

Higher Bebington Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105009
Local Authority	Wirral
Inspection number	308738
Inspection dates	1–2 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Angela Milner HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	327
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr M Harbison JP
Headteacher	Mr R Austin
Date of previous school inspection	11 October 2004
School address	Mill Road Higher Bebington Wirral Merseyside CH63 8QE
Telephone number	151 6081011
Fax number	151 6081011

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

Higher Bebington Juniors is a larger than average sized junior school. Social and economic indicators vary within the area served by the school. A third of pupils travel from outside of the school's catchment area. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is lower than the national average. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are below the national average, although the proportion has increased since the last inspection. Pupils are predominantly of White British heritage.

The school has the Sport England Activemark, Artsmark Gold status and Health Promoting School status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Higher Bebington Junior School provides its pupils with an outstanding education and very high quality care, guidance and support. Standards are very high and pupils achieve their potential because of the school's exemplary support for their personal development and high quality teaching which promotes very good learning. Effective support systems nurture pupils to achieve of their best in everything they do. The headteacher and senior staff promote an extremely positive ethos, a real sense of community and positive relationships based on mutual respect. This has created a learning environment where every child matters and everyone takes pride in the school. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire were positive in their views of all aspects of the school. One parent commented, 'We could not wish for a better school.'

The personal development and well-being of pupils at this school are outstanding. Their attendance, behaviour and attitudes to learning are exemplary. Pupils enjoy school and participate fully in the extensive range of opportunities it provides. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength and contributes to the distinct sense of community within the school. Pupils become mature, self-confident young people and leave the school well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Teachers' excellent subject knowledge and their very effective use of questioning, combined with extremely high expectations, ensure pupils are eager to learn. Pupils respond very positively to the exciting range of challenging learning activities. Assessment is rigorous and regularly undertaken. Pupils know their current levels and targets, but feedback from teachers on pupils' written work does not always inform them exactly how well they have done and how to improve their work. A further strength of the school is the rich and stimulating curriculum. This also contributes to the pupils' outstanding achievement and personal development. It is flexible, regularly reviewed and adapted to provide the best learning opportunities for all groups of pupils. Parents and pupils appreciate the excellent range and quality of extra-curricular activities provided.

Standards achieved by pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 are significantly above the national average and are higher than at the time of the last inspection. All pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make outstanding progress from their initial starting points and achieve exceptionally well. There is, however, no sense of complacency. In the drive to continue to improve standards further, the school sets challenging targets linked to high expectations. School records show that all groups of pupils are on track to reach current targets. Exemplary leadership at all levels continuously moves the school forwards. Under the inspirational leadership of the headteacher, this has become a continuously self-improving school. Rigorous and accurate self-evaluation, built upon wide consultation, identifies priorities and turns them in to well considered actions that lead to further improvements. The governing body provides excellent support and ensures that the school is held to account for its performance. All of these factors and the improvements made to children's cultural development since the last inspection mean that the capacity to improve is outstanding.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the marking of work so that pupils are clear how well they have done, and what they have to do to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Standards have risen over the last five years and are exceptionally and consistently high at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils enter the school with levels of attainment that are well above average. All pupils make outstanding progress from their initial starting points and achieve exceptionally well. This can be attributed to the high quality of teaching and learning, the very well planned curriculum and to the outstanding care, guidance and support in the school. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the able, gifted and talented are extremely well supported. Consequently, results in national tests taken in mathematics and science in Year 6 are very impressive with significant numbers of pupils working well above the national average. Achievement and standards in writing have been less strong. The school is aware of this and has taken effective steps to ensure pupils become confident writers and to improve the proportion of children gaining the highest levels in the national tests in English.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils show great enjoyment in all they do, form excellent relationships and behave in an exemplary manner. Pupils say they love school and it is a happy, friendly place where staff help them and make lessons interesting and fun. Levels of attendance are well above the national average. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Their strong knowledge and appreciation of other cultures is exceptionally well promoted through the arts-work undertaken in school. Pupils have a good sense of how to live healthily and act safely. Pupils' preparation for their future lives is very well developed through their levels of attainment in basic skills and the young enterprise projects they undertake in conjunction with a local secondary school. Pupils carry out leadership roles in the school as, for example, members of the school council. They are very proud that they have been chosen to represent their peers and play an extremely active part in life of the school. For example, they organise games equipment on the playground at break-times and run the healthy tuck-shop. Pupils enjoy helping others by acting as monitors and buddies. They are actively involved in a range of local and international charitable activities. These complement the curriculum and contribute significantly to pupils' learning and personal development.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Teachers know their pupils well and carefully plan work to meet individual, group and whole class needs. Stimulating tasks and the use of high quality resources, including interactive whiteboards, engage pupils' interest. Teachers vary activities successfully and ensure that lessons move at a good pace and challenge pupils' thinking. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and high expectations for their pupils. Sharp, probing questioning enables teachers to check pupils' understanding during lessons and focus their teaching and the pupils' work to address their next steps in learning. Teachers and teaching assistants give those pupils who need extra help invaluable individual support, which successfully boosts their learning. There are opportunities for pupils to share, discuss and evaluate their own and others' work. Teachers' marking is undertaken conscientiously and is

encouraging, but it does not always inform pupils how to improve their work. The school is aware of this and has focused staff development activities on sharing best practice.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. It covers all that is required and is well matched to the needs and interests of all groups of pupils. Educational visits and visitors to the school broaden pupils' horizons and enhance the curriculum. Imaginative use is made of information and communication technology. The programme for personal social and health education, including citizenship, contributes very effectively to pupils' personal development. The learning environment beyond the classroom is particularly well used as a resource. For example, during the inspection, Year 3 pupils visited the local wood to discover more about woodland habitats and to develop their orientation skills. Pupils are consistently challenged in their work and develop a firm grasp of the skills that they will need for their future lives. The school provides an excellent and extensive range of well-supported and highly valued sporting, creative and cultural extra-curricular activities for its pupils. They eagerly join in with these activities and told inspectors, 'There is something to interest everyone.'

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The provision of care, advice, guidance and support is outstanding. There is a strong commitment to providing for pupils' welfare. As a result, pupils are extremely well cared for and encouraged to be healthy and keep safe. All required safeguarding, child protection, health and safety and risk assessment systems are in place and are well managed. Pupils trust staff and know who to turn to if they need support. The school works very well with parents and carers to make them feel welcome and involve them in their children's education. The systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress are of a high quality. Very clear strategies ensure the early identification of children who may be in need of additional support. Close monitoring and targeted support enables pupils who require additional help to make very good progress. There is extensive provision for pupils who are able, gifted and talented in conjunction with local secondary schools. The effective arrangements for settling children into school and moving on to secondary school ensure the smooth transition of pupils into and out of school. Pupils who join the school at other times are very well supported.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher and senior staff provide an extremely clear direction for the school. A common sense of purpose and a relentless drive for continuous self-improvement have been established amongst staff. The headteacher knows his staff well and makes the most of each person's abilities and skills. Improvements in accommodation, resources and the quality of teaching and learning are a direct result of this highly effective leadership. School improvement planning is excellent because it draws on rigorous self-evaluation, the monitoring of teaching and learning and the detailed analysis of data. Leaders at all levels carry out their roles exceptionally well. They play an important part in monitoring the effectiveness of the school and, as a result, all know what has been achieved and what can be done to improve even further. The school is alert to the changing needs of the community and conscientious in seeking and acting on the

views of pupils and parents. Extremely effective partnerships are forged with other local schools and a number of organisations to benefit the pupils. Governors are very well informed and provide high levels of support and challenge. Financial management is excellent and allows the school to focus its funding to achieve its vision. The school provides outstanding value for money. It has clear policies and procedures in relation to equality and discrimination.

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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?	1
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	1

Achievement and standards

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

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	1

The quality of provision

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?	1
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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	1
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

Inspection of Higher Bebington Junior School, Wirral, CH63 8QE

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave the inspectors when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and visiting you at work and at play. We saw very happy children who enjoy school and get along extremely well with all of the adults in school and with each other. We were particularly impressed by your behaviour, politeness and your extremely positive attitudes to learning. You all constantly seek to achieve your best in everything you do. It was clear to us that you all, as your school motto and song told us, take 'pride in our school'. Many of your parents completed questionnaires. This meant we were able to consider their views during the inspection. We agreed with them that your school is outstanding in everything it does.

You reach very high standards. You make excellent progress in your learning and leave the school very well prepared for your secondary education. This is because of the excellent teaching you receive, the huge range of activities the school provides, the care and support teachers give you and the way Mr Austin, the staff and governors work hard to continue to make this such an excellent school.

We have asked your school to look at one thing to make it even better.

- When the teachers mark your work, they could tell you more about how well you are doing and how you could do better next time.

You can all of course help to improve your school by continuing to attend regularly, working as hard as you can to achieve your best and by playing your part in continuing to improve the school further through the work of the school council.