencies.

Pupils with learning difficulties, particularly those with the greatest need, make better progress than the others because they receive a high level of effective support. Not all pupils with physical disabilities have learning difficulties. For those that do, progress is good overall. The few pupils with English as an additional language are supported satisfactorily and make steady progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy school and are enthusiastic in lessons, in the playground and in their support for extra-curricular activities. They have very positive attitudes, behave well and maintain good levels of attendance. They have a good understanding of how to stay safe and of the need to eat healthy snacks, and a significant number are involved in a range of physical activities.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The highly inclusive ethos permeates all aspects of the school's work. Pupils are very considerate towards each other. Spiritual awareness is developed well through the curriculum. The school effectively celebrates the different cultures and traditions of the wider community through the curriculum.

Pupils are aware of their responsibilities as good citizens within the school and wider community. Their views are sought through group assemblies, effective opportunities exist for pupils to contribute to the day-to-day management of the school, and their views are acted upon frequently. Pupils have many responsibilities, as team leaders, playground monitors, or assembly monitors, and take their duties seriously. All year groups regularly support local charities. Pupils acquire the secure basic skills, including a good understanding of ICT, that will support them satisfactorily in their later education and contribute to their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory. Although several good lessons were observed and standards of work are often above average, the assessment of the level of challenge pupils need to move their learning forward is insufficiently robust. The school does not take sufficient account of the extent of pupils' learning when it judges teaching to be good. Tighter target setting for individuals or groups is needed so that teachers are able to assess pupils' learning against these targets. The evaluation of lessons, particularly in mathematics, is not sufficiently focused on pupils' progress so that subsequent learning is not always moved on briskly enough. Given their very positive attitudes, pupils often persevere cheerfully, even if they are not all fully challenged by the tasks set.

In many respects, pupils with physical and learning needs receive the most effective support. Where tight programmes are in place, well matched to individual needs through accurate assessment, progress is often good. The skilled work of support staff makes a significant contribution to their progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. The school offers a broad range of experiences, with many subjects covered in considerable depth. A satisfactory focus on basic skills is complemented by significant strengths in other subjects. There are, for example, high quality opportunities in ICT, history and art and design. The creative arts are strongly promoted and there are many opportunities for sport and physical activities. The school is just beginning to look at the potential for engaging pupils' interest by restructuring the curriculum around themes. The curriculum is enriched by special events, an extensive programme of visits and visitors and a wide range of well-supported extra-curricular opportunities, including a Dutch language club.

The programme for personal, social and health education is good. The curriculum is effectively adapted to meet the needs of pupils with physical and learning disabilities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The overall quality of guidance and support is good, although pastoral care is outstanding. This is a highly inclusive school where every pupil is valued. The support for pupils with physical disabilities is outstanding, largely because of the high quality of the teaching assistants. Support for vulnerable children is also effective. Good relationships between pupils and staff underpin the good support for pupils with problems. In outstanding art therapy sessions, pupils rebuild confidence and develop their trust in each other.

Child protection and health and safety procedures are effective. Procedures for identifying pupils with learning difficulties work well and links with external agencies are good. Pupils with high levels of need and those with a statement make good progress as a result of effective support from teaching assistants. The progress of some pupils with learning difficulties is not as consistent as they lack tightly focused and monitored programmes of support, although one such initiative has already been effective in raising standards in reading.

The monitoring of pupils' progress has weaknesses. Pupils, although keen to improve, are not always clear about how well they are doing. They are not sufficiently involved in evaluating the quality of their work or in identifying what they need to do to improve it.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and a high level of commitment to pupils. In nurturing a distinctive ethos where care for the individual, particularly those with physical disabilities and learning needs, is central, she ensures that pupils feel valued and safe.

Although standards remain above average, there has been some delay in dealing with the decline in pupils' achievement over the past two years. In part, this reflects the ineffective analysis of performance data to highlight groups of pupils where further support is needed, but also a period when the senior management team has lacked cohesion. As a result, progress slowed. The school's view of itself has some inconsistencies, for example, in considering that teaching and learning and leadership and management are more effective than they are. However, while the management team is now more focused on dealing with the identified weaknesses, there is a need for greater rigour in monitoring the school's performance. The school's capacity for improvement is satisfactory.

Finances are efficiently managed, funding, for example, a high number of teaching assistants. These are effectively deployed. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are generally effective, well informed about the school and are involved in self-evaluation. They make a good contribution to strategic development. The views of parents and pupils are taken into account well in planning future developments. Governors are not, however, sufficiently rigorous in holding management to account for the school's performance.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. It was enjoyable to spend time with you and to meet some of you – especially the assembly leaders who talked to us so openly. It was really helpful to hear what you had to say. I am only sorry that the Year 6 pupils were out of school while we were there.

We found that your school does several things well, but can improve some others to help you to learn better. We feel that you are really motivated in lessons and are keen to learn. You work hard and reach high standards in many subjects. You look after each other well and the school is very good at including everyone in activities. The care that staff give you is outstanding. We feel that the activities available to you after school are good. You have the opportunity to discuss things that affect you in school and your decisions are listened to and acted upon.

We have asked the headteacher to work with the teachers to make sure that they use all the information they have to make sure that they set you the most challenging work they can. We have asked them to give you targets which are special to you and help you to judge how well you are doing and how you can reach your next goal. Some of you could be doing even better in mathematics.

We hope that you will all work together to make sure that the school builds on the progress it has made and improves further.