

Horsell CofE Aided Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125201
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	315187
Inspection date	14 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Michael Pye

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	7-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	359
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs L Templeman
Headteacher	Mrs Y Lawrence
Date of previous school inspection	31 March 2003
School address	Meadway Drive Horsell Woking GU21 4TA
Telephone number	01483 761531
Fax number	01483 776210

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues, achievement and standards, teaching and learning, leadership and management, personal development and well-being, and care, guidance and support, gathering evidence from lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and documents. Parents' questionnaires and discussions with parents, children, governors and staff also contributed to the judgements. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This larger-than-average junior school is situated on the northern outskirts of Woking in an area of predominantly private housing. For a school of this size, there are well-below average numbers of pupils entitled to free school meals. There are also average numbers of pupils with English as an additional language and of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. There are increasing numbers of pupils who are entering the school other than in Year 3. The school has a number of national awards, including Healthy Schools, the Active Mark Gold and the Working in Partnership with Parents Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

For many years the pupils at Horsell Junior School have attained well above average standards by the end of Year 6. The inspector wanted to find out why the school was successful and whether the pupils' good progress had been maintained. The inspector found that this is a good school with some outstanding features.

What lies behind its success are the inspired leadership of the headteacher and the excellent levels of management within the school. This results in careful monitoring, highly effective self-evaluation and actions being taken to ensure that pupils' good performance is sustained. For example, the monitoring of teaching and the sharing of good practice helps to ensure consistently good, and sometimes outstanding teaching. This results in pupils making good progress, which is particularly accelerated in the older classes. The school is benefiting from its teacher-training role. Newly qualified teachers are employed and their skills are carefully developed through close monitoring and support. Through such monitoring the school has recognised the need to further develop the higher-level questioning skills of some teachers. This initiative is designed to enable teachers to consistently challenge pupils, and to develop pupils' own critical skills. The highly effective tracking of all pupils' progress results in effective support being provided. This clearly contributes to the good achievement levels.

There is no complacency, and the school is continually striving to improve and sets itself challenging targets. Typically, the staff's commitment to self-improvement led to a recognition that a more structured approach to developing pupils' independence was required. Trials were conducted prior to the whole-school introduction of an approach which encourages pupils to identify the strengths and areas for development in their work.

Another reason behind the school's success is the outstanding level of pupils' personal development. Pupils behave extremely well, responding positively to the high quality of relationships within the school. They increasingly become independent learners, well able to discuss their learning and use their targets to improve their work. Three girls in Year 3 jumped excitedly when describing how they 'loved homework'. Other, older pupils, told of enjoying their lessons because they are challenging and fun. These extremely positive attitudes to school are a reflection of how successfully the school boosts pupils' self-esteem; listening to, and ensuring that pupils feel respected. The pupils make an excellent contribution to their community, participating in local events, involving themselves in charity fund-raising, and decision-making through the School Council. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. The pupils benefit from close links to the local church and respond very well to the opportunities provided for reflection, particularly in the stimulating assemblies.

The curriculum is good and is constantly evolving. Since the last inspection improvements to resources in information and communication technology (ICT) have reflected curriculum changes. Standards in ICT have improved as a result of its regular use in other subjects, for example, in word processing, graphics and data handling. The curriculum manifestly meets the literacy and numeracy needs of pupils very well, but it also supports the messages about healthy living and keeping safe which the school emphasise. In some curriculum planning, in foundation subjects such as history, the school has identified the need for more emphasis to be placed on the development of skills in order to further improve standards. Pupils are motivated by some outstanding enhancements to the curriculum, such as the Tudor theme day, residential trips in all years and various other activities that promote teamwork. Pupils' emotional needs are

also very well addressed. Pupils talk about enjoying circle time where they discuss matters important to them, and are motivated by the varied activities associated with the good personal, social, health and citizenship programme.

Exemplary leadership and management have also established a caring environment where pupils thrive and academic standards are high. Parents speak highly of the support they receive and praise the openness and high levels of communication established by the school. Within the school, effective management has delivered continuity of high academic standards and achievement, together with outstanding elements of pupils' personal development. Staff are highly motivated, and work effectively as a team to keep aspects of school life under close review. This goes beyond data analysis, lesson observations and work reviews. In particular, the pupils' views are sought and carefully listened to. The exemplary governing body is able to participate in strategic planning and give effective support because governors know the school well. There is an excellent capacity to further improve the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the higher-order questioning skills of teachers.
- Ensure that the skills to be taught in foundation subjects are made sufficiently clear in curriculum and lesson plans.

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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
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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

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	2
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?	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.

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	2
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

25 September 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Horsell CofE Aided Junior School, Woking, GU21 4TA

Thank you for welcoming me to your school during my recent visit. Like so many other visitors I found you polite, well behaved and very willing to speak about your school. I believe, like you, that you go to a good school. I also feel that in many areas your school is outstanding. This means that it does some things very well indeed.

I particularly liked the fact that you do so well in English, mathematics and science. You enjoy your school (rightly so!), and want to do well. You told me that you feel safe in the school, and that the adults like you to give your views and they listen carefully to you.

You also told me that you find the lessons fun and usually challenging. You could help your teachers by telling them when you find the work too easy. The teaching in your school is good and often better, and it means that, together with your positive attitudes to work, you make good progress.

Your school is good and has been for many years partly because the adults run the school so very well. They know your needs and are always looking to improve on the things that you have in school.

I have asked the school to look at two things:

- to make sure that in lessons the teachers build even more challenge into their questioning
- to make sure that in their plans all teachers identify what skills they are going to teach you in subjects like history.

My best wishes to you all for the future, and thank you again.

Yours faithfully,

Michael Pye

Lead Inspector