

Hadleigh Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115291
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	326173
Inspection dates	1–2 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Ann Taylor

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 (total)	307
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Roy Millard
Headteacher	Mrs K Mansfield
Date of previous school inspection	5 July 2006
School address	Church Road Hadleigh Benfleet Essex SS7 2DQ
Telephone number	01702558619
Fax number	01702552908

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This school is larger than many others. It serves the local community, with most pupils having attended Hadleigh Infant School. The majority of pupils are from White British families. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Most of these have moderate learning difficulties. The number with a statement of special educational needs is average. A very small number of pupils have English as an additional language. At the time of the inspection, the headteacher was on statutory leave. A seconded headteacher has been in post since Easter for one and a half days a week. The deputy headteacher has responsibility for the day-to-day running of the school. The school is receiving a programme of support from the local authority. It is developing a partnership, to share good practice, with another local school.

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 been through a turbulent period since the previous inspection, with four changes of headteacher. As a result, improvement had stalled. The strong leadership of a seconded headteacher has quickly refocused on the need to raise standards, diagnosing accurately what needs doing. Together with the support of the local authority, the seconded headteacher has started reinforcing systems and procedures to increase the rate of progress and enhance the achievement that pupils make. This is already showing some impact, most noticeably in the recent accelerated progress shown in Years 5 and 6. A developing partnership with another school is starting to show benefits by beginning to raise aspirations of what staff and pupils should be achieving. Pupils make satisfactory progress from their starting points in Year 3. They reach broadly average standards in mathematics and writing, with reading being above average. Reading standards are higher this year as a result of some recent training on the teaching of reading skills.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The roles of all leaders and managers in checking the work of the school and securing improvement are at an early stage of development. The deputy headteacher capably oversees the daily organisation. Governors are supportive and actively involved in monitoring several aspects of school life. Subject leaders are becoming more adept in their monitoring role and starting to improve literacy and numeracy skills. However, the impact on standards is limited because much of this work is quite new and they are not yet experienced in evaluating impact. Parents are supportive of the school and many wrote positively about the changes they had noticed since the arrival of the seconded headteacher. Pupils' personal development is good and their behaviour and appetite for learning are strengths of the school.

Teaching, whilst improving, is satisfactory but is not strong enough to ensure that all pupils make consistently good progress. The best teaching really stretches pupils and makes them think deeply. Teaching which is less successful is pedestrian, with activities that are not challenging enough. This is because expectations of what pupils should be achieving are occasionally too low. Levels of expertise about how to effectively teach writing are variable. The curriculum is satisfactory, with strengths in sports, clubs and enrichment activities. There is a weakness in the way the curriculum does not cater well enough for higher ability pupils. Care, support and guidance are satisfactory. Pastoral care is good and staff look after the children well, which many parents appreciatively acknowledge. However, the academic guidance pupils receive, encouraging them to reach higher standards, is weaker. Setting pupils targets to reach is at an early stage of development and they are not always clear what is expected; often targets are too easy. In addition, whole-school targets lack challenge. Given the tangible improvements seen and the impact on accelerated progress in some year groups, the school has a satisfactory capacity to carry on improving. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards further, especially in mathematics and writing, by ensuring that all pupils make consistently good progress.
- Improve teaching and learning, especially in writing by raising expectations of what pupils, particularly those of higher abilities, can achieve.

- Develop the role of all leaders and managers in using best practice for checking the work of the school, planning and implementing improvements and evaluating the impact.
- Set more challenging whole-school targets, as well as for the pupils themselves and help them to better understand what they need to do to improve.

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' entry to the school is showing an increasingly strong profile. They now arrive in Year 3 with above average standards. Since the last inspection, pupils have made satisfactory progress and achievement from relatively lower, average starting points. They reach broadly average standards in writing and mathematics. Fewer pupils have been reaching the higher levels than would be expected because of a lack of appropriate challenge. The school's own 2009 end of key stage data, confirmed by inspection evidence, show pupils on track to reach similar average standards. It also confirms that reading standards have improved this year and are above average. Standards in Year 5 are above average because of consistently good teaching. Pupils who find learning difficult make satisfactory academic progress with effective progress in their personal targets, as do the few who have English as an additional language.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy their time at school very much. They particularly enjoy the good provision for sports, the caring ethos and having teachers who are good role models and who 'help us when we are stuck'. They proudly say, 'We are an active and caring school,' explaining that the curriculum and teaching keep them active, both physically and mentally. They also appreciate the good-quality school lunches that support strongly what they learn about staying healthy. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory and improving as a result of the school's effective strategies. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, as reflected in their good behaviour, sensible attitude to learning and mature capacity for reflection. They know how to keep themselves and others safe through various safety education programmes and vigilant supervision. They feel free from bullying and racism and form positive friendships in and out of lessons. Pupils voice their views through the active school council which has made a positive impact on practical aspects of school life. Pupils also contribute in turn by preparing a school production; this year, Year 5 and 6 pupils develop communication and artistic skills by performing in 'Pinafore Pirates'. Pupils also run charity events once a term and have recently adopted two animals at a local zoo. They show themselves to be ready to shoulder more responsibilities but their opportunities to contribute to the local and global community are not effectively developed. The skills which pupils develop through all areas of the curriculum prepare them satisfactorily for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The consistency of teaching has improved over the past year but there are still differences between classes and year groups that affect the rate of progress made by pupils. These are to do with the expectations that teachers have and how well assessment is used in planning lessons to ensure that each pupil achieves as highly as possible. Teaching of writing is inconsistent because of a lack of understanding of how to teach the actual processes. Teachers have good relationships with their classes and these support pupils' strong willingness to learn. All teachers share what pupils are to be learning. The best teaching ensures that this is tailored to different groups of pupils so that the most and least able are challenged appropriately. Good lessons make learning relevant, such as in mathematics when teaching about how to use time through reading timetables was firmly based upon a forthcoming visit to the zoo. In an excellent English lesson, high expectations of pupils' achievement was seen in challenging questions about the film, 'The Lord of the Rings'. Some teachers help pupils to understand what they need to be successful, but not all lessons use this practice to best effect. The role of the highly skilled and qualified teaching assistants has improved and they make a valuable contribution to the learning of pupils with physical or other learning difficulties. They are well prepared and ask well judged questions. Sometimes, opportunities to involve them in a more proactive way are missed.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Provision for physical education, sports and enrichment activities is a real strength that contributes much to pupils' enjoyment of school and well-being. Pupils achieve a great deal of success in sports competitions at individual or team level. A good enrichment programme that includes residential visits for Year 5 and 6 pupils enhances what pupils learn about diverse cultures. Some cultural events are planned with imagination and good use of the local community, as exemplified by Year 3 and 4 pupils' Second World War street party. Pupils have exchanged letters with pupils in a school in Ghana but this link is still at an early stage. The school's focus on the creative curriculum has not yet had the expected impact on standards. In addition, the planning of the curriculum does not effectively address the needs of the more able. There are signs that the 'screen to print' project is beginning to translate into improved writing. The provision for music is developing and is enhanced effectively by weekly music assemblies. The planning of increasing cross-curricular links and the more frequent use of local resources help to make learning more relevant for pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The personal care of pupils is good, including the care given to those who have barriers to learning. These pupils quickly benefit from the school's good partnerships with specialist organisations. Procedures to safeguard pupils are thorough and meet current requirements. Concerted action over the past year has raised levels of attendance. The code of conduct for behaviour has been reviewed and pupils are very clear about rewards and sanctions. Academic guidance is at an early stage of development; teachers are trying out new approaches to involve pupils more in their own learning. There are differences in the quality of marking and guidance as to how work may be improved. There are also differences in the level of challenge for many

pupils. Often, targets are too easily attained and are not sufficiently well known or reviewed regularly enough.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership has been through a state of flux over the past few years and this has stifled school development. Improvements this year have seen the school refocusing its work on raising standards through the growing realisation that pupils could be doing even better. The seconded headteacher has an accurate and realistic view of the school's performance. Leadership has been very receptive to ongoing support and advice and, as a result, systems are improving. However, it is still early days in terms of staff with management responsibilities playing a strategic role in pushing forward school improvement. The school's aim is for this to improve next academic year when firm plans for sharing good practice, extensive staff training and an improved cycle of monitoring and evaluating the school's work come into play. Governors have a good monitoring programme but have been less successful in challenging the school to raise pupils' performance. Targets set over the years have lacked challenge. Whilst the mathematics target has now been set higher, others have not. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to promoting community cohesion. Family Learning sessions have started, as has developing the international dimension through pupils' links with a school in Ghana.

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?	2
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/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 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

How good are 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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
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

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

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 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**

3 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hadleigh Junior School, Essex, SS7 2DQ

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited you recently. You were very polite and well behaved and we were impressed with the way you clearly love learning and are keen to do well. This letter is to let you know what we found out.

Yours is a satisfactory school. There have been quite a lot of changes with different headteachers over the years. This has made it more difficult for the school to concentrate on improving. Your parents have noticed the improvements that Mrs Mansfield has made. Mr Evans does a fine job in making sure the school day runs smoothly. Mrs Lane is making a real difference; as a result, some, but not all of you, are now making good progress. Everyone works very hard to make sure you are happy and well cared for. The sports, clubs and extra activities, such as 'Pinafore Pirates', mean that you get plenty of good opportunities to experience a wide variety of things.

We have asked all the adults in your school to help you all to raise your standards in your mathematics and writing. This is so that when you leave in Year 6, the standards you reach are at least above average. At the moment, it is only in reading where this is happening. In order to do this we have asked them to do the following:

- make the teaching even better, especially in writing, so that more lessons are good and you receive work that is just at the right level, which for some of you means harder work
- involve everyone who is in charge of different areas of the school in taking a closer look at how you are getting on so they can help the school improve more quickly
- help you to know just what you need to do to make your work even better, including setting you more difficult targets to aim for.

You can do your bit by carrying on working hard and behaving well. You could also try to remember your targets to help you improve your work when you get new ones next term. We all hope you have a lovely summer break.

With best wishes

Ann Taylor

Lead inspector