

Haddenham Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110347
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	288641
Inspection dates	31 October –1 November 2007
Reporting inspector	John Carnaghan

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	327
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Margaret Aston
Headteacher	Ms Sue Roberts
Date of previous school inspection	4 November 2002
School address	Woodways Haddenham Aylesbury HP17 8DS
Telephone number	01844 291829
Fax number	01844 292534

Age group	7-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Haddenham is a larger than average junior school. It has below average numbers of pupils from minority ethnic groups, and very few pupils for whom English is an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and with statements of special educational need is well below average.

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 a good and improving school that has some outstanding features. Parents strongly support the school and few have criticisms. Most parents stress that the school provides a happy and purposeful environment for their children's development. One wrote of 'a thoroughly committed staff and head, providing a stimulating and enjoyable education.'

Pupils enter the school with above average standards. By the time they leave, their standards are well above average and they are making good progress. A number of factors contribute to their good achievement. Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Their behaviour is exceptional, relationships between pupils and with adults are warm and supportive and this has a positive impact on the way they learn. Pupils enjoy school life very much and show a great deal of interest and pride in their work.

Teaching and learning are good. Lessons tend to be lively and engaging. Pupils are perceptively questioned and their ideas are often valued by teachers and used to extend their learning. However, teachers' marking of pupils' work is inconsistent and does not always offer enough helpful advice on how pupils might improve their work. The curriculum is good, it meets all requirements and is much enriched by the opportunities provided through a wide range of visits and visitors. The many activities offered in out-of-school hours are well attended.

The care given to pupils' welfare is outstanding. Teachers show a high level of commitment and use both their close knowledge of pupils and the good systems in the school to provide very thorough pastoral support to all in their charge. However, academic guidance for pupils is less effective. The school has begun gathering a useful range of assessment information but this is not always sufficiently well used to identify where support is most required. Pupils are not all given clear indications of their standards.

The school leadership team is relatively new and has worked very hard to address weaknesses identified in the previous inspection. In this, they have been largely successful. Improvement planning is now thorough and involves a wide range of staff. This is one element in the greater delegation of leadership and management responsibilities that has occurred. The school's self-evaluation is now systematic and has brought about improvements in teaching, but it sometimes lacks rigour. For example, marking of books remains inconsistent and less helpful than it should be, despite the monitoring of books that has taken place. Governance is robust, well informed and supportive.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve marking of pupils' work and provide simple, helpful targets so all pupils are clear about their standards and what they should do to improve.
- Improve the use of assessment so that it helps to identify where support for pupils is most required.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils enter the school with standards that are above average. They leave Year 6 with well above average standards, especially in mathematics. In 2007 pupils' achievement improved and, helped by effective teaching, pupils' current progress is good. This means that pupils' achievement, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities, is good.

The school acted swiftly to address concerns about a slippage in English standards in national assessments in 2006, when a lower than expected proportion of pupils gained the higher grades. Better, more focused teaching and higher expectations led to rising standards in 2007 in English and for more able pupils and achievement improved. Current well above average standards and pupils' good progress confirm this improving picture. There are no significant variations between the standards and achievement of boys and girls or any other groups of pupils, indicating that the school promotes equality of opportunity well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils thrive in this safe and supportive atmosphere and their exceptional enjoyment and love of school is reflected in their outstanding attendance. Pupils are sensible, eager to learn and their behaviour is outstanding. They take great pride in their responsibilities, such as being members of the school council, organising school productions, participating in cookery classes with parents and organising food parcels for elderly citizens during harvest time.

Pupils' spiritual moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong and are highly respectful towards each other and their teachers. Pupils develop a good understanding of different cultures through the curriculum and by participating in activities such as Indian dancing and African drumming.

Pupils display an outstanding regard for the safety and well being of others and this is shown in their excellent behaviour and attitudes. Pupils' economic well-being is enhanced through the opportunities they have to work collaboratively in the classroom as well as through their work. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson pupils were involved in working out interesting VAT problems. Pupils have an outstanding understanding about healthy lifestyles and participate in a wide range of physical activities such as cross country running, cycling and netball.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils are very keen to learn and they react positively to their lessons. They are exceptionally well behaved, very receptive to their teachers and have very good learning routines. This enables lessons to be purposeful and fast moving, to the benefit of pupils' concentration. Teachers are invariably positive and encouraging in their comments and often question pupils perceptively in order to coax the best possible responses. Most lessons vary the difficulty of the tasks set to suit pupils' aptitudes, but there are occasions when the work set for the more able fails to stretch them sufficiently to ensure the best learning. While teachers' comments are generally encouraging, marking sometimes fails to indicate the level at which pupils are working or the next steps in learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

A whole school curriculum plan has addressed the weakness in the previous inspection. Substantial improvements have been made in the provision for information and communications technology and this is beginning to raise standards. The good personal, social and health education has a strong impact on pupils' knowledge and levels of maturity. However, the way

the school promotes the development of language, number and computer skills in other subjects is a focus for development.

Staff work hard to provide a rich and interesting range of experiences. Visitors and visits to places such as Hampton Court Palace contribute well to pupils' understanding and achievement. A good range of extra-curricular activities, including sports, construction and computer clubs, adds greatly to pupils' opportunities to learn and to their enjoyment. A high proportion of pupils take part. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is satisfactory.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral care and support are very strong features of the school and teachers know their pupils extremely well. Great care is taken to ensure that pupils attend well and that their well-being and self-esteem are given high priority. Pupils with specific needs receive good individual care and support from able support staff and, as a result, they make good progress, similar to their peers. An effective range of additional learning programmes is used to provide extra assistance to such pupils. Strong links with schools that send pupils to and accept pupils from Haddenham Juniors ensure that pupils' transition is well supported.

Pupils commented freely that they feel safe in the school environment and that bullying 'does not happen here; if it did it would soon be sorted out'. Health and safety matters including risk assessments for outdoor visits are given high priority. Child protection procedures are in place.

After a period when assessment was weak, the school has made good progress in assessing and recording attainment and has begun to track pupils' progress. The information is updated regularly and gives indications of where support is needed. While this area is developing, it does not always promote the early identification of under-achievement or help challenge the most able. Pupils do not always have a clear understanding about their current standards or their next steps for improvement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has made a very strong contribution to various aspects of the school's work, such as the monitoring of teaching, learning and lesson planning. These systems are beginning to impact positively on the pupils' progress. For example, provisional information for this year shows that standards in English have improved due to the school's actions. This demonstrates that the capacity to improve further is good.

The headteacher has recently started to devolve responsibilities to senior managers to encourage ownership and accountability. The impact of this is already clear in the thoroughness of planning for improvement. The role of subject managers is also still developing. They are beginning to monitor teaching and learning and pupils' work to gain an overview of standards in their areas, but this is not yet consistent.

The school development plan identifies appropriate priorities for improvement and is an effective tool for further improvement. Self-evaluation is good and demonstrates that the school is aware of areas that require development. Challenging targets are set, based on a secure understanding of pupils' standards and these are helping to raise standards.

Governors have a good knowledge of the school and play an active role in self evaluation and school development. They also provide good support and challenge to the school.

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Inspection judgements

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

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
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?	2

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	2
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

9 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Haddenham Junior School, Aylesbury, HP17 8DS

Many thanks for the warm welcome you gave us when the inspectors visited the school recently. We thought that you were charming, very polite pupils and a credit to the school.

Haddenham Juniors is a good and improving school and your personal development is outstanding. Its other strengths are:

- the standards of your work are well above average and, helped by good teaching, you make good progress
- the range of topics you study and the activities you do both in and out of the classroom are good
- teachers look after you very well
- the school is well led and managed and constantly trying to improve.

You told us how much you liked your school and you really enjoy everyday school life, Even so, there are some things that need attention. The most important are:

- you need better information about how good your work is and how it could be improved
- the checks which teachers keep on your progress could sometimes be better used to make sure you all receive the kind of help you need.

With all good wishes for the future,

John Carnaghan

Lead inspector