

The Howard Junior School, King's Lynn

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120878
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	339801
Inspection dates	1–2 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Melvyn Hemmings

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	134
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andy Lane
Headteacher	Gregory Hill
Date of previous school inspection	0 March 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 12 lessons or parts of lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at school policies, records of meetings, assessment information and curriculum planning. In addition, 22 parent questionnaires were received and analysed.

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

- how effectively the school is working to raise standards, particularly in writing
- if pupils, especially those who are more able, make sufficient progress
- how successfully leaders are tackling pupils' low attendance.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with statements, is well above average. Most pupils are White British. The school has gained a number of awards, including Artsmark Gold and Healthy Schools status.

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****2**

Main findings

The school provides a friendly and caring setting in which to learn. The strong leadership of the headteacher has been the key to the school's improvement in the last two years. He has been fundamental in motivating staff and pupils to aim high and take the school forward. As a result, though attainment is low, particularly in writing, it is improving strongly and learning and progress are good. This is evident in the 19% increase of pupils in Year 6 reaching the expected level in writing in the 2009 national tests. This improvement stems from leaders' actions in setting pupils challenging individual targets for improvement, making teachers more accountable for the progress their pupils make and giving pupils clearer guidance on how to improve their writing. The introduction of guided writing sessions for pupils in Years 3 and 4 is having a positive effect on the progress they make. The trend of improvement in mathematics and science means that pupils are approaching average standards in these subjects by the time they leave school. This represents satisfactory achievement from their starting points, and an improvement on pupils' performance in previous years. Throughout the school, increasing numbers of pupils are working at the levels expected for their age and capability.

Enthusiastic teaching engages pupils and motivates them to do their best. As one pupil commented, 'Teachers make learning fun.' Teachers generally use assessment information well, so that pupils of all abilities make good progress. Nonetheless, there are times when activities do not provide sufficient challenge, particularly for those pupils who are more able. Although pupils can evaluate how well they have done, they are not as adept at identifying the specific steps they need to take next to improve their learning. A wide range of enrichment activities successfully enliven the curriculum and extend pupils' learning. Good personal development means pupils are polite and respectful towards others. Their behaviour is exemplary and makes a strong contribution to the progress they make. Strong pastoral care ensures the safety and well-being of all pupils and leads to them being cherished as unique individuals.

The school shows good capacity for sustained improvement. Leaders have acted rigorously to raise attendance, including closer liaison with parents and the education welfare officer, and setting ambitious targets for individual pupils and classes. This has led to significant improvement and the latest data shows attendance is above average. Accurate self-evaluation means leaders have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Their plans reflect what needs to be done to consolidate success and secure further improvement. This is shown in the school correctly prioritising improvement in pupils' writing by developing their ability to construct sentences accurately, providing more opportunities to write purposefully across the

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curriculum and widening their vocabulary to enrich their creative writing. Subject leaders carry out their individual responsibilities diligently. They evaluate what needs doing and take action to bring about improvement in the short term. They are not as effective in having a collective, long-term vision of whole-school improvement. The procedures for managing the performance of staff and for their professional development are used well and systems to support the school's further development are well established.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards, particularly in writing, by:
 - ensuring pupils, especially those who are more able, are always given work that is sufficiently challenging
 - improving pupils' skills in constructing sentences accurately with correct vocabulary, punctuation and spelling
 - extending pupils' vocabulary to enrich their creative writing and providing more opportunities to write purposefully across the curriculum
 - extend and embed guided writing throughout the school.
- Develop pupils' skills in identifying for themselves the next specific steps they need to take to improve their learning.
- Strengthen leadership and management by developing the skills of subject leaders in planning strategically for long-term school improvement.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged 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 start school with skill levels and abilities that are low, particularly in language and literacy. They have positive attitudes to their learning and this contributes well to the good progress they make. They show interest in their work, particularly when engaged in practical activities, and work well together in pairs and small groups. This was evident in a mathematics lesson for pupils in Year 3 when they were developing their understanding of the properties of two-dimensional shapes. Pupils confidently make contributions to class discussions and listen attentively to the views of others. Pupils read well and show an enjoyment of books. Their writing skills are less well developed but improving. Pupils' mathematical calculation skills are satisfactory but they are less adept at handling data to solve problems. Improved attainment in science means they have satisfactory skills to design and carry out investigations. They use information and communication technology (ICT) appropriately to support learning in other subjects. There is no significant difference between the achievement of different groups. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same good progress as other pupils because of the extra support they receive.

Good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development means pupils are kind,

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considerate and respectful of the beliefs and traditions of pupils from different backgrounds. They willingly take on responsibilities and carry them out seriously, such as being a member of the school council. In so doing, they make a good contribution to the life of the school. Pupils are adopting healthy lifestyles well and show a good understanding of the need to eat healthily and take regular exercise. They show a good knowledge of how to stay safe. Pupils are prepared satisfactorily for the next stage of education and their future lives. They are making good progress in developing basic skills in literacy and numeracy and are confident when using ICT in everyday situations. Pupils work well as members of a team and take pride in their good level of punctuality. They have a suitable understanding of the opportunities available to them and how to achieve them.

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	4
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	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers plan lessons well to build on previous work so pupils can use what they already know to support their current learning. Good classroom management leads to them being calm and friendly places in which to learn. Teachers do not always use

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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assessment information to plan work that matches pupils' individual needs. This results in them sometimes being given work that is either too easy or too hard, and this hinders the progress made, especially for the more able. Feedback to pupils, both orally and through marking, usually provides clear guidance on how they might improve. Teaching assistants are deployed well to support pupils, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

A strong feature of the curriculum is the range of enrichment opportunities that are much appreciated by pupils and parents. These include extra-curricular clubs in which many pupils enthusiastically participate. Curriculum planning ensures that work given to pupils builds systematically on previous work. Good links with others, such as professional sports coaches, extend pupils' skills and widen their horizons. The curriculum places good emphasis on developing pupils' creative talents, as reflected in the award of Artsmark Gold.

Rigorous child protection procedures and risk assessments are firmly in place. All staff are aware of the procedures to follow if they have concerns about the well-being of a pupil. The school provides a welcoming and safe learning environment for individuals and groups of pupils. Good links with outside agencies, such as the educational psychologist and social services, means extra support for individual pupils is available when required.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
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?

Leaders embed ambition and drive improvement by focusing the school on well chosen priorities. They communicate their high expectations for improvement clearly to staff. Target setting is realistic and challenging. The school promotes equal opportunity and tackles discrimination well. It has relevant information about different groups of pupils and carefully evaluates their performance across the curriculum and contribution to school life. All safeguarding requirements are met and arrangements are systematically reviewed. Leaders' actions have a positive impact on community cohesion within the local community and beyond. Leaders monitor and evaluate the school's work rigorously in order to build on its strengths. Everyone is treated equally and fairly and this is reflected in the excellent relationships evident throughout the school and the respect adults and pupils show to others. Subject leaders do not play a full part in planning strategically for long term school improvement. Governors understand the strengths and

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weaknesses of the school and are fully involved in influencing its direction.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
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

Almost all parents and carers who responded to inspection questionnaires were positive about the school's work and the efforts of all staff. One parent summed up the views of many in commenting, 'My child enjoys life at Howard Junior. It is good to know that the school supports children emotionally as well as academically.' A very small minority of parents did not think the school helped the children to have a healthy lifestyle.

Inspection evidence does not support this view.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Howard Junior School, King's Lynn 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 22 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 134 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	15	68	7	32	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	17	77	5	23	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	13	59	8	36	0	0	1	5
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	77	4	18	0	0	1	5
The teaching is good at this school	16	73	6	27	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	14	64	8	36	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	13	59	6	27	1	5	1	5
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)	14	64	7	32	0	0	1	5
The school meets my child's particular needs	14	64	7	32	0	0	1	5
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	13	59	8	36	1	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	50	10	45	1	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	16	73	6	27	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	16	76	4	19	1	5	0	0

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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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:	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. ■ 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.



3 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Howard Junior School, King's Lynn, PE30 4QJ.

Thank you for the very friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you and seeing the many interesting things you do. Your school is helping you to make good progress, although the standards you reach by the end of Year 6 are not as high as they could be.

What we found out about your school

It provides a welcoming and friendly setting in which to learn.

Your behaviour is excellent and you work very well with others, in pairs and small groups.

The contribution you make to the life of the school is good, such as being a member of the school council.

Adults look after you well and make sure you are safe, both in and around school and on visits.

You show a lot of enjoyment in coming to school and this is shown by your attendance rate being above average.

Many of you take part in the wide range of extra-curricular activities.

The headteacher, all the staff and governors are working hard to help you do better.

What we have asked your school to do now

Improve your skills, especially in writing.

Help you develop your ability to decide for yourselves the next steps needed to improve your learning.

Make sure all those who lead the school are fully involved in planning its future development.

You can all help your school improve further by continuing to try your best in everything you do.

Yours sincerely

Melvyn Hemmings

Lead inspector

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