

Hartford Community Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110696
Local Authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	356798
Inspection dates	4–5 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Margaret Goodchild

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	211
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ann Beevor
Headteacher	Miriam Piper
Date of previous school inspection	8 July 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Seventeen lessons were observed and nine teachers were seen. Meetings were held with staff, representatives of the governing body and a group of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at information about pupils' progress, evidence of monitoring and self-evaluation, a variety of the school's policies and at safeguarding documentation. In addition, they analysed the questionnaires returned by 74 parents and carers, 20 members of staff and 199 pupils.

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

- What keeps standards broadly average despite the school's continuous effort to raise achievement, especially in mathematics?
- How well does the school provide for the above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities?
- How well do leaders at all levels use monitoring and self-evaluation to improve teaching and learning and to drive improvement?
- What features of provision give rise to pupils' apparent enjoyment of school, their positive attitudes and good behaviour?

Information about the school

This is an average sized junior school. The percentage known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. Most pupils are of White British heritage and very few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average, and there are more pupils with a statement of special educational needs than in other schools of this size. Of the pupils who left the school in the last three years, 40% had special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school has gained the Silver Eco Award, Activemark, the International Schools Award (Foundation Level) and has national 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

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. It has a warm, welcoming atmosphere and pupils feel greatly valued as individuals. The quality of care and promotion of pupils' personal development are clear strengths of the school. As a result, pupils have very positive attitudes and behave well. Their attendance is good and they are very proud of their school. In lessons, pupils are highly co-operative, eager to learn and nearly always focus well on the work they are given to do.

Pupils' attainment since the last inspection has been broadly average and progress has been consistently satisfactory. In recent years, pupils have done less well in mathematics than in English and science. There is no clear pattern to variations in the progress of different groups of pupils, including those with English as an additional language or from minority ethnic groups. In 2010, standards in writing rose dramatically, reflecting a successful whole-school push for improvement. The introduction of a wide range of support strategies saw an increase in boys' attainment in mathematics in the 2010 national tests.

Lesson observations show that pupils generally make good progress in English and mathematics in Year 6, where some of the best teaching is found. There is some good and occasionally outstanding teaching in the rest of the school, but teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. This is because the learning intention in lessons is often too broad and not matched closely enough to the prior attainment of different groups of pupils. In these instances, lower attaining pupils receive support to achieve a similar outcome to the rest of the class and more able pupils are not always challenged enough. Group targets in English and mathematics are not linked closely to the next steps in learning for individuals and many pupils are not clear about their targets, although they do benefit from some helpful feedback in lessons.

The school is very successful in managing behaviour, including that of pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Exceptionally good support for some individuals with special educational needs and/or disabilities enables them to make rapid progress. Nevertheless, the achievement of this large group is variable and satisfactory overall. Teaching assistants are skilled and experienced in supporting pupils with additional needs but, at times, teachers do not make full use of them during lengthy lesson introductions. Targets in individual education plans are not all specific enough and do not always focus on the associated learning needs of pupils with behavioural difficulties.

The pastoral aspects of the school's work are led well. Much time is spent considering the needs of individual pupils and senior leaders have succeeded in establishing a very positive climate for learning. The school sets targets that reflect high expectations, and systems are in place for tracking the progress of individuals and year groups. Staff in

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leadership roles are keen to improve the school and have concentrated on identifying pupils who need additional help in English, mathematics and personal development. The wide range of support programmes and emphasis on making learning enjoyable mean that the curriculum meets pupils' needs well. This, and the broadly accurate self-evaluation, shows the school's satisfactory capacity for further improvement. The analysis of data to monitor the progress of different groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is at an early stage of development. There is little analysis of pupils' progress in subjects other than English and mathematics, and the school is only just beginning to look closely at which questions pupils find most difficult in tests in Years 3 to 5. The observation of teaching and learning by leaders at all levels is not frequent or rigorous enough. Governance is satisfactory: the governing body has a number of new members and is developing its role in challenging senior leaders.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement throughout the school, especially in mathematics, by:
 - making more precise use of assessment information to match learning objectives, success criteria and activities to the next steps of learning for different groups of pupils
 - ensuring that targets in English and mathematics are specific to the next steps in learning for individual pupils and that pupils know these targets
 - making sure that individual education plan targets are consistently specific and measurable, and always focus on learning as well as behaviour
 - ensuring that teachers make full use of teaching assistants throughout their lessons.
- Strengthen leadership and management at all levels by:
 - sharpening leadership and self-evaluation skills throughout the school
 - increasing the rigour and frequency of lesson observations
 - closely analysing the progress of different groups of pupils, including in non-core subjects
 - making greater use of test information in Years 3 to 5 to identify what pupils find most difficult and where teaching needs to be improved
 - developing the role of the governing body in challenging senior leaders.
- About 40% of 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 join the school with broadly average attainment and make satisfactory progress. They do better in some year groups than others, most notably in Year 6 where their progress accelerates. This was clearly evident in an English lesson in Year 6, where pupils were absorbed in their work, editing and improving a piece of writing, some reaching above average standards in their expression and choice of vocabulary. Similarly, in an outstanding mathematics lesson, pupils showed absolute concentration and worked at a

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rapid pace, thoroughly enjoying using the interactive whiteboard to plot coordinates. They responded very well to the high level of challenge and worked enthusiastically and independently, taking responsibility for consolidating their learning through the use of a software program. In both these lessons, all pupils acquired new skills and knowledge quickly. In too many other lessons, pupils make satisfactory progress because tasks are not matched well enough to the wide range of prior attainment in the class. In these lessons in English, lower attaining pupils tend to make the most progress because they receive good adult support. The progress of lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities is more variable in mathematics. One-to-one specialist support provided for those with learning difficulties in mathematics is of good quality and promotes their learning well. In some mathematics lessons, resources are used well to support these pupils. For instance, a teaching assistant in Year 4 used a large A3 Carroll diagram to enable pupils to sort and classify various foods according to their properties, then they moved on successfully to categorising shapes. In some mathematics lessons, lower attaining pupils make less progress because teachers do not use the right methods and resources to communicate new concepts so that lower attaining pupils struggle to keep up.

Pupils' good, and at times outstanding, behaviour supports their learning very well. They enjoy gaining new skills, nearly always remain focused on their work and collaborate well in groups. Pupils say that they feel very safe and get on well together. They have a good understanding of healthy living and have taken an active part in the school's promotion of healthy eating. Pupils make a good contribution to the community and the school council has a direct influence on decisions. All ages readily take on a range of responsibilities and contribute to various local events, as well as raising funds for international causes. Pupils' involvement in work towards the school's Eco Silver Award has resulted in a great deal of enthusiasm for looking after the environment. Pupils have a good insight into their own and others' cultures and show tolerance for each other's differences. The school prepares pupils satisfactorily for the next stage of their education.

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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	2
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

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

How effective is the provision?

Teachers' classroom organisation and management of behaviour are consistently good. Their relationships with pupils are positive and lessons are orderly. Teachers try to make learning interesting and varied, and this is reflected in the stimulating classroom displays. In the best lessons, learning proceeds at a brisk pace and teachers have high expectations. In these lessons, they use a combination of probing questioning and highly focused feedback to accelerate pupils' knowledge and understanding. Where teaching is good in mathematics, each operational step is taught thoroughly, for instance, with the use of a visual model, and clear guidance is provided on how to record workings. Overall achievement remains satisfactory, however, because in other lessons pupils with very different prior attainment work on tasks that are too similar. The quality of marking is variable. It is generally better in English than in mathematics, where there are, at times, insufficient comments to show pupils how to reach a higher level.

The curriculum provides pupils with a good range of interesting activities within and beyond the school day. Special events, educational visits and residential trips extend pupils' awareness, and visitors to the school further stimulate learning. Literacy is promoted well across the curriculum and this has contributed to the recent rise in standards in writing evident in the work of older pupils. Personal, social and health education is of good quality and the school pays considerable attention to developing pupils' emotional skills. Through collaboration with other educational establishments,

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specific opportunities are provided for pupils with particular gifts and talents. A wide range of programmes supports pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and who need additional help with English and mathematics. Pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties receive exceptionally good support. This ensures that the school is a calm and orderly place, regardless of the significant proportion of pupils with this type of difficulty. Pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable receive very effective support and this often extends to their families. The school works closely with a number of external agencies, including in its support for pupils with physical difficulties and autistic spectrum disorders. Liaison with the infant school has been strengthened recently in order to smooth pupils' transfer from Year 2 and prevent the dip in progress evident previously in Year 3.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	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 headteacher and senior leaders provide a satisfactory drive for improvement. School development planning is detailed and focuses on raising achievement. Meetings to review the progress of individual pupils ensure that teachers are aware of which pupils need additional help to reach their targets, and data is shared increasingly amongst the staff. The new assessment team has focused on what more needs to be done to drive improvement in mathematics but insufficient time has been given, as yet, to monitoring. The school has been successful in raising standards in writing, evident in most recent test results and in work seen in Year 6. Leaders' lesson observations in English and across the school are too infrequent, however, to ensure that teachers are all working to best effect to accelerate pupils' progress. The governing body has, rightly, identified the need to strengthen the way it challenges senior leaders. The recent establishment of a strategic committee to focus on standards is a key development to this end.

The school has satisfactory systems for safeguarding pupils. The school is a highly inclusive establishment that promotes the personal development of pupils from a wide range of backgrounds very well. Variations in teaching and in the use of assessment information mean that the promotion of equal opportunities is satisfactory. The engagement of parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is good; the involvement of the rest of the parents is satisfactory. Partnerships with other educational establishments contribute well to pupils' progress, for instance, through extending curriculum opportunities. The school promotes community cohesion well: it has a good understanding of its local community and close links with a school in India do much to raise pupils' awareness of cultures and ways of life beyond their everyday experience.

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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	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
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

About a third of parents and carers returned the inspection questionnaire. Of these, a very large majority expressed satisfaction with the school's work and said that their children enjoy school. Parents and carers who added comments to the questionnaire were generally pleased with the way the school cares for their children and keeps them safe. Most parents said that they feel suitably informed about how well their children are doing, although they do not all believe that the school takes their views sufficiently into account. Of those who responded, a few expressed concern about the way their children's needs are met and, particularly, about how the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. Inspection findings endorse parents' and carers' positive views about the quality of care provided and pupils' enjoyment of school: these are both clear strengths. The school has satisfactory procedures for gathering parental views but could extend this with more frequent surveys to gauge their opinions. Whilst some pupils make good progress, the school meets the academic needs of the majority of pupils satisfactorily. It has put a lot of work into developing systems for managing pupils' behaviour and these have been successful. All lessons observed during the inspection were enhanced by pupils' courteous and respectful attitudes, and their good behaviour.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hartford Community 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 211 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	37	51	32	44	4	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	34	47	37	51	2	3	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	29	40	36	49	3	4	3	4
My child is making enough progress at this school	28	38	37	51	6	8	2	3
The teaching is good at this school	30	41	35	48	5	7	2	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	27	37	36	49	3	4	3	4
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	27	37	38	52	3	4	1	1
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)	30	41	31	42	7	10	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	29	40	30	41	9	12	2	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	22	37	51	8	11	5	7
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	19	44	60	5	7	5	7
The school is led and managed effectively	23	32	38	52	6	8	3	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	29	40	35	48	4	5	4	5

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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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 pupils' 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.



8 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hartford Community Junior School, Huntingdon, PE29 1UL

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you, reading your completed questionnaires, coming into your lessons and looking at the work you have done. We found that you go to a satisfactory school. This means that it does a number of things well and could do some things better.

We were impressed to see how well you behave and we found you helpful and courteous. In lessons, you nearly always concentrate well and try hard with the work you are given to do. You said that you feel safe in school and many of you know a lot about the importance of making healthy choices. You are clearly proud of your school and especially of its work to gain the Eco Silver Award. You are all eager to take on responsibilities around the school and your link with a school in India is helping you to understand more about people whose lives are very different from your own.

To help your school to improve, we have asked the headteacher, other leaders and the governing body to:

- help you to make more progress, especially in mathematics, by making sure you always have work that is exactly right for you, not too easy and not too difficult
- give you subject targets in literacy and numeracy that set out what you need to do to move to the next level and make sure you know your targets
- organise lessons so that teaching assistants are always able to spend all their time helping you to learn
- look carefully at which questions you find most difficult in tests in Years 3 to 5, so that they know where you need extra guidance
- look more closely at what is working well in the school and what could be improved.

You can help by making sure you know your targets and think about them when you are doing your work. We wish you all the best in the future.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Goodchild

Lead inspector

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