

Howden Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117854
Local Authority	East Riding of Yorkshire
Inspection number	339086
Inspection dates	19–20 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Bernard Jones

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	194
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Helen Higson
Headteacher	Mrs Judy Scargill
Date of previous school inspection	6 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors, one of whom examined the school's safeguarding procedures. In looking at learning, the inspectors visited 14 lessons, totalling some eight hours and saw all nine teachers, some on two occasions. In addition, around one and a half hours was spent scrutinising a sample of pupils' work. Inspectors held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils, parents and a representative of the local authority. They observed the school's work, and looked at the data on pupils' performance, including their current progress, plans for the future and records of the school's own monitoring of its performance. The responses to 74 parents' questionnaires were considered.

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

- the effectiveness of teachers' planning in ensuring different groups make the progress they should
- teachers' use of data and how effectively they check to ensure the progress made by different groups of pupils
- the impact of leaders and managers at all levels in helping to raise standards.

Information about the school

Howden Junior School is a smaller-than-average junior school, with two classes for each year group. Most pupils live locally and very few join or leave the school other than at the normal times. Almost all pupils are White British and there are very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds or pupils learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below the national average as is the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There are slightly more pupils with statements of special educational needs than is found nationally.

The school has a number of awards, including the Healthy Schools Award, the Basic Skills Quality Mark and the Activemark.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Howden Junior School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. The leadership of the headteacher has ensured that standards are improving and pupils are achieving satisfactorily after a period when there was some significant underachievement. By the time pupils leave Year 6 standards are broadly average and this reflects sound progress from their earlier starting points on joining in Year 3. Initiatives taken recently to raise attainment have been successful, particularly in English where standards are higher than average, but there is still a weakness among girls in mathematics.

This is an inclusive school, which has significant strengths in pastoral areas. Pupils enjoy coming to school and their parents appreciate the approach taken by the school where every child does matter. Pupils respond by making a good contribution to the school and wider community. Good levels of care, guidance and support have a positive impact on the personal development of pupils. The results are seen in pupils who feel safe and have an excellent understanding of how to live healthily. The importance attached to pupils' well-being is reflected in the good level of detailed attention given to providing a safe environment for all children and staff. The school's work to engage parents has seen a marked improvement and a very large majority express their support for the school. Class teachers, senior staff and governors continue to improve their communication with parents.

Pupils behave well around the school; they show consideration to others, and these positive relationships are taken into classrooms, where pupils work well together. However, it is only where they receive good teaching that their behaviour makes a strong contribution to their good learning, shown in their enthusiasm to participate and concentrate. Too often, pupils receive teaching that fails to engage them fully and some that is mundane and dull. In such lessons, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve and the contribution they can make to their learning are set too low. Here, behaviour is satisfactory, marked by pupils' compliance and passivity rather than their active participation. The majority of teaching is sound rather than good, and this is a barrier to the school's efforts to raise pupils' achievement further.

The headteacher ensures that all staff are involved in decision-making and most teachers have specific responsibilities. There are still weaknesses in the way middle managers pursue their roles and they lack specific training in monitoring standards and the quality of teaching in their subjects. Governors challenge appropriately and support well the life and work of the school. Financial control, planning and accountability are good and help to ensure the satisfactory value for money that the school produces. Recent improvements to the curriculum have made a positive impact on standards as seen in the above average attainment in English. The school's focus on using phonics

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has strengthened teaching in this area. These improvements, which are supported by detailed planning documents and realistic and broadly accurate self-evaluation, ensure that the school has a satisfactory capacity to sustain improvements.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards among girls in mathematics by adopting a more consistent approach throughout the school to teaching problem-solving.
- Increase the proportion of good teaching by:
 - identifying and spreading the good practice that exists in the school
 - ensuring that teachers plan clearly what they expect different groups of pupils to attain in lessons
 - raising teachers' expectations about the contribution pupils can make to their learning.
- Develop the skills of middle managers and subject leaders so that they are better equipped to monitor teaching and learning and judge the impact this has on raising standards.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils are making satisfactory progress to attain broadly average standards in mathematics and science. Boys do better in mathematics because girls are held back by poorer problem-solving skills. In English, pupils make good progress overall and reach above average standards; girls make particularly good progress in writing. All pupils are helped to develop an appropriate range of basic academic skills, including how to use computers and interactive whiteboards. This has the benefit of making learning more meaningful and so improving pupils' enjoyment and engagement and helping to prepare them for the next phase of their education. When their progress, attainment and enjoyment are taken together, pupils' overall achievement is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities progress at the same rate as their peers. They benefit in their personal development from good pastoral care and guidance given by their teachers and experienced teaching assistants.

In lessons, pupils' satisfactory behaviour ensures that learning can take place without undue interruption. Pupils are taught to live healthily and safely and the large majority follows what they are taught. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of how to cross the road safely, how to be safe when they are near water, what to do if they hear the fire alarm at school and the importance of not talking to strangers. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the wide range of activities the school provides and show enthusiasm for the many sporting activities that are available.

The school council plays a positive role in putting forward ideas and pupils take their

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responsibilities seriously and feel they make a difference. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong and they are open, welcoming and confident with adults and visitors.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
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?

Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory, but there are some common strengths. The consistency with which staff manage pupils' behaviour is generally good. Teachers have adequate knowledge of subjects and have a good understanding of how to help pupils to develop basic skills in literacy, numeracy, science and information and communication technology. Relationships in lessons between adults and pupils are good and help to engender good relationships between pupils. This ensures that pupils work well in pairs and groups. Teachers' increasingly effective use of assessment data to guide and support pupils is a growing strength. Teaching assistants are generally well deployed and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, particularly in their support of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, there are weaknesses. Too many teachers still talk at length while pupils sit passively for too long.

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

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The quality of planning lacks detail about exactly what teachers expect pupils of different abilities to learn. Extension activities are not regularly used to challenge and so extend the skills and understanding in the subject being taught. There is not enough emphasis placed on the progress different groups of pupils make in lessons.

There are effective links between the school and outside specialists to ensure good levels of pastoral care, guidance and support, and some good support for the most vulnerable pupils. The curriculum is good. There is a good range of after-school clubs and a residential experience for older pupils. These, along with the visits to places of interest and visitors to the school make a good contribution to enriching the curriculum. The school is in the process of modifying and improving its provision and recognises that the use of literacy and numeracy skills in subjects across the curriculum is not yet fully embedded, but the impact is starting to be seen.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
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 headteacher's vision is welcomed by governors, a number of whom are new to post, and there is a common purpose to improve. The budget is used efficiently and the school ensures satisfactory value for money. However, their success in effecting improvement has been variable. Some middle managers have helped to improve the quality of teaching in targeted areas such as reading and writing, for example, in the use of phonics. However, managers have not been well-enough equipped to make the most of observing colleagues in the classroom or to judge the impact of the initiatives they introduce. The work of middle managers is still not focused sharply enough on the progress made by different groups of learners and on raising standards. For example, insufficient attention is paid to the progress pupils make when monitoring the quality of teaching. These weaknesses are recognised by all concerned and currently serve as a spur to embed ambition and drive further improvements.

Partnerships with other schools are good, ensuring a flow of expertise into the school and opportunities for Howden teachers to work in other schools in their areas of particular expertise. The school has a comprehensive range of policies in place that are reviewed at regular intervals and high among the priorities is an emphasis on ensuring safeguarding procedures are up-to-date and effective. With good support from the governing body, the school's leaders ensure that all arrangements and policies relating to keeping children safe are in place. There are good procedures to ensure pupils

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experience equal opportunities in all aspects of their school life and the school is assiduous in tackling any form of discrimination. These factors and the good provision for community cohesion have their impact on the ways pupils of varied backgrounds interact positively. This contributes well to the safe, happy and caring atmosphere which is evident throughout the school.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Views of parents and carers

The inspection confirmed that the school works hard to engage parents and has good systems in place, both formally and informally, for parents to meet with staff.

Parents are very supportive of the school. No common concerns were expressed, although a few individual parents described particular problems they had experienced. Parents find teachers to be approachable and they feel that they are involved in school life and say they are helped to support their children's learning both in school and at home. When interviewed, parents said they are aware of their children's progress and their targets and were satisfied with their children's achievement. Parents appreciate the safe environment of the school where their children are happy and bullying is not an issue. As one parent said, 'Staff treat children as individuals.' Parents praise the school and its staff for the ways they help children enjoy school and learn how to respect other people and other cultures.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Howden 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 74 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 194 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	24	32	48	65	1	1	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	36	49	35	47	2	3	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	24	32	42	57	7	9	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	22	47	64	9	12	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	24	32	43	58	2	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	28	42	57	9	12	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	20	27	47	64	3	4	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)	24	32	41	55	4	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	26	49	66	3	4	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	31	40	54	5	7	3	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	24	42	57	11	15	2	3
The school is led and managed effectively	28	38	39	53	2	3	3	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	27	36	39	53	7	9	1	1

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.



21 January 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Howden Junior School, Howden, DN14 7SL

Thank you for being so welcoming and friendly when my colleagues and I inspected your school recently. Please thank your parents and carers for all their letters and for talking to us. We enjoyed watching and listening to you in your lessons, reading your work and talking to you. It was a joy to hear your singing in assembly.

I like the way you take responsibility, and how well you are taught to take a pride in your surroundings. This is reflected in the quality of the displays in corridors and in your classrooms, which make them interesting places to be in. I was also impressed in how you all get on so well together, whether in the classrooms or out in the playgrounds. I appreciate how your school helps you very well in learning to live healthily. Your teachers are very good in ensuring that you are safe and that you know how to live safely. You obviously enjoy your time in the junior school and you are made ready to progress to the next stage of your education.

I found that your school gives you a satisfactory standard of education because teaching is sound and the curriculum is planned well. This helps you to make satisfactory progress and so the standards you reach by the end of Year 6 are broadly average. You do particularly well in English, where standards are above average. To make things even better, I have asked your headteacher and teachers to ensure that girls raise their standards further in mathematics, particularly in developing their skills in problem-solving. I have also asked that teachers plan even more carefully to make sure that all of you make the progress of which you are capable and keep a good account of how well you all perform in your lessons. You can help by continuing to work hard.

I hope you continue to enjoy school and I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Bernard Jones

Lead inspector

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