

Hounslow Heath Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102489
Local Authority	Hounslow
Inspection number	308025
Inspection dates	10–11 February 2009
Reporting inspector	George Rayner

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 (total)	414
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cllr Jagdish Sharma
Headteacher	Mrs Ritu Aulakh
Date of previous school inspection	10 November 2003
School address	Selwyn Close Cambridge Road Hounslow TW4 7BD
Telephone number	020 8570 1332
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Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This school, situated close to Heathrow Airport, is larger than most primary schools. The vast majority of pupils come from minority ethnic groups. They represent a diverse range of cultures, with the largest national groups being Indian and Pakistani. About three quarters of pupils have a total of 32 first languages other than English and more pupils are still at an early stage of learning to speak English than is usually found. An above-average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Their most common needs are in learning to use language and developing basic skills, which are sometimes hampered by behavioural difficulties. The school has a special unit that caters for up to 10 pupils with physical disabilities, with eight currently on roll. A slightly higher than normal proportion of pupils enrol and leave the school other than at the normal times.

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 school. It has some outstanding features. Excellent pastoral care makes a strong contribution to pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being. Pupils feel extremely safe and enjoy school immensely. They show this by their very positive attitudes and behaviour, above-average attendance and high enthusiasm for joining in with all that the school offers. One pupil demonstrated this with her comment in her mathematics workbook, 'I really enjoyed this lesson because it was such fun.' Pupils show highly respectful attitudes to the diverse cultural backgrounds of their classmates and contribute very well to the caring and harmonious atmosphere that prevails across the school.

Good teaching, learning and curriculum help pupils to achieve well from their starting points. While overall standards are broadly average in Year 6, many pupils are beginning to reach above-average English standards. While satisfactory, progress is slowest in science so that pupils' standards remain below average in Year 6. Leaders are very aware of this and are introducing improvements to the curriculum and teaching, focused on raising pupils' ability to be enquiring scientists. These are beginning to show an impact. The pupils with difficulty in developing skills at the normal rate, or in concentrating, have their needs carefully identified and effectively provided for, so that they make similar progress to their classmates. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress as they are given effective extra teaching in small groups. While some teaching is outstanding, the quality is not fully consistent. Some lessons, while satisfactory, are less effective than most in meeting all pupils' needs. This results, for example, in challenge for the most able pupils occasionally being reduced, so that their progress temporarily slows.

The years immediately following the previous inspection showed a decline in quality and standards. This trend has been reversed and this is now an improving school, with standards currently higher than in any year since the last inspection. In 2007 English standards were beginning to be too low. Since then well-focused strategies to improve curriculum and teaching have brought marked improvement. The school's leaders are ambitious to ensure that improvement continues in the coming years. They have focused well on improving systems for using assessment to meet pupils' needs and guide their improvement and on monitoring and evaluating the impact of improvements to ensure that this happens. The recent track record shows a good capacity to sustain improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that improvements being made to the science curriculum and teaching of this subject lead to higher standards.
- Make teaching fully consistent in providing for all pupils' needs.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

When they enter the school, pupils' standards are below average overall and particularly in using language to communicate. They make good progress, so that their overall standards reach average levels by the time they leave the school. Progress is very good in English and many pupils are beginning to reach above-average standards in this subject. Pupils use their imaginations well to produce interesting writing in a range of styles. They make good progress in mathematics to reach average standards. They become competent in the various skills that

they need, but do not always use these well to solve problems. Although their standards remain below average in science, pupils' make satisfactory progress in this subject. The school's assessments show that pupils are weakest at planning experiments and then reporting what they have found out. The school correctly identified that, in 2007, girls achieved less well than boys and some pupils with difficulty in developing basic skills achieved less well than their classmates. Improvements to provision, which have ensured a better match of activities to individuals' needs and interests, have resulted in both groups catching up well, so that there are now no great variations in the progress made by different groups.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The emphasis on mutual respect is evident from the very friendly way learners work together in class and form sociable and gregarious clusters on the playground. Incidents of racial intolerance or bullying are almost non-existent with children from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds mixing extremely well together. A comment from one child about the 'friendship bench' in the playground, where children in need of someone to play with can sit, shows this. 'There's never anyone on it!', he said. Pupils live active lives and talk knowledgeably about a good diet. The behaviour of the great majority around the school is exemplary. Learners greet visitors politely and move around the school in a thoughtful and sensible way. In nearly every class pupils settle quickly, work quietly and purposefully, and stay on task well. The 'Junior Leaders' programme, through which elected members from each class represent the views of their classmates, plays a hugely important part in the life of the school. Pupils often come up with their own ideas for making their school even better, such as an adventure trail so that they can combine research in environmental science with strenuous physical activity. Such activities, together with their good progress in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), prepare pupils well for their futures.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

In most lessons teachers' own enthusiasm motivates pupils' enjoyment and involvement well. Pupils willingly contribute to discussions and show their interest by asking their own questions to improve their learning. Teachers usually use these opportunities well, for example by developing pupils' understanding through discussion. The best lessons are characterised by highly imaginative activities which inspire pupils to be exceptionally well engaged in their learning. This was seen in a Year 6 English lesson, when pupils thoroughly enjoyed acting out 'freeze-frame' scenes to help them picture scenes that they were to write about in 'time-shift' stories. Teachers and teaching assistants work effectively together to ensure that any pupils finding the work especially difficult quickly receive the help that they need to keep up with the pace of learning. Teachers use marking very well to encourage pupils and show them how to improve. In a few lessons teaching is less effective than usual. This happens when, for example, time is used less well than normally. The effect is that sometimes too little time is given for pupils to complete their writing, or at the end of the lesson to consider how well they have learned.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Leaders regularly evaluate the impact of the curriculum on pupils' achievement and personal development and make improvements where necessary. This has recently had considerable impact where a 'Big Write' initiative has improved provision of motivating writing opportunities, helping pupils to raise their English standards. Leaders are aware of the need to similarly improve the science curriculum and are doing so by adding good opportunities for scientific investigation. Since the last inspection, the school has greatly improved provision for ICT. Pupils now have excellent access to computers in every classroom and opportunities to use these to enhance their work are well planned in all subjects. Opportunities to practise writing skills are very well planned in geography and history. While other subjects offer some good opportunities, these are not so well planned across the school. The curriculum is enriched well by activities outside the classroom. Pupils recently said that they would like more extra-curricular activities other than sport. In response, staff have introduced new clubs in activities such as knitting, nature, drama and art, so that there is now a good variety of well-attended clubs. The curriculum contributes very well to pupils' personal development. One boy's comment, 'When I know it's a science lesson, I go 'Yeah!'' demonstrated this. Excellent links with outside agencies provide regular visits, for example from recycling experts, which help pupils to develop responsible attitudes.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is greatly enhanced by the outstanding pastoral care they receive. Child protection procedures are extremely rigorous and complemented by exemplary systems for pupils' welfare. Excellent liaison with partner agencies, for areas such as speech, occupational therapy and physiotherapy, provide high-quality support for pupils who need additional help. By setting clear expectations and praising their efforts, staff are successfully helping the pupils who arrive with behavioural difficulties to strongly improve. While having excellent specialist care, the pupils based in the centre for physical disabilities are exceptionally well included in the main curriculum and other activities, such as organised lunchtime games. New systems to track pupils' academic progress and offer guidance and support are good. Effective use of these to guide and support pupils has contributed to the improved English standards. Use is not so effective in science, but school leaders are making improvements to tackle this. Assessment processes are thorough and pupils agree individual learning targets with their teachers.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has a very clear vision for the future direction of the school. Strong unity of purpose and teamwork are shared by staff working at all levels. During the last two years there has been a considerable broadening of responsibility and accountability. Staff working at middle levels, for example those leading subjects, have relished the opportunities thus provided for them to extend their roles beyond administration to true leadership of learning. They are well involved in all aspects of monitoring and evaluation. Self-evaluation is regular, rigorous and accurate. It has given leaders a clear awareness of the areas still requiring improvement. In securing recent improvements, those in the school have made good use of effective guidance

and training from local authority advisers. Governors support the school well, while being willing to challenge it when necessary. The senior team is currently incomplete, following the promotion of the deputy headteacher to a headship elsewhere. Team members have willingly shouldered the additional burdens resulting from this and have succeeded well in maintaining their effectiveness while doing so. The leaders know the importance of restoring the team to its full complement to ensure that leadership quality can be maintained in the long term.

The leaders have a strong commitment to community cohesion. They have completed a comprehensive evaluation of the school's effectiveness in promoting this. Leaders are successful in ensuring the school is a harmonious and very inclusive community, which greatly values its diversity. Pupils have good opportunities to become valued and confident members of the wider community through, for example, frequent involvement in local religious and cultural celebrations and fund-raising activities for good causes further afield.

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Annex A

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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
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 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

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

25 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hounslow Heath Junior School, Hounslow, TW4 7BD

Thank you for welcoming the inspectors to your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you. We are grateful for the help you gave, by talking to us and showing us your work. We were able to see that yours is a good school.

Some things are outstanding. One is the way that the adults care for you and make sure that you are safe. They told us that they are proud of you, because of the excellent way that you grow into mature, responsible young people. We could see that this is true. Lots of you welcomed us and enjoyed talking to us. You told us that you really enjoy school and show this by your good attendance and behaviour and by joining in with things so well. This really helps the adults as they try to do the very best for you.

You are well taught and this helps you to make good progress. This is especially so in English. Even though some of you find this subject difficult at first, your standards are at least as good as those in other schools by the time you are in Year 6. The adults know that they do not teach you science so well, so that your standards are not as high in this. They are already making improvements and some of you told us that this is making science really exciting.

To make your school even better, the headteacher and the staff have already made some important improvements and they have a good idea of what to do next. We have asked them to do two important things.

- Make sure that their improvements to science teaching help you to become as good in this as you are already in English.
- Make all lessons as good as the best ones, because at present some are not quite as good for giving all of you just the right sort of work. This means that a few of you sometimes find work too easy.

Well done to you all and very best wishes for your future lives.

Yours faithfully

George Rayner

Lead Inspector