

Hamstead Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103895
Local Authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	336186
Inspection dates	2–3 February 2010
Reporting inspector	David Driscoll

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 of pupils on the school roll	230
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Joanne Moon
Headteacher	Mr Tim Bowen
Date of previous school inspection	8 September 2006
School address	Hamstead Road Great Barr Birmingham
Telephone number	0121 357 1557
Fax number	0121 357 1557
Email address	timothy.bowen@hamstead-jun.sandwell.sch.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2010

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The majority of their time was spent looking at learning. Twenty three lessons and 12 teachers were observed. Inspectors held meetings with groups of pupils, governors and staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at records of pupils' progress, the school's development plan, records of checks on teaching, documents relating to safeguarding of pupils and the responses to 131 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- whether assessments of the most able pupils are sufficiently accurate to allow teachers to set them sufficiently demanding work
- whether actions to improve the progress of boys are proving successful
- whether initiatives aimed at reassuring parents about the incidence of bullying are working.

Information about the school

Hamstead Junior School draws its pupils from an urban area. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is average. The proportions of pupils from a minority ethnic background and who speak English as an additional language are well above average, although very few are at an early stage of learning English. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Hamstead Junior provides a good education. Achievement is rising rapidly and the school is well placed to continue to improve. This is because the school's leaders pay close attention to checking how much progress pupils are making, then identify accurately where changes to provision can be made in order to improve any areas where progress is not as good as it could be. The most notable example is the progress made by boys in their writing. As in most schools, boys used to make less progress than girls in writing. However, the changes made to teaching and the curriculum have led to boys enjoying writing much more, and they now make even better progress than the girls. Lower attainers and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make particularly good progress because they are very well supported by teaching assistants and, for those with disabilities, specially adapted resources. Teaching assistants are continually assessing how well each individual in their group of pupils is doing, and then changing the work to make it progressively more challenging. The school's accurate self-evaluation has rightly identified that the higher attainers still do not make as much progress as their classmates. They are sometimes given the same work as middle attainers, which they find easy, or finish quickly and have to wait for others to finish before being moved on. Assessments for all groups of pupils are accurate. There are examples of outstanding assessment in the school. Pupils in Year 6, for example, assess their own work with the teacher, who provides detailed feedback on what they are doing well and what they have got wrong. Each pupil in this year group is also set individual targets for each piece of work, so they know exactly what they need to do to improve. However, this is the exception rather than the rule. In all classes work is marked frequently, but some pupils, and their parents and carers, understandably do not feel that they know enough about how well they are doing or how to improve.

Throughout the school pupils get on very well together. They are polite and considerate of others. Pupils from all backgrounds play together and cooperate very well in class. Incidents of poor behaviour are very rare because teachers are strict but fair. The school has been particularly successful at helping individuals to modify their own behaviour by getting such pupils to think about the impact of their actions and always consider what is the 'right' thing to do. This is helped by the good social education that the school provides, where pupils are often given moral dilemmas to consider. These attributes, together with a good level of basic skills, help to prepare pupils for later life. However, many are late to school in the mornings. Furthermore, although pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes healthy living, many bring unhealthy snacks to school. The school sends out general information to guide parents and carers on punctuality and healthy eating, but it is clear that some are not supporting the school's

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

efforts in these respects and the school does not target these parents and carers with extra support or guidance.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure the most able pupils make consistently good progress by always providing them with work that is suitably challenging.
- Work more closely with those parents and carers who are not fully supporting the school's efforts to improve pupils' punctuality and adoption of healthy lifestyles.
- Make better use of assessment information to consistently inform pupils, and their parents and carers, of how well pupils are doing and what they need to do to improve further.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils achieve well because they enjoy their lessons. Attainment rises at a faster rate than expected nationally in all years, and the standards seen in lessons and pupils' books were above average by Year 6. There are no significant differences in the progress of different groups, other than the most able making less progress than others. In the past there were more White British boys among the most able, so it appeared that they made less progress than others and the school worked hard to improve their achievement. This has led to improvement in learning for all boys, especially in their writing, which was evident in the lessons observed. Boys now enjoy writing as much as the girls do because they are always clear of its purpose. Teachers exploit boys' interest in solving problems, for example by giving them folders of evidence that they have to analyse in order to write a biography. Boys also like having a 'right' answer, which is one reason they do well in mathematics. The staff have cleverly drawn up checklists for pupils' writing, so that pupils check for themselves that they have all the ingredients of a good piece of writing. In most lessons pupils worked hard and concentration was total. Only in lessons where the pupils were not sufficiently challenged did attention wander and pupils start to fidget. Pupils are quick to take the opportunity to work with others and discuss their tasks. It was commonplace for pupils to first turn to a neighbour for guidance, so they could get on as quickly as possible, rather than stop and put their hand up for the teacher. Pupils also like taking responsibility beyond lessons. They take their roles as monitors and playground buddies seriously, although there are fewer opportunities to learn from activities in the wider community. Pupils feel safe and secure at school, with a great deal of confidence that staff will take seriously any concerns they may have.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Lessons proceed at a good pace. The impetus often comes from a starter activity, such as a mental arithmetic test, that gets pupils straight down to work and thinking hard at the beginning of a lesson. Teachers use questioning well to test pupils' understanding, although they do not always find out why some pupils have got the answer wrong in order that they may correct any misunderstandings. One notable feature of teaching is the way that discussion is encouraged. If few hands go up, the teacher will tell pupils to talk to their partner about the question and soon almost all of the class will have a response ready. The school's efforts to allay the concerns of pupils, and parents and carers, about bullying have been entirely successful. Every pupil, when asked, said that there is no bullying in school and almost all parents and carers were very happy that their child was safe in school. Incidents of poor behaviour are dealt with very well. The school has had notable success with individuals. Those with special educational needs relating to behaviour, for example, make good progress towards their targets so that the amount of support they receive quickly reduces as they move through the school. Other pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have the curriculum modified to meet their particular needs, often using one-to-one support where needed. For others, the curriculum is well planned to become increasingly more difficult as they move through the school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
---	--

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The school's leaders, including governors, set challenging targets for the school's performance. Progress towards them is carefully monitored, and all staff are aware of the part they need to play if the targets are to be met. As a result, all pull together. The great majority of targets are met, although the school falls short in its aspirations for the most able. Checks on lessons are accurate and identify clearly for all staff, including teaching assistants, what has worked well and where improvements can be made. All senior managers are involved in carrying out such checks, but a relatively high proportion of governors are new and so the governors' role in monitoring work in school is more limited. Nevertheless, they are rigorous in assessing progress towards priorities on the school development plan and take a strong lead on safeguarding matters, where the school adopts good practice in all areas of its work. Good attention is paid to ensuring that all pupils can do as well as they are able in school, although leaders do not always make the most of links with parents to extend learning at home. Data are analysed well to check for differences in progress between groups and any racial incidents, though rare, are always taken very seriously. The result is a school that is a most harmonious community, where assessment data are combined well with the results of lesson observations to ensure that any gaps in performance between groups are quickly closed. The school maintains good links with other schools in the area, but links with schools in other parts of the country, which would help pupils to understand life in other parts of the United Kingdom, are more limited. In order to promote understanding of community cohesion on an international level some, but not all, classes have formed links with partner schools in France. Partnerships with specialist support services are good, with a rapid response when extra support is needed for an individual pupil.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers are happy with all that the school provides, and almost all rightly feel that their children are safe in school. A very small minority feel that their child is not making enough progress. However, inspectors found that the great majority of pupils make good progress. A few parents and carers also said that although they receive information about their child's progress, they would like more in order to better support their child's learning at home. Inspectors found that the school meets statutory requirements in respect of reporting progress, but does not make the best use of marking and assessment in order to help parents and carers understand how well their children are doing and how they can help them.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hamstead Junior School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 131 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 230 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	62	47	66	50	3	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	58	44	72	55	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	38	29	81	62	9	7	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	42	32	72	55	14	11	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	47	36	78	60	5	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	42	32	73	56	15	12	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	45	34	78	60	8	6	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	32	26	85	68	7	6	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	31	24	87	67	11	8	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	43	33	72	56	10	8	4	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	18	91	72	11	9	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	44	34	77	60	5	4	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	47	36	74	57	7	5	2	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



4 February 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hamstead Junior School, Birmingham, B43 5BE

Many thanks for all the help you gave us when we visited your school. We were most impressed by your good behaviour, how well you get on with one another and how hard you work in lessons. Your parents and carers can be very proud of your good manners and how welcoming you are to visitors. Some of you are often late to school in the morning, which means that you miss part of the first lesson. We have asked the people who manage the school to help your parents and carers get you to school on time. You can help too, by always reminding them when you think you might be late. We were surprised that so many of you were eating unhealthy snacks, when you clearly know that they are bad for you. So, we have asked the people who manage the school to work more closely with your parents and carers to encourage you to eat more healthily. You can help with this too by asking for more healthy snacks.

You go to a good school. Most of you do well in all your subjects. Those of you who find learning more difficult get good support from the adults and make particularly good progress. Some of you sometimes find the work a bit too easy, so we have asked your teachers to always make sure that work is difficult enough to make you really work hard. Some of you told us that you were not always sure how well you were doing or what you need to do to improve. We can see why. Some of you mark your work with your teacher and then are given targets to aim for with each piece of work, but this is not true for everybody. So, we have asked your teachers to all use this way of marking your work and telling you what you need to work on. This will also help your parents and carers understand how well you are doing.

Your school is getting better and better every year. The people who manage the school are always checking how well you are doing, so they can spot any who are falling behind. They know where they can make improvements, and are working hard to make sure that you all do as well as you possibly can.

Yours sincerely

David Driscoll

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.