



Northolmes Junior School, Horsham

Inspection Report - Amended

Unique Reference Number 125836
Local Authority West Sussex
Inspection number 293374
Inspection date 18 September 2006
Reporting inspector Helen Hutchings

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Leith View Road
School category	Community		Horsham
Age range of pupils	7-11		RH12 4ET
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01403 261822
Number on roll (school)	188	Fax number	01403 242166
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	R J L Reed
		Headteacher	Sandra Ashby
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2002		

Age group 7-11	Inspection date 18 September 2006	Inspection number 293374
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Amended Report Addendum

Report updated to resolve formatting inconsistency

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Northolmes Junior School serves a residential area and is a little smaller than most primary and junior schools. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, including those who hold statements, is higher than the national average. Most children are from White British backgrounds. The headteacher has been in post for less than a year.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Northolmes Junior School is a good school, with some outstanding features - even better than the school indicated in its self-evaluation. Parents' confidence in the school is reflected in very positive responses and the high return of questionnaires before the inspection. One comment summarised the views expressed by many others, 'Northolmes is a fabulous school with fabulous teachers. ... Both my children are very happy here and are learning well.' Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding and the result of a carefully thought-out and consistent approach. Pupils bring this personal confidence into the classroom so that all, particularly those with learning difficulties and disabilities, flourish and achieve well. The work undertaken in 'Circle Time', part of the personal, social and health education programme, is particularly effective in developing pupils' understanding of the needs of others and in encouraging each pupil to be responsible and make a contribution to the school community. All pupils spoken with displayed a real sense of care for others in the school and beyond. This is evident in pupils' appreciation of how well they work and play together and of the new games equipment. Pupils eat healthily and know the importance of taking exercise. They also show their exceptional enjoyment of all that the school offers in their high attendance rates and involvement in the wide range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils have very positive attitudes to their work and levels of concentration are high. One pupil summarised the views of many, 'Sometimes the work is easy, sometimes hard but there is always someone to help.' Teachers see themselves sharing in learning as well as guiding it for pupils and their enthusiasm is infectious, so that pupils are genuinely engaged and excited by their work. The result of pupils' hard work is seen in their impressive achievement. Standards in the tests at the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science have been consistently above national averages for the last six years and have been exceptionally high in mathematics in more recent years. Pupils make particularly good progress in Years 5 and 6, where teaching is strongest. Leadership and management are very strong across the school. Staff work very well in teams, using the strengths of individuals to the full. Since the headteacher took up her post last year, she has led staff in a revision of the curriculum. This is just one example of how the school is continually analysing and improving its practice, and the school knows that more needs to be done to refine the curriculum further. Older pupils described how better links made between subjects this year are making learning more interesting for them. Pupils are highly analytical of their own learning and this will be particularly useful to them in the next stages of their education, as well as ensuring that they reach the highest possible standards in their current work. They find the systems for evaluating their own work really helpful and particularly appreciate how teachers make written comments or talk to them about how to make it better. Procedures for assessing the progress of younger pupils are less well developed. The newly formed leadership group has moved quickly to gain a real understanding of the school's current performance and has a clear view of the direction for the future, so the school is well-placed to continue to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the very good practice in assessment and target setting for older pupils is extended across the whole age range.
- Implement fully plans to improve links between subjects across the curriculum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The attainment of pupils when they join the school in Year 3 varies from year to year, but is generally just above the national average. Because transition arrangements with the feeder infant school are strong, pupils settle quickly into the school's routines. This helps them to make good progress, for example in the quality of their handwriting, during their first years in the school. Thereafter, the pace of work speeds up and pupils make more rapid progress in Years 5 and 6. The standards reached in English, mathematics and science are all consistently higher than the national averages and are exceptionally high in mathematics. Over the years, the school has gradually widened the gap between its performance and national performance levels. In 2006, the English results improved significantly over the previous year, bringing progress back into line with that made in mathematics and science. This is a result of changes made in the teaching of writing and represents very good achievement for these pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities do particularly well and almost all reach the nationally expected standards

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils take great pride in their school and their achievements. Their behaviour is outstanding and they gently guide and support one another if they feel that this is needed, for example, when friends fall out. They say that the school is a very happy and safe place. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The last inspection highlighted the need to extend pupils' experiences of a multi-cultural society and this has been addressed. Pupils now have visits from a wide range of different cultural and ethnic groups, although the school recognises that it can develop its programme to prepare pupils further for life in an increasingly diverse society. They are already tolerant of differences. Pupils are listened to and are enthusiastic about how they influence decisions. For example, through their involvement in the selection process for new staff, reviewing which teaching strategies help them to learn best, use of the playground and refurbishment of a toilet block.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching sweeps pupils along so that they are successful learners. Pupils thoroughly enjoy lessons and as one said, 'All the teachers are enthusiastic and fun; they make you work hard but it is to get good grades and they teach us really good things.' Teachers are particularly adept in planning for the needs of the different age groups in each class. Work is organised carefully to ensure that all are given the support they need and teaching assistants are an integral and effective part of this support. Pupils respond very well to teachers' very high expectations of what they can achieve. A particularly strong aspect of teaching in Years 5 and 6 is the way in which teachers know individuals and analyse the needs of each group so that no time is lost. Teachers know the achievements of different year groups and have specific plans to build from this information. The pace of lessons is a little slower in some of the younger age classrooms where procedures for assessing pupils' work are less well developed.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and has a positive impact on the progress pupils make. Last year the school recognised that pupils were not achieving quite as well in other subjects as they were in English, mathematics and science and has revised the curriculum to make better links between subjects, for example, by teaching some aspects of English using the content of other subjects as the focus and vice versa. Staff realise that this development is at a relatively early stage and plan to evaluate its success against the impact on pupils' progress and continuing compliance with statutory requirements. The way in which the curriculum is taught requires pupils to research and present information for themselves and this has a positive impact on their personal development. Pupils and parents are enthusiastic about the wide range of extra-curricular activities, including a residential visit for older pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, support and guidance for pupils are outstanding. It is central to the school's work and that pupils need to feel safe and valued before they can achieve. This is almost taken for granted by pupils, although some who had joined the school later than others remarked how much better the atmosphere is at Northolmes than in their previous schools. Pupils are given exceptionally strong guidance about their work. This means that most pupils, particularly the older ones, are able to set precise targets for themselves and understand exactly what they have to do to improve their work to reach the next level.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has formed a strong leadership group, with a clear view about the school's strengths and the next steps in development, which is shared by the whole staff. Within a short time, the headteacher has established great confidence in her leadership. She has the respect of pupils, staff, parents and governors. She also recognises that some systems, such as recording the school's evaluation of its performance and reviewing policy, need to be improved further. Already, the school accurately identifies what works well and builds successfully from this foundation, identifying weaker aspects and taking prompt action when necessary. Planning for the future emphasises the maintenance of successful aspects of the school whilst developing other areas designed to have a positive impact on improving standards further. Governors use their individual skills and experience to the good of the school and have managed the budget well to plan for the future and ensure that quality of the school's work can be maintained.

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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
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	1

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	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	1
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	2
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.

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	1
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

Thank you for welcoming me to your school recently. I really enjoyed my time with you even though I would have liked more time to speak with even more children. The group who spoke to me really helped me to understand just how highly you think of your school and I told them that I would write to tell you all what I think. I agree that Northolmes is a good school and some aspects are really super. The group told me that you really enjoy being there and your parents also say that you are happy at school. Miss Ashby was really pleased when I told her that your behaviour is outstanding and how well you care for each other. Children said that it is important to you that everyone feels happy and included at playtimes. I saw how hard you work in lessons and this means that you achieve well in your work. It is good that you find your work so interesting and appreciate that you are taught well. I hope that the whole school year will be as successful as the start and that you all continue to do well. Miss Ashby and the staff have planned some things for you, such as finding even more exciting topics for you to study and helping younger pupils to understand just how to improve their work further, and this should help you to do even better in the future.

Northolmes Junior School
Leith View Road
Horsham
West Sussex RH12 4ET

19 September 2006

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Best wishes for the future

Mrs H Hutchings
(Lead Inspector)