

St Ann's Heath Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125073
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	315140
Inspection dates	19–20 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Peter Thrussell

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 (total)	236
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev S Sizer
Headteacher	Mr G D Bollands
Date of previous school inspection	7 February 2005
School address	Sandhills Lane Virginia Water GU25 4DS
Telephone number	01344 842 900
Fax number	00344 845 526

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Ann's Heath Junior is a popular, average-sized school. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. A lower than average proportion is known to be eligible for free school meals. About a quarter of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), which is above average. These pupils have a variety of needs, including moderate learning needs and social and behavioural needs. The school has gained an Activemark award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Ann's Heath Junior is a good school. The very caring and committed leadership of the headteacher ensures that pupils reach a good level of personal development and achieve well. He is well supported by the senior leadership team, staff and governors. Together, they show a high regard for all pupils and ensure their safety and well-being at all times. One parent commented, 'St Ann's Heath is a truly wonderful school. There is a really strong ethos of mutual respect between adults and children.' Strong partnerships with parents, other schools and agencies, contribute effectively to pupils' well-being. Good, well-managed support for pupils with moderate and other learning difficulties ensures that they also achieve well. Effective support for vulnerable pupils, and their families, helps them play a full part in the life of the school.

Pupils greatly enjoy school and are appreciative of all that it offers them. When asked what they liked about the school, one pupil replied, 'Everything is fun!' They particularly enjoy Creative Friday, which is a key part of the school's outstanding curriculum. It draws on specialist teaching in drama, music, sport and Spanish, and provides further opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematics and their information and communication technology (ICT) skills to challenging and interesting investigations. These help to develop pupils' very positive attitudes to learning and to promote their excellent behaviour, which contribute to their good academic achievement.

From their average starting points in Year 3, pupils achieve well. At the end of Year 6, standards are above average in mathematics and science, and broadly average in English. Writing is the weaker component in English, especially for boys, which is something that the school is starting to address. Despite this good achievement, there is some variation in the rates of progress made between year groups towards the challenging end-of-year targets set for pupils. The main reason for this is that progress is not being assessed and monitored well enough throughout the year, with the consequence that teachers do not always build effectively on what pupils have already learned. Consequently, progress slows at times and more-able pupils especially are not always fully challenged. In Year 6, where staff have a keener eye on the levels pupils are expected to achieve, progress is accelerated through additional, well-targeted support.

The school has worked very successfully on the issues raised at the last inspection, showing that it has a good capacity for further improvement. Remodelled accommodation now provides a well-thought-out, spacious learning environment. Much work has been done on the curriculum and an increasing number of opportunities are provided to encourage pupils' independent learning. Some more-able pupils from each class took part in independent learning projects. The results show a very good level of research using library books and ICT. In discussion with staff, these pupils expressed their enjoyment of this way of working and told how they had gained from it. However, taking responsibility for their own learning in this way is not yet as evident in general classroom learning. Some guidance is given through constructive marking and discussion, but pupils, apart from those with LDD, do not yet have personalised targets to aim for, to encourage and involve them further in their learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers continually assess how well pupils are doing and make full use of this information to plan an appropriate level of work for all, particularly the more able, and to keep the pupils themselves aware of their progress.

- Rigorously monitor throughout the year the progress that pupils are making in order to ensure that they meet their end-of-year targets.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well. By the end of Year 6, standards overall are above the national average. There was an expected dip in standards in 2007, where starting points for this group were lower, but these pupils nevertheless achieved well. The school has identified a weakness in writing, and that rates of progress throughout the school are variable. Improved planning in mathematics, supported by a published scheme of work, is beginning to address the variable progress in this subject. A strong emphasis on drama is helping pupils to develop more creative ideas and vocabulary for their writing. The school recognises that it now needs to focus more on developing the use of grammar and punctuation to improve pupils' writing further. Opportunities for writing in other subjects are providing pupils with exciting avenues for their work, and helping to engage the interest of boys. This was very evident in a lesson where pupils were working on the evacuation of Dunkirk in the Second World War. A role-play activity helped pupils to understand the situation and to prepare their thoughts for writing. These actions are relatively recent, and are yet to show a significant impact on pupils' progress throughout the school and improved standards in writing.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school. Nevertheless, attendance is only satisfactory, partly due to some parents taking their children on holiday in term time. Pupils' behaviour and understanding of safe practices are both excellent. They feel very strongly that they are treated fairly and that bullying is not a problem. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of physical exercise and diet. Their spiritual, moral and social development is good. They learn to develop respect for themselves and others, and are proud of their own and others' achievements. They clearly understand the difference between right and wrong. Cultural development is good, particularly in art, drama and music. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility, happily carrying out tasks around the school, and make a good contribution to the wider community. The school council is effective and pupils feel their opinions are acted upon. However, the school recognises that further opportunities could be offered for pupils to take on responsibilities, particularly with regard to their learning. They gain confidence and new skills through involvement in the good number of extra-curricular activities offered. Given the progress that they make in acquiring basic skills and this level of personal development, pupils are well prepared for their later life and learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and this has a positive effect on their learning. Teachers prepare lessons well so that they move forward at a good pace. Teaching assistants support pupils effectively in their learning, whether in class or in small groups, because they are skilled and work closely with teachers to plan work. ICT is used very well in lessons to support and enliven teaching and learning. In the best lessons seen, teachers planned interesting

and varied activities. These ensured that pupils worked hard, enjoyed what they were doing, and took pride in their work. In these lessons, learning intentions were shared well with pupils. They therefore knew what was expected of them and were encouraged to work independently, assessing their own work. Although teachers have information on the range of ability within their classes, sometimes insufficient account is taken of ongoing assessment and what pupils have previously learnt. At times, planning places too much emphasis on organisation rather than considering what pupils, especially the more able, need to learn in order to make good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum provides an extremely interesting and enjoyable range of activities for pupils. Creative Friday, the many visits and visitors - including residential visits in Years 5 and 6 - and a very good range of popular after-school clubs are a testimony to this. A very well-planned personal development programme effectively supports pupils' personal development and well-being. Very well-presented topic folders, on subjects such as the Blitz, Africa and ancient Greece, show that cross-curricular work is being very well developed. This is demonstrating that pupils, especially the more able and those who are gifted and talented, can work independently and apply and develop their different skills, especially their research, writing and ICT skills, to interesting and purposeful ends. A very strong focus on drama helps to develop pupils' self-confidence, as well as contributing to improvements in writing. All have the opportunity to take part in very well produced performances. These are much appreciated and enjoyed by parents, and are the highlight of the year for many pupils. A sports partnership with a local secondary school provides good opportunities for pupils to take part in different sports. The school has recently been remodelled and now provides both space and resources to enhance pupils' learning. The new ICT suite is used well, enabling pupils to quickly develop their computer skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Extremely good pastoral care ensures that all pupils are looked after very well. Pupils say that they feel extremely safe and know to whom they can turn if they have any concerns. Parents feel strongly that their children are cared for well. One said, 'Our child is always happy. The school provides a warm, caring environment.' All health and safety requirements are fully met. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are securely in place. Any pupils needing support are quickly identified and helped effectively. The school has strong links with external agencies, particularly to help support pupils with behavioural or learning difficulties. Although assessment systems are well established to track progress year-on-year, the school does not keep a close enough check on the day-to-day progress that pupils are making in order support and guide them more effectively in their learning. There are good examples of constructive marking and opportunities for pupils to discuss and evaluate what they have been learning, but such practice is inconsistent. Consequently, pupils are not always provided with clear guidance on how well they have done or how they could improve their work. Apart from those with LDD, pupils do not have individual targets to help guide and support their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good and ensure that a high quality of care and education are maintained. The curriculum is extremely well managed, and very successful developments have taken place since the last inspection. Subject leaders have clearly identified where action needs to be taken to raise achievement and standards. The school improvement plan sets out a list of appropriate priorities for development based on its self-evaluation. However, these do not always show how their success is to be measured, especially in relation to raising achievement and standards. The school carefully tracks pupils' progress year-on-year, but does not keep a sufficiently sharp eye on how well pupils are doing throughout the year to ensure that they all make the best progress possible. Lessons are observed regularly and provide precise development points for individual teachers as well as whole-school issues, such as the need to challenge more-able pupils. Governors are very supportive of the work of the school. The committee structure enables them to monitor the school's performance and different aspects of school improvement. Very good links with parents encourage them to be involved in their children's education. There are also very good links with other schools, which support curriculum provision and development, leadership and management roles, and the effective transfer of pupils from one stage of education to another. The school's teaching and curriculum are used effectively to promote pupils' understanding of local and global communities. Visits to different places of worship and the development of links with a Ugandan school help pupils to understand and appreciate different ways of life.

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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?	2
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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

03 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Ann's Heath Junior School, Virginia Water, GU25 4DS

I am writing to let you know what we found when we visited your school. Thank you for taking part in the inspection. We spoke with some of you during our visit and you were always interesting to talk to, and very polite and helpful. You spoke very enthusiastically about enjoying school and all of the things in which you take part. St Ann's Heath Junior is a good school.

We liked these things the most.

- You work hard in your lessons.
- The school is extremely caring and makes sure that you are safe and well looked after.
- Your behaviour is excellent.
- Pupils who find learning or behaviour difficult are very well supported.
- You really enjoy school and are all keen to keep fit and eat the right things.
- You have lots of exciting events and many school clubs. Creative Friday looks to be a great day.
- You are keen to take on responsibilities.
- Your headteacher, staff and governors are doing a good job.

We have asked the school to work on the following things now.

- Teachers must look more closely at how well you are doing in lessons. They must use this information to plan work that is just right for each one of you, neither too easy nor too hard. This will help you all to make the best progress possible. The teachers also need to use this information to make you aware of how well you are doing and how you could do even better.
- The school must check regularly that all of you are making the best progress possible.

We did enjoy visiting your school and watching you learn.

Yours sincerely

Peter Thrussell

Lead Inspector