

Hillborough Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109578
Local Authority	LUTON
Inspection number	288431
Inspection dates	28–29 November 2006
Reporting inspector	Philip Mann HMI

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 on roll	
School	254
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Robin Cowan
Headteacher	Mr John Williams
Date of previous school inspection	14 March 2001
School address	Hillborough Road Luton Bedfordshire LU1 5EZ
Telephone number	01582 613331
Fax number	01582 613332

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Hillborough Junior School is average in size and located in an area with some significant evidence of social deprivation. The attainment of pupils on entry into school is above average overall and a below average number of pupils have learning difficulties. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is above the national average. The proportion of pupils learning English as an additional language is above that in most schools with 10 pupils at the early stages of language acquisition. The school has achieved national recognition in several aspects of its work.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is an effective school with several outstanding features. These are judgements that generally match the school's own self-evaluation. The strong passionate, leadership of the headteacher empowers staff and pupils to do their best. Teamwork is a very prominent feature, and hardworking staff provide a very positive climate for learning where all pupils, including those who are most vulnerable are well provided for and valued as individuals. A wealth of opportunities and experiences is provided that enables pupils to flourish as confident individuals within society. This is reflected in a number of external awards and reports. Taking all factors into consideration the school provides very good value for money, and its capacity for further improvement is good.

All pupils work hard to succeed and their personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils are confident and welcoming. Behaviour is excellent both in lessons and in the playground and pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. Attendance is good. Pupils really enjoy coming to school and state that this is because teachers make lessons fun. The inspection found this to be a major contributory factor in the overall good standards attained, and the good achievement of pupils.

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good with several outstanding examples seen around the school. Teachers place a strong emphasis on teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy well. They also provide good opportunities for pupils to excel in sport and the performing arts. Lessons are often exciting. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to illustrate key teaching points. The curriculum is good overall with a broad range of relevant learning experiences. However, the allocation of time and activities varies between some subjects and year groups resulting in pupils receiving different levels of experience. The school continues to provide a very extensive range of learning experiences and club activities before and after school.

Staff provide outstanding levels of care, guidance and support for pupils. Considerable attention is paid to monitoring their achievement, and strategies are quickly put in place to rectify any potential underachievement. Effective levels of support are provided for those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The growing number of pupils new to learning English are well supported and are making good, and sometimes rapid, progress.

Leadership and management are good. Planning for school improvement is comprehensive and governors play an important part in overseeing the work of the school. Procedures for self-evaluation and review are good and the use of data to monitor pupil achievement is a real strength. However, procedures for monitoring the quality and effectiveness of the curriculum lack rigour and do not always focus on the quality, impact of learning and overall level of experience for all pupils.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop robust monitoring procedures to evaluate the overall quality of the curriculum and levels of access for pupils.
- Review the allocation and use of teaching time in line with current government guidance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. The attainment of pupils entering the school is above average overall; it is average in English. Standards in mathematics and science have remained well above average for the last few years, with a significant proportion of pupils consistently attaining the higher Level 5 in both. The uncorroborated results for these subjects in 2006 confirm a continuing trend of improvement. However, in English, these results indicate that standards are average for this subject, having fallen from the high levels seen at the time of the previous inspection.

Initiatives successfully introduced by senior staff to improve standards in writing are now having a positive impact on the achievement of all pupils. For instance about a third of pupils in the current Year 6 are producing writing of quality in a wide range of styles. Inspection evidence indicates that approximately a third of these pupils are likely to attain the higher Level 5 in national tests next year. Targets set for pupils are challenging and the school is set to meet them. The pupils' very positive attitudes to lessons and other learning experiences is a significant factor in their overall level of achievement.

The achievement of pupils who speak English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good because support is effectively targeted within in a climate of care and support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Pupils are confident and their behaviour is excellent both in lessons and in the playground. They demonstrate very positive attitudes to learning and enjoy school immensely. Attendance is above average.

Pupils respond positively to the very good provision for their social, moral and cultural development. Spiritual development is good but sometimes opportunities are missed for pupils to reflect more deeply on their experience and achievement through daily acts of collective worship.

Pupils have a very good understanding of the need to stay healthy, for instance through balanced eating and participation in the wide range of physical education activities on offer. They feel safe in school and know that there is someone they can turn to if they are in difficulty. Pupils state that they appreciate that they can also use the 'Problem Box' if they prefer. They make a positive contribution to their own school community through the school council, and to the wider community through raising money for charity. They have a very good understanding of the diversity of cultures in society. Pupils also learn the basic skills necessary for future life well.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good overall, varying from satisfactory to outstanding. In the best lessons, teachers plan a rich and varied range of learning experiences that excite and motivate pupils. Some pupils make outstanding strides in their learning as a result. Skilful questioning is used by the most effective teachers to draw out ideas from pupils; as seen in a mathematics lesson where

the use of secure subject knowledge and good humour by the teacher effectively engaged pupils at all stages. All teachers establish a strong rapport with pupils and this generates a secure environment where pupils can investigate and try out new ideas with confidence. In most lessons teachers have high expectations and provide challenges that are readily accepted by the pupils. Teachers enable pupils to develop their different styles of learning by adopting a wide range of methods and using resources such as electronic whiteboards. Support staff play a significant role in helping and guiding pupils of all abilities. In lessons where teaching is satisfactory, the work is not matched well enough to the different abilities of pupils, the pace is too slow because the teacher spends too much time talking and, as a consequence, pupils lose interest.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good overall and covers a wide range of learning activities and experiences. Good attention is paid to developing basic skills and making the curriculum more creative and enjoyable through well-planned links between subjects. For example, pupils learn about healthy living through science and physical education. However, the allocation of teaching time varies between year groups and some subjects. As a result, pupils do not always get a good balance of experiences and equal levels of entitlement within some subjects and learning opportunities.

Pupils enjoy, and parents greatly value what staff do to provide an excellent range of well attended after school activities, for example, football, netball, art, design and technology and guitar. Other activities such as the excursions in France, skiing in Europe and a good number of educational visits and visitors enliven the pupils' learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are excellent. The school cares for and supports its pupils very well. It has thorough procedures in place for child protection and for checking on adults who work with pupils. The school provides very good support for vulnerable pupils, including those who have been excluded from other schools. Pupils are helped to settle quickly when they enter the school by being paired with an older pupil from Year 4, and pupils in Years 5 and 6 also have good opportunities to find out about their next school.

Academic guidance is outstanding. The progress of all pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language is tracked very closely using very efficient ICT based systems. Pupil achievement is effectively recognised through teachers' marking and the awarding of certificates during a weekly assembly. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 also have the opportunity to discuss their work in more detail with their teachers.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The quality of leadership and management is good. The headteacher provides strong, passionate leadership for the school. Senior staff are effectively empowered to lead and manage their areas of responsibility. Teamwork is strongly encouraged to push forward initiatives successfully; for example, the teaching of writing throughout the school has impacted positively on the achievement of all pupils. Self-evaluation is good. Good procedures are used to monitor the

quality of teaching in lessons. Very good systems are in place to track the progress of all pupils and review trends and patterns in their performance. However, senior managers monitoring the quality of planned learning activities, time allocations and level of curriculum access for pupils is less rigorous. As a result, the school is not yet in a good position to fully assess the overall quality of learning and its impact on standards in specific initiatives; for instance, the weekly experience sessions for pupils to develop their sporting and performance skills.

Planning for school improvement is thorough and the day to day management is very good. Governors provide effective levels of support for the school, and demonstrate a good understanding of its strengths and areas for further development.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

29 November 2006

Dear Pupils

Hillborough Junior School, Hillborough Road, Luton, Bedfordshire. LU1 5EZ

We particularly enjoyed inspecting your school and I would like to thank you all for making us feel so welcome during our visit.

We were very impressed with the way you all get fully involved in lessons and in all the other activities that the teachers and staff provide for you. Your behaviour is excellent and you are all growing into sensible people who want to learn and find out as much as you can.

Teachers and support staff work very hard to help you with your learning and several of the lessons that we observed were of very high quality. Teachers have worked especially hard to help with your writing and we were particularly impressed with the work of pupils in Year 6 this year.

We recognise that your headteacher and teachers are passionate about giving you many opportunities to take part in sport and/or performing in front of others. This is something very special to your school and it is clearly giving many of you the confidence to try new things and help you with your learning. However, it appears that not all of you get similar opportunities to take part in many of the interesting things on offer at your school. This is something that the headteacher and staff are going to look at more carefully.

I look forward to hearing more about your school's success.

Yours sincerely,

Philip Mann

Her Majesty's Inspector