

Hyde Park Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113274
Local Authority	Plymouth [113274]
Inspection number	311185
Inspection dates	9–10 July 2008
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	359
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Cole
Headteacher	Bernadette Evans
Date of previous school inspection	14 June 2004
School address	Hyde Park Road Mutley Plymouth PL3 4RH
Telephone number	01752 225314
Fax number	01752 255315

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Hyde Park Junior School is larger than average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average; most of these have behavioural, emotional and social, or speech, language and communication difficulties. The school holds the following awards: Healthy School, Inclusion Award, FA Charter Standard, ICT Mark, Basic Skills Quality Mark, Activemark and International School.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Hyde Park Junior School is a good and improving school. It has a number of outstanding features and its work makes a difference for every pupil. All staff strive energetically to overcome the limitations imposed by its outdated, cramped accommodation. These restrictions make it difficult for the school to reach the best possible standards and achievement, although both continue to improve. Current standards reached by pupils are above average and pupils achieve well by the time they leave.

The headteacher is an outstanding leader and her influence runs through the school like 'Plymouth' through a stick of rock. She inspires and empowers staff so they work as a close, effective team. Leaders and managers monitor the school thoroughly and know it very well. Governors are very supportive, increasingly independent and are developing skills to work as critical friends. Rigorous attention to the issues raised in the previous report and an upward trend in standards mean improvement has been outstanding. As long as the building continues to restrict pupils' performance, particularly by preventing the school from providing all the support it would wish, the school's capacity for the future remains good.

Parents recognise the many strengths of the school and have no significant concerns, except for the limiting accommodation. One typical response was, 'Hyde Park is a wonderful, out-going, pro-active community. Children are polite and happy while teachers display a real enthusiasm, guided by excellent leadership from the head.'

Care, guidance and support for pupils are outstanding. Pupils know they are safe and that there are many adults to help them if required. Most have a good grasp of what they have learnt and the next steps to take. Not surprisingly, pupils' personal development is outstanding. It is no exaggeration to say that pupils love their school. They enjoy school enormously and behaviour is excellent and very beneficial to pupils' personal and academic development. Under the watchful eye of their teachers, they develop great independence and maturity.

Teaching and learning are typically good as teachers plan carefully and manage classrooms with great assurance. Lessons are usually interesting and pupils thrive in this positive atmosphere. They are hungry to participate and learn, although on occasion the pace of lessons could be quicker. Lessons are a collaborative experience where all progress equally. The curriculum offers an outstanding mixture of fascinating experiences. Subjects are combined creatively to stimulate imagination and understanding. The many clubs and societies are very popular and well attended. The school's sporting prowess in the local area is a triumph in the face of adversities, such as having no playing field.

What the school should do to improve further

- Seek opportunities to improve the quantity and quality of both inside and outside accommodation so that pupils' learning and range of physical activities can improve even more.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' academic standards when they start Year 3 are close to the national average. Good teaching and support ensure that all pupils, including those whose first language is not English and those with learning difficulties such as in speech, language and communication, achieve

well. Helped by very good links with other educational providers, the achievement of gifted and talented pupils is outstanding in a number of areas such as mathematics.

Pupils' standards in the 2007 Year 6 national assessments were above average with few variations between subjects. The most recent school assessments indicate that standards are likely to rise this year. Girls' standards in mathematics, which were a concern, have climbed sharply due to measures the school has enacted but are still a little behind those of boys. The innovative curriculum has helped to assure better than expected standards and high achievement in foundation subjects such as music, history and physical education. Information and communication technology (ICT) standards, a concern in the previous inspection, are now higher than expected nationally.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils are eager learners and are excited by the realisation of how much they can achieve in lessons. In the words of one pupil, shared by others, 'Hyde Park is the best school in Plymouth!'

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is excellent. Multicultural awareness is impressive; this was exemplified in a wonderful assembly, led by Year 6 pupils, which was partly delivered in Mandarin. Not surprisingly, pupils' behaviour is exemplary, both in lessons and around school and they enjoy attending. All pupils work hard, including those with behavioural and emotional difficulties and the few who have home languages other than English. They progress well, overcoming individual barriers to learning. Pupils are caring, tolerant and build strong relationships, often sharing ideas in lessons.

Pupils feel safe and rare instances of bullying are resolved promptly. They know not to reveal personal information when using the Internet. Pupils are very knowledgeable about healthy lifestyles, enjoying nutritious school meals and saying they eat healthily at home. Sport is extremely popular, and many participate, travelling to distant sports facilities, if required. The school council is pro-active in improving the school, requesting and getting fruit snacks and improved toilets. Pupils are excellently prepared for the future through enterprise activities, visiting prospective schools and linking with schools internationally. Through an extensive range of visits and visitors, they play an integral part in the local community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The key to strong learning lies in stimulating and sometimes outstanding teaching and pupils' very positive reactions. Excellent planning ensures that the topics studied are engaging. Teachers manage and direct pupils' enthusiasms with assurance so that lessons are positive, worthwhile experiences for all participants. Pupils' independence develops rapidly as they grow older, so that in Years 4, 5 and 6 they work very well alone, in pairs and in groups, benefitting their learning considerably. Behaviour is consistently excellent and this means there are rarely distractions to the flow of lessons. However, some activities do not have tight enough deadlines and the pace of learning occasionally falters.

The school assesses pupils' standards very thoroughly. Where trends develop, the school acts effectively to address any discrepancies. Intensive analysis of results triggers intervention by staff who quickly provide support, so that individual pupils rarely lag behind. However, too few

small additional teaching spaces mean that the school cannot initiate as many small group activities as it would like which limits pupils' learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school's curriculum is rich, broad and balanced, completely embracing the principles of 'excellence and enjoyment'. The recent revisions effectively address its key aims. These were, to meet the needs of all pupils, to emphasise hands-on learning and problem solving and to make interesting connections between subjects. Teachers work together very closely to produce exciting, interesting cross-curricular topics. As a result, pupils are very highly motivated. Provision for modern foreign languages is exceptional, with six week tasters in 'guest languages' a notable strength.

The curriculum is enriched through frequent educational visits, visiting speakers and opportunities to perform and to celebrate achievement. The Year 6 'Hollywood' extravaganza reflects high levels of skill, commitment, enjoyment and hard work. Many pupils attend the numerous extra-curricular activities, including sports. The range of opportunities for pupils of all abilities contributes considerably to their enjoyment and achievement.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

All staff, without exception, take the time and trouble to understand each pupil's needs. The pupils always come first. As a result, they are confident, happy learners, aware of their strengths and determined to do their best. Pupils needing additional assistance are rapidly identified and supported to help them achieve well. The school makes shrewd use of external expertise, such as speech therapy. Systems to safeguard pupils are robust. Behaviour and attendance are closely monitored to identify any problems, so that learning can continue unimpeded. All pupils have learning targets, which they know and understand. Effective marking helps pupils understand what they should do to improve. The use of 'must, should, could and might' learning goals encourages pupils to achieve well.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school's leadership and management team, led by its dynamic headteacher and deputy headteacher, has a rigorous focus upon raising standards and achievement. They provide effective professional development opportunities for staff and have created an engaging curriculum. The middle management structure also has a very positive impact upon achievement. Strongly supported by the school governors, the headteacher and leadership team set extremely challenging but realistic targets for improvement. Rigorous self-evaluation provides the school with a precise picture of its strengths and priorities for improvement. The promotion of equal opportunities is emphasised and pupils' achievement is consistent.

Governors fully discharge their statutory responsibilities and support the management of curriculum areas well, working increasingly closely with subject leaders. At present, governors are working to increase the challenge they provide for leaders to help the school move to the next level. The effectiveness of the leadership in promoting even higher standards and achievement is also restricted by the confining and dispiriting Victorian accommodation. This

negatively impacts upon achievement and standards and the potential for further improvement. This is particularly because there are too few small spaces, reducing opportunities to accommodate small groups and provide as much supportive intervention as the school would wish. As a result, achievement remains good rather than outstanding. Lack of other spaces limits the flexibility of teaching arrangements and the teaching of physical education, both inside and outdoors.

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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	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	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	1

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?	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?	2
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	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

10 July 2008

Dear Pupils

■ Inspection of Hyde Park Junior School, Plymouth, PL3 4RH

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave to the inspectors when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to such charming, courteous and confident pupils. You told us you are very happy and think Hyde Park is a good school. We agree! In fact, here are many things about the school that are better than good.

Your personal development is one. It is excellent and the inspectors were very impressed with your superb behaviour. Your very positive attitudes in lessons and the good teaching help you to achieve well. Your standards are better than average and improving. The way you are cared for is also excellent. You told us that you know you always have adults and friends who will help you if you need it.

The mixture of subjects and topics that you study (called the curriculum) is also outstanding. As you told us, it gives you a great mixture of very interesting things to study and activities to join in. You have masses of interesting clubs and these are very popular.

The headteacher and staff lead and run the school very well. They work their hardest to make sure that you get the best of everything. They especially strive to improve your standards, but the old school building and grounds are far too small and this means that the school cannot improve as much as it would like. We have asked the school to focus on one area to help in the future:

- Develop the building and outside areas so that they provide a more spacious place to grow and learn.

Once again, many thanks for all your help during the inspection. It was delightful meeting you.

Yours sincerely

John Carnaghan Lead inspector