



Signhills Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 117783
Local Authority North East Lincolnshire
Inspection number 290926
Inspection date 9 November 2006
Reporting inspector Eric Jackson

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

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|-------------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Type of school | Junior | School address | Hardys Road |
| School category | Community | | Cleethorpes |
| Age range of pupils | 7-11 | | DN35 0DN |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 01472 694811 |
| Number on roll (school) | 353 | Fax number | 01472 699965 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair | Mrs Jayne Kaye |
| | | Headteacher | Mr Ken Thompson |
| Date of previous school inspection | 1 July 2002 | | |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Signhills Junior is a large school, sharing a site with its partner infant school. The school works closely with the infant school and other local schools in a Learning Partnership. It has a swimming pool that is hired by parents and the local community. Socio-economic conditions locally are broadly average, although the school draws its pupils from a wide area. Pupils' attainment at entry to Year 3 is above average. Most of the pupils are White British, but there are increasing numbers of pupils of minority ethnic or mixed heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Signhills Junior is a highly effective school, with many outstanding features, as stated in its own accurate self-evaluation. Pupils say that, 'The teachers make learning really fun and exciting!' This was obvious in the way that Year 6 pupils energetically tackled work interpreting co-ordinates in four quadrants to map geometric shapes. The high quality, dedicated teaching leads to excellent progress in learning, so that pupils' exceptional achievement is in the top one per cent overall in national tests in English, mathematics and science and the standards reached are very high.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. This is founded on the very strong working relationships fostered by the staff, leading to pupils' excellent behaviour and very positive attitudes to learning. Pupils learn to be safe, to keep themselves fit and healthy, and develop high level basic and social skills that equip them superbly for their future lives. Playtime exemplifies these strengths. Here, children play together extremely well: a large group aerobic dancing to the music of the 'Macarena', others learning step-over 'elastics', some talking with their friends in the School Council instigated quiet area.

Academic and personal support and guidance are excellent, as are care and safeguarding procedures. Each child's learning is known in depth. The staff plan learning activities carefully to ensure that each pupil knows what they need to do to achieve the set learning goals. A parent wrote, 'The school strives to bring out the full potential of every child.' That lower attaining pupils and those with learning difficulties and disabilities make the best progress reinforces the accuracy of this parent's comment. The curriculum is good, and the wide and interesting range of extra activities provided is outstanding. However, the school recognises that achievement in subjects other than English, mathematics and science, though good, is not as high as in the core subjects.

The strength and value of the exemplary leadership and management that leads to these high outcomes are in the relentless search to find better ways to help children learn. This search results in excellent partnerships with other educational institutions. The whole staff, pupils, governors and parents enthusiastically support the inspiring vision of the experienced headteacher. He sets high expectations in an understated but convincingly determined manner. This approach results in high quality systems and procedures that focus the school's work directly on outcomes for the pupils. The pupils respond to this focus with concentration and commitment, really enjoying the many and varied learning opportunities provided. It is no wonder, then, that the vast majority of the 282 questionnaire returns from parents were highly supportive, typified by one parent who wrote, 'My child is very settled and happy. The school is excellent'. It is, and it provides outstanding value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop pupils' learning skills and achievement in all areas of the curriculum to match their achievement in English, mathematics and science.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils' achievement is outstanding. Both boys and girls reach levels in national tests in English, mathematics and science that are very high compared to national averages. Boys generally reach higher levels than girls, different to the national pattern, but girls make better progress from Years 3 to 6 than boys. Currently, the few pupils from minority ethnic groups make similar progress to their peers. Because support for lower attaining pupils and those with learning difficulties or disabilities is so good, these pupils achieve exceptionally well compared to similar pupils nationally. Able, gifted or talented pupils are also recognised and supported to achieve their best. There is a real excitement when pupils describe their work. This pleasure in learning contributes strongly to the high standards reached. The staff assess children's achievement in other subjects, but accept that whilst it is good and sometimes very good, achievement in the rest of the curriculum is not as high as in the core subjects. Nonetheless, there is evidence of high level work in a number of other subjects, including art and design and music.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is excellent, in line with their high academic achievement that equips them well for their future lives. Their good attendance shows how much they like the school, confirmed in discussions with pupils from Years 3 to 6. Parents say that really strong working relationships are the key to their children's confidence and enjoyment. The staff have embraced the national focus on ensuring that safety, healthy living, enjoyment and personal achievement are at the heart of the curriculum. The school is working cooperatively with a group of local schools to achieve Healthy School status. The pupils explain very well how this affects their lifestyles, particularly in eating healthily and taking exercise. The extensive range of physical activities, including use of the school's own swimming pool, leads to children being fit. School teams often win local competitions. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Very good improvements have been made in developing pupils' wider cultural awareness since the last inspection, including the development of e-mail links with children in a school in Jordan. They also learn well how to reflect on art and music, and to consider and compare the beliefs of the different faith groups in Britain.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are outstanding, particularly in the core subjects. The pupils' achievement in English, mathematics and science is founded in very thorough

assessment and target setting for groups and individuals by the staff. Pupils understand clearly what they need to do to improve further, and also know the levels they have already achieved in the core subjects. Coupled with the teachers' high expectations, this supports their learning very well. Lessons are very well-organised, and move at a good pace. Pupils say that staff are patient in explaining new ideas or any misunderstood aspects. Older pupils learn good skills in information and communication technology (ICT) because the teaching is pitched at challenging but achievable levels. There is good teaching in other subjects such as French, music, art and design and physical education. This leads to good and sometimes excellent achievement in these areas. Occasionally, pupils use printed worksheets that limit their ability to record their learning in their own way.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The staff provide a good curriculum with excellent enrichment activities. The strongest subjects are in the core of English, mathematics and science, which are thoroughly and knowledgeably covered. There are also displays and evidence in pupils' work of good coverage of physical education, art and design, music, history and geography. ICT is covered well as a subject, but the school's main computer resources are not readily accessible to support general work in classes. Many parents and the pupils commented on the strength and take-up of the many extra-curricular activities. The first night of the Film Club attracted over 150 pupils!

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. All pupils are looked after very well, and the school's policies and procedures for ensuring pupils' safety meet requirements. The school has a deserved high reputation for guiding pupils needing extra support to reach personally high levels in their learning. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are fully included in all the school's work, and receive high level support to promote their learning both personally and academically. Reward systems are used skilfully to encourage effort. Staff monitor pupils' personal and academic progress very well so that the next steps in learning are clear. Whatever a pupil's prior achievement, the staff enthuse each of them to work towards challenging personal targets. For example, a full drum kit has been set up in a corridor in order that a talented young drummer can practise to improve her skills.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are excellent. The school has maintained and in some cases built upon the many strengths recognised in its last inspection report. In particular, pupils' achievement from Year 3 to Year 6 has been raised to extremely high levels. It would be easy to take the smooth running of the school, its excellent

working atmosphere and its consistently high results for granted. However, this consistency has not led to complacency. Parents and pupils are kept very well-informed, and consulted regularly for their opinions. The settled staff work diligently to fulfil the headteacher's constantly high expectations. Governors also provide very good support, and have been instrumental in helping to improve the management of the school by setting demanding performance targets. The school's self-evaluation is thoroughly founded in evidence from extensive monitoring of all aspects of the school's performance by the staff and governors. The written summary is occasionally too cautious about the school's strengths. Despite the current high level of performance, the school is always looking to improve, and is very well-placed to do so. For example, the headteacher is currently working with other local headteachers to develop an innovative package to link evidence, self-evaluation and improvement planning in an easily accessible computer program.

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Inspection judgements

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| 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

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| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 1 |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being? | 1 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 1 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 1 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes |

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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| 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 | 1 |

The quality of provision

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|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 1 |
| 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.

Leadership and management

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 1 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 1 |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets | 1 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 1 |
| 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

Signhills Junior School

Hardys Road

Cleethorpes

DN35 0DN

12 November 2006

Dear Children

You will remember that when I visited Cleethorpes my task was to inspect how well your school helps you to learn and to grow. I would like to thank you warmly for the way you welcomed me into your school. It is the first time I have been invited to do the 'Macarena' at playtime.

Both you and almost all your parents told me that Signhills Junior is an excellent school that looks after you well and provides you with interesting and enjoyable learning experiences. I agree. I think that yours is an outstanding school. It helps you to learn really well, and by Year 6 most of you achieve very high standards for your capabilities. Those of you who sometimes need extra help make excellent progress because the staff make sure that you have the right work to help you improve. You told me that the staff make lessons exciting and fun, especially mathematics! I could see how much you enjoyed it by the way you tackled your work.

You add to what the staff and your parents do with your excellent behaviour and by concentrating very well on the tasks the staff give you. I feel that your personal development is outstanding. You are lucky to have a school that cares for each of you so well.

Your headteacher and staff run the school to meet your learning needs, and they do this exceedingly well. I have asked them to help you even more by asking you to achieve in all subjects as you do in English, mathematics and science.

- You can do it!

Thank you again for your welcome; and good wishes for your futures wherever they may take you.

Eric Jackson

Lead Inspector