

Humberstone Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120013
Local Authority	Leicester City
Inspection number	329650
Inspection dates	8–9 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Pat Walsh HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	311
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robina Newcombe
Headteacher	Jim Tarpey
Date of previous school inspection	20 June 2007
School address	Main Street Humberstone Leicester LE5 1AE
Telephone number	0116 2767248
Fax number	0116 2740779

Age group	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

Humberstone is a larger than average sized junior school serving a community close to Leicester City with more social and economic disadvantage than is typical. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average. Around half the pupils are from White British backgrounds and a quarter are of Indian heritage. A wide variety of languages are spoken in the school, about a third of the pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. The school has gained the Activemark award. At the time of its last inspection, the school was judged to require special measures. An executive headteacher has been in post for three terms.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. The school has made some important improvements in its provision since its last inspection and its overall effectiveness is now satisfactory. It is emerging from a period of rapid improvement. The executive headteacher, ably supported by senior leaders, has been effective in leading a determined drive to accelerate pupils' progress and to improve teaching. At the heart of the school's success has been the acceptance by all staff and governors that improvements had to be made and their excellent team spirit and total commitment to make them. This positive response reflects the good leadership and management provided by the executive headteacher, senior leadership team and governors. This strong leadership, improved sense of purpose and continued planned support from the local authority demonstrates good capacity for further improvement in the future.

Teaching is satisfactory overall and results in satisfactory learning and achievement. Standards in Year 6 have accelerated over the last year and are broadly average. Pupils' achievement over time is now satisfactory. Inspection evidence confirmed the school's own evaluation that, as the quality of teaching has improved, pupils' progress in core subjects has accelerated throughout school. Progress still varies between year groups but is currently never less than satisfactory and is already good in places. This is because more good lessons are now being taught. The tracking of individual pupils shows that the proportion attaining the expected standards for their age is rising and that overall standards are set to improve further. However, standards in writing are considerably lower than in reading, mathematics and science and so remain a priority for improvement.

The curriculum is satisfactory. The school is at an early stage of planning links between subjects to make learning more relevant and to reinforce basic skills. As a result, there are still too few opportunities for pupils to develop writing skills through work in other subjects. Furthermore, activities for all pupils are not always sufficiently challenging to promote the best possible progress. Nevertheless, a key factor underpinning recent improvements has been the school's effective use of assessment information. Because teachers regularly review progress and are held to account for pupils' short and longer term achievements, their expectations are higher and the targets that they set for pupils more challenging. Teachers and teaching assistants have become more skilled at identifying and closing gaps in pupils' learning and in targeting specific support at any who are at risk of underachieving. In this respect, provision is better than it was at the time of the previous inspection. Care, guidance and support for pupils are good. Pastoral care is strong and results in effective personal support and guidance for pupils and their families. Levels of personal development and well-being are good and attendance is above average. Pupils enjoy school and behave well because relationships between pupils and staff are good. They know the importance of safe and healthy lifestyles and make a positive contribution to the school and wider community. Sound basic skills and positive attitudes to learning prepare pupils satisfactorily for their future lives.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards, particularly in writing, and ensure that the work planned for all groups of pupils is suitably challenging so that they achieve as well as they can.

- Develop links between subjects in order to make learning more relevant and to provide every possible opportunity for pupils to reinforce basic skills.

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

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The concerted effort of all staff to tackle underachievement through better teaching and effective tracking of how well pupils are doing is having a positive impact. Consequently, standards are average and achievement is satisfactory overall. When pupils enter the school in Year 3, standards fluctuate but are usually average. In 2007, Year 6 results in the national tests were below average in English, mathematics and science. Standards in writing and mathematics have been weaker than in reading but are improving. The most recent 2008 assessment data indicates that standards in English, mathematics and science are now broadly average, although writing remains an area of weakness. School data and inspection evidence indicate that pupils in the current Year 6 make sound and sometimes good progress and are on track to achieve satisfactorily. Furthermore, the rate of progress is accelerating in all year groups, particularly those with younger pupils and the gap in their achievement is narrowing. Pupils who find learning difficult receive effective support and make satisfactory progress in relation to the targets set for them. Those pupils learning English as an additional language make similar progress to their peers and are well supported in their learning.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' behaviour is good, and pupils report that behaviour has much improved recently. They enjoy school, as illustrated by their good attendance, and they have sensible attitudes to their work. Pupils are courteous and polite, and the quality of relationships is good. They feel safe in school and say that bullying is not a problem. They adopt safe practices, such as when carrying out science experiments. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the school and the wider community. In school, pupils carry out a variety of responsibilities and, for example, the school council has helped with initiatives to improve playground resources and activities. The school is involved in the local community, the choir often takes part in various events, for instance at the local church. Pupils have a good understanding of how to live healthy lives, and they make healthy choices in what they eat. They also benefit from the opportunities provided by the school for exercise and sport. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and pupils show a good awareness of different cultures. The school successfully develops in its pupils a range of personal skills, and pupils make satisfactory progress in literacy and numeracy. This is preparing them satisfactorily for their next stage of education, as well as later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning overall are satisfactory, although during the inspection a significant amount of good teaching was observed. However, this teaching, which is much improved since

the previous inspection, has not yet had time to impact sufficiently on pupils' learning, which remains satisfactory. Teachers provide interesting lessons for pupils, using a good range of resources and strategies. Classes are well managed and relationships are strong. As a result, pupils are keen to learn and ready to work hard. Teachers make effective use of the interactive whiteboards to motivate pupils and develop their understanding. Teaching assistants are well deployed to promote learning, especially that of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This ensures they are able to join in all class activities. Teachers make good use of paired discussions. They plan a range of work for the different abilities in their classes. However, they do not always provide work that is challenging enough for pupils, especially in relation to writing, so that over time their knowledge and skills are not fully extended.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum enables pupils to study a broad range of subjects and this contributes to their satisfactory progress. The days dedicated to a single subject, such as the recent science day, successfully enhance pupils' learning. The school recognises that the curriculum overall might be made more interesting and, as a result, more links are beginning to be made between subjects to produce topics that will further motivate pupils. A particular emphasis is also being placed on the greater use of literacy as the school rightly recognises that some pupils have weaknesses in their writing skills. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are provided with a satisfactory range of tasks, activities and support. There is a good emphasis throughout the school on developing pupils' personal and social skills, and the curriculum makes a good contribution to pupils' safe and healthy lifestyles. There is a satisfactory range of outings, visitors and after school activities, which pupils say they enjoy.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral care, guidance and support are good. The nurture group is particularly effective in supporting more vulnerable pupils. Child protection and safeguarding procedures are robust and meet all national requirements. Pupils in turn are confident that they have an adult to turn to if they are worried. Staff ensure that pupils work in a safe and secure environment. Safety checks and risk assessments are routinely carried out. Regular use of support services also ensures good provision for pupils, such as those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The improving links forged with the infant school successfully prepare pupils for joining Year 3. Links with parents and carers are improving through better opportunities for them to be involved in their child's learning and this promotes satisfactory community cohesion. The school has improved its assessment and tracking systems, and staff track pupils very carefully and take prompt and effective steps if their progress falters. Pupils have targets for improving their work and discussions with pupils suggest that, whilst some are a little unsure of them, most have a suitable understanding about what they need to do to make their work better. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and they often add words of praise and encouragement. A number of teachers also add advice about improving their work, although this does not happen in every class.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school has improved steadily because leadership, management and governance are now good. The executive headteacher has empowered all staff to work as an effective team and to take responsibility for the necessary improvements. The appointment of a senior leader with responsibility for teaching and learning has been pivotal in the most recent improvements seen in the school and she has the full support of staff and governors. Subject and year group leaders have clear expectations of their role and continue to grow in confidence. Systematic and rigorous monitoring by senior staff and the local authority ensures that all staff are clear about what still needs to be done to maintain the drive for improvement. Governors, under the strong guidance of the chair of governors, play their part well, increasingly monitoring pupils' learning and challenging the school to show evidence of progress. The school has demonstrated that its actions have been effective in raising standards and achievement across the school. It has made good improvement since the last inspection and is giving satisfactory value for money.

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	2

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	2
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?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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	2
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?	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	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**

10 December 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Humberstone Junior School, Leicester LE5 1AE

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed looking around and meeting you, your teachers and teaching assistants, and seeing what you achieve in school. We found talking to you very interesting and these discussions helped us to come to decisions about how good your school is. Your school has really improved in the last year and we have decided that inspectors do not need to visit every term to check how things are going. All the staff work hard to help you learn and the school is now providing you with a satisfactory education.

We were particularly impressed by your good behaviour in lessons and the way you work together sensibly. You told us that you feel safe and happy in school and we were pleased to hear that you know how to deal with bullying. I enjoyed hearing Year 6 talk in assembly about Children's Human Rights Day and talking to Year 3 about the natural materials displayed outside their classroom. I have asked your headteacher, the teachers and the governors to make sure that you all get work that really makes you think hard. This will help you to become good writers and get better results at the end of Year 6. I have also asked them to plan work in all subjects that gives you lots of practice in literacy, numeracy and ICT. I am sure you will help by continuing to behave well and always doing your best. I wish you well for the future.

Yours faithfully

Pat Walsh Her Majesty's Inspector