

# Hertford Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114383
<b>Local Authority</b>	Brighton and Hove
<b>Inspection number</b>	326001
<b>Inspection date</b>	14 May 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Joan Lindsay

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	128
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Wenda Bradley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Joan Marshall
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 February 2006
<b>School address</b>	Lynchet Close Brighton BN1 7FP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01273 557341
<b>Fax number</b>	01273 330919

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<b>Age group</b>	7–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a relatively small junior school where most pupils are from a White British background. Far more pupils than the national average claim free school meals. A much higher proportion than average have a learning difficulty and/or disability and the number with a statement of special educational needs is also higher than the national average. The main learning difficulty is dyslexia. There are breakfast and after school clubs on site. The school currently has an acting headteacher.

## 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. There are some outstanding features such as the behaviour of pupils and the extent to which they feel safe in school due to excellent pastoral care. This means that pupils' enjoyment of school is outstanding. Parents have very positive views of the school, with words such as 'wonderful' and 'fantastic' being used. The school works well in partnership with others such as the feeder infant school to ensure pupils settle quickly when they arrive.

Achievement is good overall, especially when looking at a three-year average. When pupils come into school in Year 3, they are achieving below what would be expected for their age, particularly in their writing skills. There are wide year-on-year variations in the standards pupils reach. For example, standards reached by pupils in 2008 were below national average, especially in mathematics, and dipped from 2007, due to large numbers who had a learning difficulty and/or disability. Consequently, far fewer than the national average reached the higher levels. However, currently, Year 6 pupils are making good progress overall following a strong focus on writing and mathematics. As a result, standards are rising again and are now broadly average. Pupils who have a learning difficulty and/or disability achieve well due to effective use of information about what they know, coupled with well targeted support. Good teaching throughout the school encourages pupils to learn. Teachers make lessons fun and manage behaviour extremely well so that classrooms are happy places with pupils eager to learn. However, the use of information about what pupils know and can do, is not rigorous enough, especially in mathematics, to spot underachievement and help pupils to improve.

The curriculum is good and the topic-based approach links subjects effectively and adds to pupils' enjoyment. For example, a visit to an air-raid shelter as part of a history project and a talk from an evacuee led to pupils producing emotive pieces of writing. A stronger emphasis on the teaching of blending sounds and letters, and developing a whole-school writing style, are also having a good impact on pupils' desire to write at length.

Pupils learn well because their personal development and well-being are good and their pastoral care is outstanding. This means that they are ready and willing to settle to their tasks. They relate very well to each other, showing high levels of respect for others and their achievements. While pupils really enjoy school, attendance overall is only satisfactory, reflecting a small number of pupils who are absent a lot. The school is working hard to support families to improve this.

Leadership and management at all levels are good. There is a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and so the school's self-evaluation is accurate. Challenging targets have not been used well enough to improve standards in mathematics, but the impact of recent initiatives to improve pupils' achievement in mathematics and writing is now beginning to be seen. This improvement together with the great sense of teamwork and a desire to continue to get better, demonstrates the school's good capacity to improve.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and pupils' achievement in mathematics across the school.
- Make more rigorous use of the information about what pupils know to identify areas of underachievement.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

The school successfully enables pupils to achieve well, particularly in English and in science. Standards are broadly average but they are not yet good enough in mathematics. However, the school has put in several initiatives to raise standards and improve progress in mathematics. For example, the current Year 6 has been split into two smaller classes and taught in three even smaller groups for literacy and numeracy and there is more 'talking around' problems. This is having a positive impact on their progress in mathematics, and in writing, which the school has also rightly highlighted as an area for development.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

There is a very strong focus on pupils' personal development and well-being. As a result, pupils really love coming to this school, as parents confirm. Pupils' enjoyment of school is enhanced by the fact that they feel extremely safe there as behaviour is excellent. There are very few problems with bullying and pupils have confidence in adults to resolve any issues. Playtimes are extremely well organised by teaching assistants who use very effective systems to manage behaviour and ensure that pupils are active. Pupils have a good understanding of how to lead healthy lives enhanced by the good food at lunchtime and by growing their own produce in the school garden. There is a strong community spirit in the school with the school council active in improving the outdoor environment and the Eco Club ensuring pupils have a sense of caring for the wider environment. Year 6 'buddies' ensure the new Year 3 pupils settle happily. The school is involved well in the local community and has done much to enhance its reputation since the last inspection. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their life given their improving key skills and excellent relationships. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good. Although they have a strong respect for others, there is scope to develop their multicultural development further so they have a clear understanding of life in to-day's diverse society.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

There is consistently good teaching throughout the school. One of the strongest elements of teaching is how pupils are managed so that lessons are not disrupted, relationships are strong and pupils are keen and able to learn. Lessons are well planned and time is used effectively to ensure pupils are kept on task and productive. Teaching assistants, who are generally highly trained and dedicated, play an important role in pupils' learning in class and in small group work. On occasions, the period for reflection at the end of the lesson is not used as effectively as it could be to enable pupils to recognise their own progress and what the next steps in their learning should be.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is broad and balanced, linking subjects through topics such as living things. A stronger focus on developing mathematics and writing skills through other subjects is beginning

to have an impact in these areas. The school has also looked at how to improve girls' confidence in mathematics and now there is more talking around problem solving which is helping girls' progress. Although information and communication technology is used in various subjects, the school recognises this area needs further development so that future curriculum needs are met. One of the strengths of the curriculum is the use made of the wonderful outdoor environment. For example, a Year 3 drama project is using various outdoor areas while developing teambuilding skills in pupils. After-school activities are varied and plentiful with cooking, drama and sports clubs on offer. Pupils also benefit from being able to have breakfast on site and they can go to the well managed after school club which is also attended by pupils from other schools.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Pastoral care is outstanding and is highly regarded by parents, one of whom stated that the school 'really looks after each and every child; it really does know each one as an individual'. Pupils who have a learning difficulty and/or disability are especially well supported by teachers, teaching assistants and outside expertise. Several parents mentioned how their children have gained in confidence because of this. Procedures to safeguard pupils are robust. Academic support and guidance are good overall and pupils know their targets and feel they help them to improve. Marking is generally helpful in guiding pupils in how to develop their skills. However, some of the systems to assess pupils are new and not yet used robustly enough to spot underachievement, especially in mathematics.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The acting headteacher has quickly grasped the issues for the school and has been well supported by senior staff. She has built on the inherent strengths of the school and has continued to move it forward by, for example, ensuring that using information to track pupils' progress is embedded and used consistently. Challenging targets have not been used effectively enough to raise standards. However, there is a strong sense of team effort in the school with much sharing of information and a determination to improve achievement and standards, especially in mathematics. Leaders and managers at all levels are involved in whole-school planning and share a desire to succeed, and evidence shows that initiatives to raise standards in writing and mathematics are beginning to bear fruit. Governors are challenging and very supportive. They are frequent visitors to the school, linking with subjects and teachers, which has enabled them to have a good grasp of the strengths and areas for development. The school's commitment to community cohesion is good. It has worked hard to encourage parents into the school and to improve the school's reputation in the local area. For example, strong, mutually beneficial links are in place with a local special school. Pupils are given the chance to learn about other faiths and they have developed a strong respect for others and their different backgrounds. Pupils learn about global issues through, for example, Fair Trade Fortnight, the Eco Club and from visiting teachers from other countries.

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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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

**Achievement and standards**

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

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<sup>1</sup>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.



## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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	3
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	3
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**

15 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hertford Junior School, Brighton, BN1 7FP

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed talking to you and your teachers, visiting your lessons and assemblies, and having a chat with some of you at lunchtime. Your school is a good one with some outstanding features.

Here are some of the best things about your school:

- Your behaviour and enjoyment of school are outstanding. This really helps you to learn and so in most cases, you make good progress. You feel really safe in school because adults take such good care of you.
- Teaching is good and the subjects you study are linked well to make learning enjoyable. You have lots of clubs, visits and visitors that make school fun and help you to learn, and you have a great outdoor area that is used really well.
- The people who lead and manage the school do this well.
- This is what we have asked the school to do next:
  - Improve everyone's skills in mathematics.
  - Make sure that teachers use the information about what you know to spot where some of you could use some help to do even better.

You can help your school by continuing to work hard and behave in the excellent way you do. Thank you again for a very enjoyable visit to your school and best wishes for your future.

Yours faithfully

Joan Lindsay Lead Inspector