



# High Down Junior School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 109084  
**LEA** North Somerset  
**Inspection number** 278117  
**Inspection dates** 7 March 2006 to 8 March 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Shirley Billington AI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Junior	<b>School address</b>	Down Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Portishead
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7 to 11		North Somerset BS20 6DY
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01275 848501
<b>Number on roll</b>	333	<b>Fax number</b>	01275 817426
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	27 March 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr A E Grannan

<b>Age group</b> 7 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 7 March 2006 - 8 March 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 278117
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

This is a large junior school sharing a site with an infant school. When pupils join the school in Year 3, their attainment is well above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average. There are few pupils from minority ethnic groups and no pupils are in the early stages of learning English.

The school has gained Investor in People status, the Activemark Gold award (for sports-related activities) and the local authority's healthy schools status.

## **Key for inspection grades**

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The school provides a sound education for its pupils and gives satisfactory value for money. The school views itself as good. Whilst this is an accurate evaluation in some respects, more needs to be done before this view is well founded. In particular, the school needs better systems to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they should and to rigorously check on the effectiveness of work to bring about improvements.

Standards are well above average by the end of Year 6. However, given pupils' very good starting points, this represents satisfactory achievement. There is variation in how well pupils do in different subjects. They generally do better in English and science than they do in mathematics, where there is scope to increase the rate of progress.

Particular strengths of the school lie in pupils' good personal development and the good level of attention given to their welfare and well-being. There are very good opportunities to participate in a wide range of exciting activities through special events, clubs, music and sporting opportunities, visits to local places of interest and residential trips. Teaching and the curriculum are satisfactory, but expectations of what pupils might achieve could be higher in some lessons. Tasks are not always well matched to pupils' needs.

Leadership is satisfactory overall and has ensured that the school has made sound improvement since the last inspection and has the capacity to improve further. However, there are some aspects of management that need attention. The school checks on pupils' performance in national tests and, as a result, identifies aspects of planning and teaching that could be improved. While attention is given to these areas, systems to check on the impact of what has been done are weak. There is a good range of data available to track pupils' progress through the school but this is not being used as effectively as it should be. There is no systematic approach to checking the rate of progress in different subjects or different year groups, or to analysing how well specific groups of pupils, such as boys and girls, are doing.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they should in mathematics by raising teachers' expectations and ensuring that work is well matched to pupils' different levels of ability.
- Improve the rigour with which strategies to bring about improvements are evaluated to establish the effect on pupils' learning and achievement.
- Ensure that assessment data is analysed systematically to evaluate and ensure consistent progress across subjects, year groups and for boys and girls.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory and standards are above average. However, there is some variation in how well different groups of pupils do and how well they achieve in

different areas. Throughout the school, pupils have very good skills in speaking and listening and in reading. They use these skills well in work across a range of subjects, for example, in discussing and presenting their ideas and researching and recording information. Skills in writing, while satisfactory, are not as good as those in reading. This has been a focus for improvement over the past two years and recent work is showing a positive impact. Performance in science is strong, with the majority of pupils reaching the higher levels in national tests at the end of Year 6. Mathematics is a weaker area. While all pupils make progress, they do not make gains at a consistent rate and those of average and above-average capabilities, do not always achieve as much as they should. Girls are generally achieving better than boys, although there is some variation in different subjects, but the school has not yet identified a reason for this.

The school sets realistic targets for pupils' performance in national tests at the end of Year 6 and these are generally achieved. However, not all the pupils who were predicted to attain the higher levels in 2005 actually did so and ensuring improvement in this aspect of achievement is currently a focus for the school.

Throughout the school, pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities benefit from individual and small group support and make satisfactory gains in their learning.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development is good as a result of the strong focus on promoting their well-being and self-esteem. They enjoy school and attendance is good. Behaviour is generally of a high standard and the majority of pupils show consideration for others and tolerance of those who need special support. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The moral and social aspects are particularly strong, with pupils having good involvement in formulating class rules, contributing to decision making through the school council and working together in pairs or small groups. Spiritual and cultural development is promoted well through work in subjects such as art and religious education and visits to museums, theatres and places of worship.

Pupils are aware of the need to lead a healthy lifestyle and the importance of a balanced diet and regular exercise. They feel safe in school and know the importance of safe practices in everyday life. They make a good contribution to the wider community through participation in special events and fundraising, for example, for a local hospice. Their good basic skills and positive attitudes mean that they are very well prepared for the next stage of their education and for the world of work. Many are ambitious to succeed, expressing, for example, hopes to become doctors, lawyers or, in one instance, a child psychologist, after attending university.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and this ensures that pupils make steady gains throughout the school. Lessons have clear objectives that are shared with the pupils so that they have a view about what they are expected to learn. Interactive whiteboards are used well to support teaching and to demonstrate key points for learning. In the most effective lessons, pupils are actively involved from the start, for example, by using 'talk partners' to discuss ideas or whiteboards to note their responses to the teacher's questions. However, sometimes the opportunities to use these strategies are missed, the pace of the lesson is too slow and not enough is achieved in the time available. At times, the same work is set for all levels of ability. This results in a lack of challenge for more able pupils and the less able struggling with what they have to do. This is particularly evident in mathematics and is a key factor that hinders achievement in this subject.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The curriculum is satisfactory and generally meets the needs of the pupils. It is broad and enriched by a good range of activities, visits and visitors to school. Provision for science, art, music and physical education is particularly strong. There are very good opportunities to participate in clubs and sporting competitions and to acquire new skills, for example, by playing golf or learning an instrument. There is good use of ICT to support learning across subjects. Occasionally the use of commercial material, such as worksheets, limits the opportunities for pupils to apply and extend their good language and literacy skills.

Several pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities benefit from adaptations to the curriculum to ensure that they experience success in learning, often through engaging in practical tasks, where appropriate.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

This is a strong feature of the school's work. There is a high level of care for individual pupils. Those who join the school other than at the usual starting times or those who have particular needs and difficulties are very well supported. A well-trained team of learning support assistants and lunchtime supervisors provides a very good level of extra support in lessons and in the playground. Pupils are confident that they have someone to turn to if they are worried. Many spoke positively about the 'friendship bench' in the playground and the use of buddies or peer mediators to talk things through. They are also confident that staff will support them if necessary. All statutory procedures, including those for child protection, are in place to ensure pupils' safety and welfare.

Pupils are given helpful guidance on how to improve their work through written comments and short-term targets. They also negotiate personal targets for improvement which may relate to improving their general skills in academic or out-of-school activities. However, there is no system for setting clear targets related to children's progress in relation to National Curriculum levels. As a result, they do not have a clear enough view of what they need to do to improve their achievements in literacy and numeracy.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. There is a strong focus on the welfare and well-being of the pupils, as indicated through the work done in relation to the healthy schools status and the Activemark award. There is also a strong emphasis on ensuring pupils' enjoyment of school and extending their experiences. Governors fulfil statutory responsibilities and are beginning to take an active role in evaluating the school's performance.

The school looks carefully at its performance in national tests and analyses strengths and areas for improvement. Work goes on to tackle identified weaknesses, but there is a lack of attention to checking on the impact of improvements in terms of raising achievement and this restricts the effectiveness of self-evaluation. In mathematics, for example, the need to improve pupils' mental skills has resulted in some in-service training and guidelines for teaching. However, there has been no follow-up to determine whether or not these initiatives are making a difference.

A new system has been put in place to track pupils' progress in English and mathematics in year groups through the school. This is being used well to identify where individual pupils may need extra support. However, the information is not yet being analysed in sufficient detail to check that all groups of pupils are making progress at a consistent rate in all subjects. As a result, the weaknesses in achievement in mathematics have not been identified.

The views of pupils are gathered through the school council and these are acted on. For example, the quality of school meals is currently under review because pupils feel these could be healthier. The views of parents are also sought, most recently in relation to the development of the school travel plan. However, senior managers recognise the need to canvass all pupils and their parents more systematically to better inform planning for school development.

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	4	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thanks you all for making us welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed seeing some of the work that you are doing and talking to the school council, and to other groups, about the sorts of activities in which you get involved. We thought you would be interested in what our report says about the school.

Things we thought were particularly good:

You are very good at speaking and listening and reading and your skills in writing are getting better. You use all these skills well to help your learning in lots of different subjects.

Almost all of you are mature and sensible and you work well together.

There are lots of interesting activities to get involved in, including clubs, trips and special events like Arts Week and learning to be 'Earthkeepers'.

The school takes good care of you and you help each other through acting as buddies or peer mediators.

By the end of Year 6, you have a good range of skills to help you through the next stage of education and to prepare you for the world of work.

We have suggested that the school needs to:

Make sure that you all do as well in mathematics as you do in English and science.

Find ways to check whether all the hard work that staff put in to improve your learning is really making a difference.

Use all the information from the tests that you do each year to check that your learning moves on as well as it should.

Thank you again for your help. Good luck with your future learning.