

# Hazelmere Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114745
<b>Local Authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	326060
<b>Inspection dates</b>	4–5 February 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Rob McKeown HMI

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)	169
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr A Mortimer
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs J Firth
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 November 2007
<b>School address</b>	Hawthorn Avenue Colchester CO4 3JP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01206 862691
<b>Fax number</b>	01206 866405

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<b>Age group</b>	7–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Hazelmere is a smaller than average sized junior school situated in the St Andrew's ward in Colchester. It shares a site with an infant school and a secondary school. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their first language. A relatively high proportion of pupils come from an area of social and economic disadvantage. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is double the national average. The number of pupils who have learning difficulties and/ or disabilities is higher than is typical for this size of school. Pupils enter the school with levels of attainment that are below the national average. A breakfast club runs each morning and the school employs a home-school liaison worker. The number on roll has fallen since the last inspection. The headteacher has led the school for two years.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

At the time of the last inspection, Hazelmere Junior School was performing significantly less well than it could be reasonably expected to perform, and overall effectiveness was judged inadequate. Since then the school has built on the satisfactory progress recorded in the monitoring inspection in June 2008 and now offers a satisfactory quality of education. In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Under the determined leadership of the headteacher, the school has set about tackling the issues identified in the last inspection. Several improvements have been introduced and these have strengthened leadership and management, helped to make teaching more effective and begun to raise standards and boost achievement. Many of the changes introduced now require embedding and seeing through to completion. The small number of questionnaires returned to inspectors showed that most parents are pleased with what the school provides for their children.

Achievement is satisfactory and pupils are making better progress than they were at the time of the last inspection. Standards at the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics improved in 2008 when more pupils reached the expected Level 4 in English and mathematics. Most pupils met their targets but standards overall remained below average. Progress for these pupils from their starting points in Year 3 was satisfactory. It was better in English, particularly in reading, than it was in mathematics. A more robust system for tracking pupils' progress has been introduced. This has helped the school's leadership team to identify the pupils who may be slipping back and prompted suitable action to tackle underachievement.

Most pupils enjoy coming to school and show positive attitudes in their lessons. They cooperate well and have good relationships with each other and their teachers. Behaviour in and out of classrooms during the inspection was good, although pupils reported that occasionally individuals misbehave. The number of pupils excluded from school for unacceptable behaviour has dropped significantly to a very small number. This reflects the improvements in the way in which staff help pupils to manage their behaviour successfully. Pupils' attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. The rewards given by the school to reduce absence and improve behaviour are appreciated by pupils, and help reinforce the school's expectations.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Inspectors observed some good and outstanding teaching but less effective teaching was also observed, and although this is being tackled, it is working against the school's drive to improve standards and achievement. Emphasis is still required on helping teachers to turn their satisfactory lessons into good ones. The school rightly places a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy in a satisfactory curriculum. Many pupils enjoy singing and the school choir sings on special occasions in the local community. The care, guidance and support of pupils are satisfactory. A home-school liaison worker gives good support to pupils and their families.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The appointment of a new deputy headteacher has strengthened the school's leadership team. The subject leaders for English and mathematics are taking much more responsibility for leading and managing the work in their subjects. Leadership in other subjects is still underdeveloped however, with very little monitoring and evaluation taking place. Governance has improved since the last inspection and key governors are determined to ensure the school continues to move forward successfully.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and accelerate progress particularly in writing and in mathematics.
- Improve teaching and learning to bring the overall quality of lessons in line with the best, by ensuring that teachers match learning more precisely to the needs of all pupils.
- Continue to strengthen the role played by subject leaders in monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision.

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 come into the school with standards that are below average. Teachers assess pupils' attainment on entry to add to the assessments already made by the partner infant school. These assessments show that several pupils in Year 3 are working below the expected level for their age when they arrive. Pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school, although their progress is inconsistent. This is because the teaching is not matched well enough to pupils' learning needs in all classes. Recent improvements to systems for keeping a check on pupils' attainment and progress have enabled senior leaders to identify underachievement. The school is taking suitable action to tackle this by providing support for pupils who need to catch up, for example in reading. Since the start of this term, some additional mathematics sessions have been organised for Year 6 pupils; these are taught well and are helping to boost attainment. The sharper focus on raising standards has resulted in more ambitious targets being set for Year 6 pupils in 2009.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 3

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory, although pupils' knowledge of communities outside their immediate locality is limited. Pupils say they feel safe in school and that adults listen to any personal concerns they may have and deal quickly with any bullying. While most pupils get on well together, boys' playground behaviour is boisterous at times and some would benefit from taking part in more purposeful games and activities. Pupils know about healthy lifestyles and most respond positively to the school's 'Fit Friday' healthy snack day. Most pupils take part in two hours of physical activities each week, which include swimming for one year group each term. Pupils get the chance to contribute their views on how to change the school through the school council; one of their ideas improved healthy food choices with the introduction of a salad bar. Councillors also help organise collections for charities, which many pupils support. Pupils benefit from working with adults from a local firm who support with reading and a gardening project. A greater focus on raising standards in literacy and numeracy and improvements in pupils' access to computers is preparing them suitably for their future learning.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Although the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, it varies too much. In the best lessons, teachers encourage pupils to share and discuss their ideas, and practical activities are organised to help pupils learn effectively. Teachers ask searching questions that challenge thinking and pupils are also encouraged to assess their own learning. In less successful lessons, teaching is not matched well enough to the needs of pupils with different abilities. Parts of lessons are too slow, and on occasions, pupils spend too much time listening rather than doing. The atmosphere in most classrooms is quiet, calm and industrious because teachers manage behaviour well; this contributes well to pupils' enjoyment of learning. The use of electronic whiteboards and computers has a positive impact on learning. Teaching assistants usually give good support to pupils in small groups but they are not always used effectively at the start of lessons. Regular marking and assessment help pupils to become aware of how to improve their work. There are good systems in place to keep a check on pupils' progress and extra support is given to pupils who are not on track to meet their targets.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory but the school acknowledges that learning across and within subjects requires a review to make the most of the time available. Since the last inspection, there have been further improvements in provision in information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils are encouraged to access learning at home by logging into the school's website and many enjoy attending the lunchtime computer club. Focus weeks at the end of each half term encourage independent learning and enhance pupils' enjoyment. Lessons in personal, social and health education have a positive impact on pupils' personal development and on their understanding of safe and healthy living. Visits to places of interest, such as Colchester and Framlingham Castles, add another dimension to pupils' learning and a residential trip for older pupils extends their outdoor learning experiences. The school provides a varied range of after school activities, including sport, which enriches pupils' learning.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

Staff provide a caring and supportive learning environment for all pupils. The procedures for safeguarding meet the latest government requirements. Pupils with learning difficulties and /or disabilities have individual learning plans and receive the extra help they need to enable them to make satisfactory progress. Pupils' attendance and punctuality are monitored closely and the home-school liaison worker meets with families to support any pupils whose attendance is irregular. The school works well with several external support agencies to promote pupils' welfare and learning. Academic guidance is satisfactory. It has improved since the last inspection because of the introduction of new assessment resources. These have improved the accuracy of teachers' assessments. Strategies have been introduced recently to encourage pupils to be more involved in assessing their own learning and many pupils know their targets for English and mathematics. Parents are encouraged to take an interest in their children's learning. Pupils' learning targets are shared and reviewed at termly progress meetings with teachers.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. A tightly focussed raising-attainment plan sets out the key actions to be taken to bring about improvements in the quality of teaching and learning and for raising standards. Following good support and guidance from local authority consultants, the English and mathematics subject leaders are now performing their roles effectively. They are much more aware of the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects. Although improvements are still required in the work of other subject leaders, the ICT subject leader has been successful in managing the school's development of provision. The support provided for pupils with learning difficulties and/or difficulties is helping them to catch-up but there is no overall plan to map out the full range of intervention work and how and when the success of this will be measured. The school has considered its strategies for promoting community cohesion and a member of the senior leadership team has responsibility for extending links with parents and the community. Governors are much more in tune with what is going on in school and have benefited from local authority training and monthly awareness raising meetings with the headteacher. They are involving themselves more in seeing the school's work in action and are beginning to ask questions about how well it is doing.

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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 <sup>1</sup> 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/or disabilities make progress	3

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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>	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which 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	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

9 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hazelmere Junior School, Colchester, CO4 3JP

Thank you for your help with the inspection and for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed the two days we spent with you. Please thank your parents for completing the questionnaires about their views of the school.

We think your school is satisfactory. It is better now than when it was last inspected, just over a year ago. Your headteacher, the governors and all the staff have been working hard to bring about improvements. They all care about you and want you to do well. We know that many of you are making better progress than you were in reading, writing and mathematics and that most of your lessons help you to learn well. We like the idea of having targets to help you improve, well done to all of you who remembered them.

We enjoyed talking to the school council and some of Year 6 about their views on the school. We were pleased to hear that they think that behaviour has improved and that the rewards you receive help everyone to do their best. The 'Fit Friday' healthy snack days are a good way of reminding you about healthy eating. We were very impressed with your singing and that so many of you are in the choir. It was also good to see that your teachers are giving you more opportunities to use computers and that you can extend your learning at home.

At the end of the inspection, we asked Mrs Firth, the staff and governors to keep working on some improvements to help you do better, particularly in writing and in mathematics. We also asked your teachers to make sure all your lessons are good ones and to keep a close eye on how well you are doing in your different subjects. You can help with these by being at school every day and working hard in all your lessons.

You have much to look forward to in the rest of the year; I hope you do your best and enjoy it.

With best wishes,

Rob McKeown

Her Majesty's Inspector