

Harefield Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102381
Local Authority	Hillingdon
Inspection number	307987
Inspection dates	14 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Susan Thomas-Pounce

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	239
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Barrie Evans
Headteacher	Miss Vicki Williams
Date of previous school inspection	18 October 2004
School address	Park Lane Harefield Uxbridge UB9 6BJ
Telephone number	01895 824 447
Fax number	01895 824 098

Age group	7-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school. The inspector looked particularly at the children's progress and standards as they move through the school, their ability to write well in all subjects to raise standards in English; the rigour of the school's self-evaluation processes including the school's assessments and tracking of pupils' progress. The inspector met with staff, governors and pupils. Parts of some lessons were observed, parents' questionnaires and a sample of pupils' work were examined and school information, including self-evaluation, was scrutinised. 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 the report.

Description of the school

Harefield Junior School shares a site with its partner infant school and is situated in a village community within the outer London Borough of Hillingdon. Most pupils are of White British heritage with a few coming from twelve other ethnic groups. Mobility of pupils has recently increased. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. There is an above average percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need. The school holds the National Healthy Schools Award, Sports Activemark, Basic Skills Award, Artsmark, and National Association for Able Children in Education Award, Australian Heritage Award, Charter Mark, Investors in People and also has two Achievement Awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Harefield Junior is an outstanding school, being both a welcoming and caring place in which to learn. The school grounds and internal displays are inspirational and all who work in the school are rightly proud of what the pupils achieve. Parents are overwhelming in their praise - 'fantastic teachers', 'best school', 'outstanding provision'. The highest commendation is reserved for the headteacher, 'She is amazing and leads the school so well'.

The outstanding leadership and management of the headteacher is the key reason for the continued success of the school. She manages change skilfully and has used the breadth of activities on offer and skills of staff to gain national accreditation in many areas. For example the school is at the forefront of a national initiative to cater for the needs of pupils who are gifted and talented. This work has been recently recognised by the National Association for Able Children in Education with an award. As an Investor in People and Well-being School all staff are clear about their roles, they work tirelessly to continually improve and extend the school's provision. They know their contributions are valued and consequently morale is high. Rigorous and accurate self-evaluation is built upon wide consultation and secure procedures for monitoring and evaluating performance. Governors are fully involved in the life of the school; they share a clear vision for the future success of the school. Resources, accommodation and staffing are used extremely well to the benefit of all pupils. Capacity to improve is excellent as demonstrated by the continuing high standards and the high quality provision that has been maintained and built upon since the last inspection.

The excellent teaching, curriculum and guidance lead to pupils making especially good progress in both their academic and personal development. Regardless of gender or ethnicity pupils' achievement is outstanding, and standards in a wide range of subjects are high. The school exceeded its performance targets in the 2007 national tests for pupils in Year 6. This is because teachers have high expectations of pupils and set them challenging learning targets. The teaching of basic skills is outstanding and the work done in art and music is extremely impressive. Pupils write well in their literacy lessons. The school is now rightly focused on refining writing skills in all subjects to raise standards even further.

The pupils' outstanding academic progress is regularly assessed and rigorously tracked to ensure that no pupil underachieves. Any pupil at risk of falling behind is very well supported to catch up. Pupils know how well they are doing and what they must do to get better. This is because marking is done regularly and time is spent talking to pupils about their work and how they can use their learning targets to improve. Parents are full of praise for the support and encouragement provided by teachers and one, representing the views of many, commented on the 'high standard of teaching and regular feedback on progress which has led to good steady progress'.

Many lessons are outstanding and learning is of high quality and ensures that, over time, pupils' progress remains strong. This is because lesson planning takes account of the wide ability range in each class. The needs of vulnerable pupils and those who are the most able are well met, enabling them to achieve of their best. Teaching assistants are skilled in challenging and extending the most able pupils as well as supporting and guiding pupils when difficulties arise. Another feature of lessons is the way that teachers help pupils to make decisions, learn to work in teams and, where appropriate, complete tasks independently. This was observed in a mathematics lessons when the teacher created excitement through a problem solving exercise called 'if I ruled the world.' Pupils are taught to think first and fully understand the three B's system of 'use your Brain, ask a Buddy, ask the Boss.' Throughout the school, as well as planning interesting activities, teachers ensure that classrooms are calm and industrious places to work. Excellent behaviour management was observed during the inspection. The school provides an outstanding curriculum for its pupils with high quality opportunities in music, art and sport. The wide range of extra-curricular activities helps to extend pupils' understanding and enjoyment of the work they do in lessons.

As a result of the high quality care, guidance and support the school provides, pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils are confident and self-reliant and have extremely positive attitudes towards school.

They say that lessons are enjoyable and challenging, many particularly like the 'keep me busy folders' used to maintain pace at key points in the day. Pupils understand the importance of keeping fit and well, they eat healthily and take plenty of exercise. School council representatives ensure that pupils contribute fully to the school's development. Not only have they been influential in securing more games and playground activities, they have organised 'thank you teas' for all who help the school.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very strong. Pupils from all ethnic backgrounds work and play well together. One parent commented on how well the school takes account of culture and traditions, giving children the confidence to celebrate their roots and their identity. Behaviour is excellent, whether in lessons, around the school or at playtimes. The tireless work of the Learning Mentor has forged strong relationships with parents and given very effective support to a few pupils who were away from school too often. As a result, attendance has greatly improved. Excellent attention is paid to ensuring pupils are safe. Parents say that their children feel safe in school and pupils confirm this. To ensure that pupils' varying and constantly changing needs are met the school has developed outstanding partnerships with a wide range of organisations and agencies, the local authority and other educational institutions.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend the range of opportunities for children to write confidently in all subjects to help them to achieve even higher standards in English.

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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?	1
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	1

Achievement and standards

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

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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
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 learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interest of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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.

All white boxes must be completed. The grey boxes are used wherever the inspection team has sufficient evidence to come to a secure judgement.

² IE - denotes that insufficient evidence was available to inspectors for a judgement to be made.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

Letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection.

22 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Harefield Junior School, Uxbridge, UB9 6BJ

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school. I enjoyed the day I spent with you and only wish I had more time to see all the interesting things you are doing. I was very impressed with your excellent behaviour and your positive attitude to school. I really enjoyed your assembly, especially the music you played as we came in and your impressive two part singing.

Both you and your parents told me what a welcoming, caring and exciting place you have to learn in. I agree, you have an outstanding school. You all work very hard and get on well together and this means that you make excellent progress and achieve high standards in a wide range of subjects. Your teachers work hard to make sure that lessons are interesting and exciting. Many of you spoke about how much you enjoy your lessons and the after school clubs and activities. You are fortunate to have so much space to play and explore in the school grounds not to mention the inspirational gardens you help to work in. I enjoyed visiting the Breakfast Club and seeing you play so well at lunchtime.

You are very well cared for because you are known and valued as individuals by all who work in the school. You and your parents appreciate the encouragement you get from your teachers and the sympathetic support and help from the teaching assistants. Your teachers told me that they are working with you to improve your writing skills. When I visited you I saw how interesting your writing can be, but know some of you find it difficult to write like this in all subjects. Your headteacher works extremely effectively to help all your staff to keep making your school even better, so I know you will be encouraged and helped to improve.

Thank you again for making my visit so enjoyable. I wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Susan Thomas-Pounce
Lead Inspector

