

# Heacham Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	121191
<b>Local Authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	339891
<b>Inspection dates</b>	12–13 October 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Michael Farrell

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>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	148
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ms. Julia Elsley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs. Nicola Darley
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 July 2007
<b>School address</b>	College Drive Heacham Kings Lynn
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 11 lessons and a school assembly, and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of policies, data on pupils' progress and other documents and analysed 86 parent questionnaires.

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

- The achievement of boys in writing, lower attainers in literacy, pupils eligible for free school meals, and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to judge the effectiveness of the school's analysis of their progress and of interventions to support their learning.
- Teaching and learning and how challenging it is to ensure different groups progress well enough, including in mixed age classes.
- The curriculum, including its effectiveness in mixed age classes.

## Information about the school

Heacham Junior School is smaller than average and educates pupils from Heacham and areas around it. The great majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of children eligible for free school meals is below average but has doubled in the previous three years. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities and that of pupils with statements of special educational needs is above average. In 2004, the school was reorganised from a middle school to a junior school, leading to a decline in the number of pupils on roll. This has had a significant impact on the school's organisation, including having fewer staff, fewer classes and the introduction of some mixed age teaching. The school has an Activemark and achieved Healthy School status in 2008.

**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

Heacham Junior School is a good school which provides well for its pupils. A warm and caring ethos permeates the school because staff put great effort into developing this. Consequently, pupils greatly enjoy coming to school and one, typical of many, said, 'I love my school, I love my teachers - they are really nice- and I have lots of fun'. The school's leadership and management are good in every aspect. With the strong leadership of the headteacher, the committed staff have developed an exciting new curriculum in response to the challenge of smaller pupil numbers. Self-evaluation is accurate so the school knows its weaknesses and strengths well and tackles areas to improve successfully. This, coupled with the school's constructive response to having fewer pupils and fewer teachers, gives the school a good capacity to improve. The hard working governing body combines good challenge and support. The school's welcoming approach helps ensure equal opportunities for all pupils are well promoted. However, subject leaders are not as involved as they should be in raising standards by monitoring, evaluating and promoting interventions in their subject areas.

The good care, guidance and support is particularly strong in supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities because the school effectively coordinates the contribution of colleagues from other services and schools. Because of the good arrangements to help pupils settle into the school and support them as they prepare to leave, these transition periods are smooth. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, especially their moral and social development, because the school places such an emphasis on this. Pupils' behaviour is good and sometimes excellent because it is well supported and encouraged, including by the example of staff and by good whole school assemblies. Pupils feel safe because of the school's strong systems and the caring attitude of staff. Because the school curriculum and other aspects of provision promote healthy living, pupils eat healthily and enjoy exercise, and older pupils can speak about the importance of emotional health. Attendance is good but the pupils' economic well being is sound because of the satisfactory contribution from average attainment in literacy, numeracy and information and communications technology (ICT). The curriculum meets the needs of pupils well, including in mixed age classes. Imaginative new developments such as teaching through topics across some subjects are enriching it further and motivate pupils more. The balance of cross-curricular links and the focus of particular subjects have been well thought through. While the detail of new curriculum plans to ensure a wide range of activities and resource ideas to challenge all pupils and capture their interest is not fully embedded, their impact is already good.

Lessons observed during the inspection ranged from good to satisfactory but teaching is

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good overall. Teachers use assessment information well. In lessons, good behaviour is successfully encouraged, relationships are warm and the best lessons move at a brisk pace. Activities are motivating. Teaching assistants make an effective contribution, and information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to support learning. However, in satisfactory lessons teachers do not always deploy teaching assistants to the fullest, and opportunities are missed to enable pupils to take more responsibility for their own learning. Because of the good teaching and the stimulating curriculum, pupils make good progress and learn well. They enter school attaining below the national average and leave it attaining at average levels and ready for the next stage of their education. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because of the care put into individual planning and support. Boys progress well in their writing and pupils who begin from lower starting points in literacy and pupils eligible for free school meals all make good progress because the school identifies difficulties and provides timely support including booster classes. The school works hard to maintain its strong links with parents, the great majority of whom warmly appreciate what the school provides.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Improve all teaching to good or better by December 2010 by ensuring that:
  - teachers always deploy teaching assistants to the fullest extent
  - pupils take more responsibility for their own learning.
  - Improve standards by involving subject leaders more in monitoring, evaluating and driving up the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in their subject areas.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

From their lower than average starting points, pupils enjoy learning, learn well and make good progress. Consequently, by the time they leave school, they reach standards broadly in line with national levels. Indeed, in 2009, standards at the end of Year 6 reached above the national average in English and mathematics. The school has been proactive in supporting the development of writing, which has particularly improved the performance of boys. Pupils eligible for free school meals and lower attainers achieve well because the school follows their progress, identifies difficulties early and gives extra support as necessary. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those looked after by the local authority make good progress because of the individual support they receive and because the school works effectively to coordinate the contribution of other services such as the health service. Children having special talents are encouraged well by opportunities such as links with other schools and specialist coaching. In lessons observed during the inspection, pupils made satisfactory progress in some and good progress in others but overall their progress in lessons was good. In a good lesson in which Year 3 pupils learned to write a news diary, they made good

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progress because they were interested and fully engaged in the suitable task, the teaching assistant provided effective support, and a good ethos encouraged real effort. In a good Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils developed their understanding and interpretation of bar charts because the clear learning objective was shared with the class and the pace of the lesson was brisk. In a good ICT lesson for a mixed age class of Years 4 and 5, pupils retrieved, edited, and saved documents and were able to describe their use of ICT and its use elsewhere. The teaching assistant provided good support because the lesson introduction was short and the teacher and assistant then circulated to support individual pupil's learning well. Pupils know and reach their challenging learning targets, supporting their good progress.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils feel safe because good procedures are in place, they place great trust in staff and help each other, for example, through being 'playground angels'. Their good behaviour

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

### How effective is the provision?

Teaching, including the use of assessment, is good. Lessons observed during the

<sup>1</sup> 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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inspection were good overall. Strengths of lessons include warm relationships between staff and children, clear planning and structure to lessons, and strong encouragement of pupils' good behaviour. Assessment informs planning well as teachers take account of what different pupils can do based on previous work. Marking is up to date and supportive. Pupils know their learning targets and work towards them well. Teaching assistants contribute well. However, in satisfactory lessons, teachers do not always deploy teaching assistants to the maximum, for example where lesson introductions are too long; and pupils are not always given opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning.

The imaginative curriculum meets the needs of pupils well and contributes to their enjoyment of school, supporting their interests and their progress. The school places a strong emphasis on developing core skills in numeracy and literacy which is raising standards across the school. The curriculum motivates pupils well and encourages progress. For example, the current topic work on evacuees in the Second World War supported by high quality displays is enabling pupils to work hard and produce sensitive and thoughtful writing and links across many subject areas. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities enjoy work that is challenging and engages their interest. The spacious grounds are well used for a variety of games and activities at playtime, and a good range of clubs and activities are offered. The detail of new curriculum plans is not fully embedded, but their impact is already good.

The good care, guidance and support the school provides ensures pupils feel valued and has a considerable impact in raising self-esteem. The school is warm, welcoming and open and values honesty and respect for others so that this permeates all its relationships. Vulnerable pupils are well supported through the development of good and well-monitored individual plans. Care is taken that pupils settle in well when they come to Heacham Junior School and that as the time approaches to move on, they are equally well supported to make this transition smoothly. The school works closely with families to ensure pupils do the best they can. All this leads to the good outcomes in personal development.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The dedicated and effective headteacher is supported by a hard working staff team who are always seeking to do better and governors who care greatly about the success of

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the school and therefore support and challenge it well. Because of this powerful combination, the school has been able to respond strongly to the challenges of the need to reorganise. The school's accurate self-evaluation has enabled it to recognise where its strengths and weaknesses lie and to work well to improve further, as indicated by its effective targeting of boys' writing. However, subject leaders are not as involved as they should be in driving standards higher by monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in their subjects. A very large majority of parents recognise the good work of the school and greatly appreciate what it provides.

The school has worked hard to develop good partnerships with others, including other services and schools, so that the best can be offered to its pupils. Because of the sense of community and the powerful ethos of the school, pupils are very accepting of others whatever their ethnic origin or social background and there is no evidence of discrimination. The school also has good policies in place and support equal opportunities. Safeguarding procedures are secure and policies are followed and known to all staff. The school encourages community cohesion well, has had specific training for governors and staff and follows planned activities that promote this area effectively. It deploys resources well to achieve good value for money.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

**Views of parents and carers**

The very large majority of parents who completed the questionnaire or spoke to an inspector were pleased with the school and what it offers. Those who made specific comments spoke of their child being happy at the school and they are very happy with

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the school themselves. A few parents were not happy with every aspect. Among the areas they would like to see improved are having more teaching assistants, better communication with the school and more information about their child's progress and how they can help.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Heacham 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 86 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 148 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	35	43	40	49	5	6	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	35	44	45	56	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	21	26	48	59	6	7	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	20	25	45	56	5	6	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	25	31	48	59	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	22	27	47	58	7	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	32	40	47	58	1	1	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)	19	23	50	62	3	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	21	26	49	60	4	5	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	28	35	44	54	4	5	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	21	26	46	57	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	28	35	48	59	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	36	47	36	47	2	3	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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



14 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Heacham Junior School, Heacham, PE31 7EJ

It was delightful to meet you when my colleagues and I inspected your school recently. Thank you for letting us know what you thought about your school and how much you enjoy it.

Heacham is a good school. As soon as we arrived, we felt how warm and welcoming it is. It is well led and staff work very hard to do their best for you. The teaching is good so you make good progress in your school subjects and when you leave, you are working at the same level as other children of the same age. The curriculum is good and you told us that you really liked the topic work you were doing when we visited. The school cares for you well and gives you good support.

There are two things the school could do even better so I have asked the headteacher to:

- make sure teachers shorten lesson introductions so they and the teaching assistants can spend more time working with individual pupils and small groups
- make sure you take more responsibility for your own learning
- make sure teachers responsible for subjects are more involved in checking the teaching and how well you are progressing to help improve both.

You can help in this by trying to take more responsibility for your own learning. I am confident you will do your best in this.

Thank you again for being so kind and helpful to me.

Yours faithfully,

Michael Farrell

Lead Inspector

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