

Harewood Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115492
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	311948
Inspection dates	29–30 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Alison Grainger

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	310
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Lockett
Headteacher	Jane Martin
Date of previous school inspection	28 June 2004
School address	Harewood Close Tuffley Gloucester GL4 0SS
Telephone number	01452 525364
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors

Description of the school

Most pupils attending this large junior school are of White British heritage and almost all have English as their first language. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. Pupils now in the older year groups entered the school with broadly average standards. More recently, attainment on entry has risen and it was above average for the pupils currently in the lower year groups.

Since January 2005, the school has been led by an acting headteacher and an acting deputy headteacher appointed from within the school. The school's substantive headteacher has been seconded to work on a local project.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. It has some significant strengths that result in good personal development and well-being. The broad and stimulating curriculum does much to develop pupils as well rounded individuals who are inquisitive and have good interpersonal skills. A calm and supportive atmosphere pervades the school, with good relationships evident at all levels, helping pupils to gain confidence and feel valued.

Almost all pupils enjoy school a lot. They particularly appreciate the wide range of practical and 'hands on' experiences provided for them. Pupils enthuse about the topic-based approach to learning and point out that it encourages them to be independent and to ask questions. As one parent commented, reflecting the views of many, 'I have always found my children have enjoyed learning as they get so involved in each of their topics.' Because pupils enjoy school, they behave well.

Pupils have an exceptionally good understanding of how to stay fit and healthy. Many take up the good opportunities offered for physical fitness through extra-curricular sporting activities. Pupils also make an outstanding contribution to the school and wider community. They diligently undertake responsibilities, organise activities to raise funds for charities, and help to look after the local environment.

Standards in Year 6 are close to the national average. These standards represent satisfactory achievement in relation to pupils' starting points and capabilities. The main reason why pupils make satisfactory progress is that teaching is satisfactory. There are examples of good teaching, but not enough to accelerate pupils' progress so that it is good. Teaching in English and mathematics, in particular, is not always closely enough matched to the full range of pupils' needs. As a result, it does not always challenge all pupils fully. The school recognises that teaching needs to be better than satisfactory if it is to build well on pupils' rising attainment on entry.

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. Pastoral care is strong and there is sensitive support for vulnerable pupils. Academic guidance is a weaker element and this is another factor preventing pupils from making better progress. Pupils are not told enough about how they can improve their work and reach higher standards. Data are not used sharply enough to review pupils' progress and to set challenging targets for standards, for example, in each year group or class.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school runs smoothly and there is a high level of attention to pupils' personal development and the maintenance of a broad and very well enriched curriculum. Self-evaluation is reasonably accurate. However, the checking of teaching, in particular, is not rigorous enough to ensure that teaching and pupils' progress are quickly improved to become good. There is only just sufficient involvement of subject leaders in monitoring teaching and developments in provision. The school's progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory and there is adequate capacity for improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teaching is always closely matched to all pupils' needs and challenges them fully.
- Improve the use of data to set challenging targets for standards, to review pupils' progress, and to provide pupils with clear guidance on how to improve their work.

- More rigorously check up on how well provision, particularly teaching, influences pupils' progress, and involve subject leaders fully in this.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards in Year 6 are close to the national average in English, mathematics and science. All groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, move on at an adequate rate in these core subjects in each year group. There are examples of higher standards being reached in enquiry-based topic work. Pupils develop a good understanding of the world around them through their topic work. Many have good skills in posing questions to focus their enquiries and in researching. They apply skills in information and communication technology (ICT) competently such as when using the Internet. There is evidence of pupils reaching high standards in art and singing, and there are examples of pupils achieving success in sports.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Moral and social development is particularly strong, as seen in pupils' positive behaviour, good relationships, and their concern for those less fortunate than themselves. The school is racially harmonious, although a relatively weaker aspect of pupils' personal development is their understanding of cultural diversity.

Pupils make very sensible choices about diet and have a very good understanding of the importance of regular exercise. They adopt safe practices well when moving about the school and in lessons. As a result of their participation in the student council and undertaking roles, such as those that involve older pupils in supporting younger ones, pupils make an exceptionally good contribution to the school community. They play a very active part in the wider community, for instance, entertaining senior citizens. Pupils' considerable enjoyment of school is not reflected in the average attendance rate, which the school is working hard to improve. Pupils' good personal attributes, combined with their satisfactory development of skills in literacy and numeracy, ensure that they are appropriately prepared for the next stage of education and their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Within the satisfactory teaching, there are good features. In almost all classrooms, lessons are characterised by a calm and productive atmosphere. The purpose of the lesson is explained clearly and activities are managed effectively. Often, activities are designed to capture pupils' interest, such as when drama methods are used in English lessons. However, there are also occasions when pupils are not engaged actively enough, particularly during whole-class sessions.

When teaching is good, it is firmly focused on pupils' different needs and expectations of the standards all pupils are capable of attaining are high. This was evident in a reading session in

one Year 4 class, for example, when the teacher asked clear questions to develop pupils' understanding. Good awareness of pupils' needs was also evident during discussion in a mathematics lesson for lower attaining pupils in Year 6. The main reason why the impact of teaching is only satisfactory overall is that it is not always matched closely enough to pupils' different needs so that not all pupils are challenged well enough. This shortcoming is particularly evident in the teaching of English and mathematics.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Thematic topic work underpins the school's curriculum. It makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal development. Independence is well promoted through pupils deciding on lines of enquiry and planning how to follow them through. Topics are very effective in helping pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. Practical investigations help pupils in Year 4, for example, to learn much about how rivers are formed and how fish breathe.

Topics are carefully planned to ensure that there is balanced coverage of different subjects. They include some good opportunities for the development of key skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT. However, the opportunities provided in specific English and mathematics lessons are less challenging. Enrichment of daily lessons through visits, visitors and clubs is very good. Clubs provide many opportunities for creative and sporting activities. In addition to having the chance to learn French in Years 3 and 4, pupils can learn Welsh through attending a club.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Good pastoral care results in pupils feeling safe at school and knowing that they have an adult to whom they can turn should the need arise. The school makes great efforts to ensure that this is so, for example, pupils have easy access to the learning mentor. Sensitive care and support is provided for pupils who, for whatever reason, are vulnerable. Individual parents expressed real appreciation of the care shown towards children with medical conditions or behavioural difficulties.

Tracking of pupils' attainment and progress is undertaken adequately but the information is not used well enough to set individual targets for pupils to work towards. The school is currently changing its system for setting pupils targets in writing and, as a result, too many pupils are uncertain about what their targets are and precisely what they need to do to improve their work. Guidance through marking is sometimes helpful but too often it is insufficiently specific about pupils' next steps.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

There are strengths in the satisfactory leadership, particularly in the promotion of pupils' personal development and well-being and in the leadership of the curriculum. Teamwork among staff is productive, particularly in planning and implementing learning opportunities in year teams. Governance has improved since the last inspection. The governing body is now well organised, much more involved in the school, and is starting to ask questions to challenge senior leaders.

There are some areas of weakness that prevent the leadership and management from being more effective. In particular, data are not used well enough to set challenging targets to raise standards for pupils moving up through the school. This weakness has an impact on how well teaching is matched to individual needs, the effectiveness with which progress is reviewed, and the quality of academic guidance. Monitoring and evaluation of provision are satisfactory, although not rigorous enough to improve teaching to a level that is good. Subject leaders are satisfactorily involved but there is much potential to use them more in checking provision.

Parents are pleased with the school. A small number of parents think that the school does not communicate well enough with them. There is, however, much good communication with parents, although parents are not involved as well as they might be in setting targets for their children to attain.

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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?	3
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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
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?	3

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Harewood Junior School, Gloucester, GL4 0SS

Thank you for helping us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking with you and visiting your lessons. We found that your school is providing you with a satisfactory education.

There are some things that your school does really well. It helps you to develop good personal qualities and to grow up into well-rounded young people. The exciting activities in your topic lessons help you to enjoy school a lot. We enjoyed looking at the lovely folders of work that show what your classes have done in their topics. We even saw the mackerel being dissected in Year 4! You have a fantastic range of activities in addition to your daily lessons, such as visits and clubs, which also make learning interesting. The adults take good care of you and we know that you have an adult to turn to should you have any worries.

We saw that you behave well in lessons and around the school. The behaviour in assemblies is excellent! You have a very good knowledge of how to stay fit and healthy through diet and exercise. You also make a tremendous contribution to the school community through the student council and the responsibilities you have. Your contribution to the wider community is very good, too. We know that you do a lot to raise funds for charities and to help other people.

- You are making satisfactory progress. We have asked the adults to do the following things in particular to help you to make more progress:
- Make sure that teaching is always at the right level for each of you and that the work gives you the right amount of challenge.
- Make better use of information on how well you are doing to check and improve your progress and to tell you what you most need to work on next.
- Carry out more thorough checks on how well the school is helping you to learn.

You can help by always doing your best. Thank you again for helping us and for making us welcome.

Yours sincerely

Alison Grainger Lead Inspector