

Hawes Down Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101590
Local Authority	Bromley
Inspection number	307748
Inspection date	3 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Jane Chesterfield

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 on roll	
School	256
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jane Hawkins
Headteacher	Mr Matt De Freitas
Date of previous school inspection	7 June 2004
School address	The Mead Bromley BR4 0BA
Telephone number	020 8777 4174
Fax number	020 8249 2897

Age group	7-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the impact of strategies to improve achievement and standards in mathematics, the strengths in pupils' personal development and well-being, and how well teachers meet the needs of more able pupils and boys. Evidence was gathered from performance data and other documentation; discussions with senior staff, pupils and governors; sampling of lessons and of pupils' work; observations of pupils and adults around the school, and parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school serves a residential community of mainly owner occupied housing. Very few pupils are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is average, though very few are at the early stages of learning English. An average number of pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities. The school has a designated resource base, known as the special opportunities unit (SOU) with nine places for pupils with severe and complex learning difficulties. Consequently, the proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need is high. Learning difficulties in the other classes are mainly autism, and speech and language.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school where pupils achieve well. Excellent links with parents mean that they are wholeheartedly supportive and appreciative of what the school offers their children. One commented that, 'The school's activities have helped my child grow in confidence and self-esteem,' while another felt that, 'There is a great emphasis on all-round education which makes the school experience very fulfilling.' Pupils enjoy coming to school very much because they agree that, as one rightly commented, 'it's such good fun'. They attend well, and a number of parents said how much their children look forward to coming to school every day.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding because of the first-class pastoral care and the excellent opportunities they have to take on responsibility and develop new talents. The school provides them with a safe and secure environment where they feel confident and able to thrive as fully-fledged individuals. Many parents commented on the approachability of the headteacher and the staff, saying they took 'fantastic' care of their children. Pupils spoke enthusiastically of the many activities open to them. Those in the gardening club, for example, were very excited to show off the fruit and vegetables they had grown, while school councillors felt justifiably proud to have played their part in interviews for new senior staff. House captains have a mature and sensible attitude to their duties and feel that they provide good role models for younger pupils, winning their respect. Pupils have a good understanding of how to eat healthily and make the most of all the chances they have to take part in sport. In the playground, pupils feel very certain that they are well looked after and know who to turn to if they have a problem. Pupils and parents alike are satisfied that any concerns are sorted out quickly and fairly. All pupils get on very well together, and those from the SOU are fully included by other pupils so they feel secure and contented with school life.

Pupils learn well because teaching is consistently good and they find their lessons interesting. They enter the school with above average standards in English, mathematics and science, and they make good progress, reaching well above average standards by the time they leave. The school has responded very swiftly to a dip in results in mathematics and English last year, particularly for boys and for more able pupils. It has focused very successfully this year on making teaching and learning more motivating for boys, particularly in writing, and on improving pupils' skills in problem solving and mental mathematics. Boys have had the opportunity to write at length on topics that inspire them. In mathematics, teachers have been careful to check pupils' understanding of what they are taught so as to build on it systematically. As a result of the increase in challenge for all pupils, standards have recovered. More pupils, both boys and girls, are achieving higher levels in mathematics and English compared with last year's performance in national tests.

Teaching is strong throughout the school, often with outstanding elements. In every class there are enthusiastic staff, high expectations and a calm and productive working environment. Lessons have a good pace and resources are used well, particularly the interactive whiteboards which capture pupils' imaginations. Teachers and classroom assistants work well together as a team. Pupils of all abilities are well supported and there is a good level of challenge for everyone. Those pupils with autism, or with speech and language difficulties benefit from caring specialist support, so that they make good progress. Good academic guidance, through thorough marking and regular target setting, means that pupils understand how to improve their work and make progress. In many classes there are excellent examples of marking which moves pupils forward rapidly to the next steps in their learning.

Pupils show that they can work well independently and in groups because they are well motivated and self-disciplined. Although they enjoy a good, diverse curriculum, the way this is planned and taught at present does not always give pupils enough opportunities to be independent learners. Some good links have been introduced between the different subjects of the national curriculum, enabling pupils to use their skills in different situations, but these are not yet widespread or consistent in curriculum planning. The school has identified that pupils are capable of becoming more responsible for their own learning and has rightly targeted curriculum development as an area for future improvement. It intends to make the curriculum more creative, with a greater emphasis on pupils finding out things for themselves rather than being directed by teachers. The increase in stimulation and challenge is designed to help pupils increase their rate of progress, so that even more reach the highest possible standards.

The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, is a driving force in moving the school forward to even greater things. He gives very good direction to the school, and has established very robust systems for self-evaluation and school review. He has carried staff with him, enthusing and motivating the whole team. Other staff who are newer to leadership are developing well in their roles, and playing their part in monitoring and evaluating the school's work. Governors fulfil their role well, challenging and supporting the school, and have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. The school has a good capacity to improve further. The headteacher and his staff have created a very nurturing and welcoming ethos, where all children are valued as individuals with different needs and talents. This is especially evident in the SOU, where pupils are very well cared for and supported, so that they make good progress against their individual targets. Parents value the SOU provision tremendously. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are secure, and the interests of all pupils are at the heart of the school. One parent commented, 'I cannot praise the school enough for the teaching, help and understanding that has been invested in my child.' Another rightly summed up the school as, 'a lovely place to be.'

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase creativity in the curriculum and links between subjects to promote pupils' independent thinking and learning skills.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

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

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

14 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hawes Down Junior School, Bromley, BR4 0BA

Thank you for being so helpful and friendly when I visited your school. I really enjoyed meeting you and talking to you. I agree with you and your parents that Hawes Down is a good school, and I could tell that you are very happy to be there. You are making good progress in your lessons, because your teachers know you well and give you work which interests and challenges you.

I was very impressed with your excellent behaviour in the school and the playground, and with the way that you are all ready to do your bit for the school and help other people. I thought that you all get on together very well indeed. The staff take great care of you, and those of you who need extra help get very good support.

The headteacher and his staff run the school well, and know how to make it even better in future. I agree that a priority is making lessons even more imaginative and exciting, and making more links between the subjects that you learn. This means that you will be able to try using different skills in new situations. You can help them by using your initiative to come up with good ideas about what you want to find out in lessons and how you are going to do it. I am sure you will be very good at this!

Well done to you all, and best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Jane Chesterfield

Lead Inspector