

Pickhurst Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101599
Local Authority	Bromley
Inspection number	355034
Inspection dates	4–5 July 2011
Reporting inspector	Helen Hutchings

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	445
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stella Brackpool
Headteacher	Matt Rampton
Date of previous school inspection	27–28 March 2008
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Age group	7–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 21 lessons involving 17 teachers and observed assemblies. They held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body and representative governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at planning documents, school policies and procedures, assessment information and pupils' work. In addition, inspectors received and analysed questionnaires from 106 parents and carers, and scrutinised others from staff and pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How well teaching interests and challenges pupils of all abilities, particularly the more able pupils.
- The impact of the curriculum in promoting the development of pupils' core skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology.
- The effect of the school's care, guidance and support in removing barriers to learning for the most vulnerable pupils and in promoting their progress.

Information about the school

The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds in this large school is above average, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language. Although the percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average, the proportion of pupils holding a statement of special educational needs is high. Pupils' identified needs mostly relate to specific or moderate learning difficulties, and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. A daily breakfast club is run by an external provider, and is subject to a separate Ofsted inspection. The school has a number of awards for its work, including Artsmark, Healthy School and Activemark awards.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Pickhurst Junior School has improved well since its last inspection and is now outstanding. 'We are a busy but friendly school, with lots going on.' This statement on the school's website is highly accurate. Pupils are busily engaged in interesting and challenging activities throughout the day, and before and after school. They readily subscribe to the school's '3Cs' motto of courtesy, common sense and cooperation, so that the school is a welcoming and happy place to learn and play together. Excellent behaviour is the norm. As a result of outstanding care, guidance and support, pupils feel extremely safe and secure. They know that their views and opinions are valued, and are motivated by the regular celebration of their academic and personal successes.

Pupils' achievement is outstanding because they make good progress and their attainment is high. Results in the Year 6 national tests are consistently above average and pupils' work through the school is of a high standard. This gives pupils a firm foundation for their secondary education. Achievement is consistent across subjects and groups of pupils, so that pupils make equally good progress in developing their reading, writing and numeracy skills. Pupils are keen learners, inspired by the school's innovative and creative curriculum which emphasises the acquisition of personal and learning skills as the basis for academic achievement. This holistic approach to developing the whole child was referred to by parents and carers as being a key factor in their children's enjoyment of school. Teachers make learning relevant for pupils and link it very effectively across subjects. Additional provision for those pupils identified as gifted or talented ensures that they are challenged well both personally and academically. A wide range of well-planned programmes, including the recently introduced Forest School, ensures a nurturing environment for those whose circumstances make them vulnerable and helps to promote their progress. Because the needs of individuals are met very well, pupils' personal development is outstanding. It is reflected in their maturity and confidence in articulating their views in a thoughtful and tolerant manner. Pupils move around the school confidently and are keen to contribute to school life and to the local community. The extensive range of pupil involvement includes a garden project with the feeder infant school, planting trees as part of a local Holocaust Memorial Day commemoration and developing active citizenship through pupils' participation in local children's councils. Pupils have an excellent understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, and this is reflected in national awards. The fact that some sports clubs are oversubscribed is evidence of how pupils try to put their knowledge into practice and the strength of the school's emphasis on sport.

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Pupils' very positive attitudes make a strong contribution to good learning in lessons. Teaching is good across the school, and there are several outstanding features; however, these are not fully embedded in all lessons. Consequently, pupils' progress overall is good rather than outstanding, and the school recognises the potential to accelerate pupils' progress further in some lessons. Marking is regular and usually gives detailed information about how work could be improved, particularly in writing. Pupils have a range of personal targets. There is inconsistency across the school in the way pupils are required to follow up on the advice given and how targets are reviewed to ensure that all pupils have a clear understanding of the level of their work and their next steps in learning. The headteacher, staff and the governing body are ambitious for pupils' achievements. Pupils' performance is analysed continually, and the information used to pinpoint where improvements can be made. The rich curriculum is very effectively promoting increased rates of progress through the school. Almost all aspects of the school's work have improved since the last inspection and achievement has been raised from good to outstanding. This, together with a sharp awareness of strengths and areas for development, shows the school's outstanding capacity for ongoing improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By the start of the autumn term 2011, ensure that pupils make faster progress in more lessons, by:
 - identifying and consistently using the strategies that have the greatest impact on pupils' learning
 - giving pupils more opportunities to review their learning and their targets so that they all know their next steps.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils' enthusiasm for learning is reflected in the comment made by one pupil that pupils 'learn in a fun way and are always occupied'. They apply themselves with great concentration in lessons and take an immense pride in their achievements. They develop an understanding of their own learning in a variety of ways, such as when the school council reviewed learning across the school by analysing the quality of pupils' displays of work. Pupils have exceptionally well-developed social skills and an excellent understanding of the importance of values such as cooperation and keeping an open mind, evident in their philosophy lessons. They use these skills effectively in lessons, for example working well in groups discussing issues and resolving problems together. In a science lesson, groups of pupils quickly sorted a package of objects into different categories prior to developing their understanding of the properties of solids and liquids. Individual abilities and starting points vary considerably when pupils join the school, but are generally above average; pupils build well on their starting points, so that all groups of pupils make good progress in English and mathematics. In some classes, pupils are required to respond to their teacher's advice and to monitor how well they are achieving their targets, and this

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helps to boost the progress they make. However, not all pupils show this level of understanding of exactly what they have to do next to achieve their target.

Attainment is high in other subjects too, for example in art, as shown by the Artsmark award. This is seen to good effect in the current project which involves developing a vibrant mural representing the sun, moon and planets. Pupils are rightly proud of their success in competitive sport, added to during the inspection with a win in a girls’ regional tennis tournament. Pupils’ concern for others is evident in the number of charity fund raising events pupils initiate and organise, including support for local and national charities, and for the link school in Uganda. These activities very effectively promote pupils’ understanding of life in different parts in Britain and in other parts of the world.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils’ behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teachers are creative in making learning very relevant to pupils’ experiences. For example, an activity where pupils made fruit smoothies to develop their understanding of healthy eating was extended to develop their numeracy skills through a range of activities based on marketing such products. By linking activities, teachers squeeze more into the curriculum and provide rich opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills alongside acquiring knowledge in other subjects. Numerous partnerships are used to take learning beyond the classroom, such as enterprise activities where pupils work with business mentors. The development of the Forest School with the

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

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infant school is an example of a well-researched initiative to make learning relevant and practical.

Joint planning within year groups harnesses the expertise of a number of teachers and results in activities which actively engage pupils in their learning, and with a particular focus on developing pupils’ skills to think things through for themselves. Tasks for pupils are pitched at different levels; this ensures that pupils of all abilities are challenged. While judged to be good overall, teaching observed had several outstanding elements. For example, teachers’ questioning is often highly focused in probing pupils’ ideas and deepening their understanding, and generally not a moment is lost in lessons. Teachers create a sense of urgency and expect pupils to work at a fast pace. In the best lessons, teachers use talk partners very effectively to make sure that every pupil is actively involved throughout and has frequent opportunities to discuss ideas. Nevertheless, these features of best practice are not evident in all lessons and, as a result, pupils’ progress overall is good rather than outstanding. The next stages of the school’s professional development plan include an evaluation of recent approaches and a coaching plan to help teachers to employ the most effective strategies more consistently in lessons. Teaching assistants provide focused support, frequently developing pupils’ confidence in their own learning and abilities to do things for themselves.

The impact of the school’s warm, welcoming environment and open door approach is seen in parents’ and carers’ views, which indicate that they find staff approachable. This helps to ensure that any problems and concerns are resolved at an early stage. The care and support for pupils and their families who need extra support from time to time is closely tailored to meet individual needs. Provision is integrated and based on very close monitoring of pupils’ academic progress and social skills. Very effective arrangements on entry to the school, and in preparing pupils for secondary school, ensure that pupils feel safe and secure at key transition points. A focus on monitoring attendance and taking a firmer stance on not authorising holidays in term-time has improved attendance levels so that they are now above the national average.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The inspirational leadership of the headteacher, backed up with rigorous systems to monitor and improve the quality of education, is a key factor in pupils’ excellent

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personal and academic achievements. This is an aspirational school with no hint of complacency, and staff and the governing body are involved in constantly evaluating how to drive the school forward. An emphasis on using teacher mentors to provide feedback and support for teachers has resulted in good quality teaching and a strong ambition for ongoing improvement. Teachers are aware of where improvements are likely to accelerate learning and are in the process of developing their skills further.

The safeguarding and welfare of pupils are given a high priority. The school’s procedures are robust, but require some minor administrative upgrading to ensure that all best practice recommendations are met in full. Discrimination is tackled robustly and equality of opportunity promoted, so that the school runs as an inclusive and harmonious community. All groups of pupils achieve equally highly, including the more-able pupils, those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. There are many examples of how the school has removed barriers to learning for individuals enabling them to make good and sometimes outstanding progress. Another outstanding aspect of the school’s work is the promotion of community cohesion. Pupils are given a wealth of opportunities to develop their understanding of local issues, including links with different faith groups, and curriculum projects to develop awareness of the roles of local community personnel such as police and local councillors. Reciprocal visits to a school in France bring French lessons alive and frequent international studies raise pupils’ awareness of global communities.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

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Views of parents and carers

Almost all parents and carers who returned the questionnaire are positive about all aspects of the school. The return rate was similar to that for most primary schools. A minority of parents and carers made additional positive comments about the school's work. For example, parents and carers who are experiencing difficult times expressed their appreciation of the school's help and support. The responses concerning how the school keeps pupils safe were particularly positive, as were those related to the strength of teaching and how pupils are prepared for the next stage of their education. A few responses and written comments indicated that some parents and carers do not believe that their suggestions and concerns are listened to, or that they have sufficient information about their children's progress, and these views are reflected in their assessment of leadership. Inspectors found that school leaders and the governing body value parents' and carers' views and that the school provides regular and helpful information about pupils' attainment and progress.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Pickhurst 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 106 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 445 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	69	65	36	34	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	76	72	26	25	1	1	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	53	50	47	44	6	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	43	41	58	55	3	3	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	61	58	42	40	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	48	45	52	49	5	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	53	50	47	44	4	4	0	0
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)	56	53	43	41	3	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	45	42	54	51	5	5	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	52	49	45	42	4	4	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	40	38	48	45	7	7	4	4
The school is led and managed effectively	60	57	34	32	4	4	3	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	66	62	35	33	3	3	0	0

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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



6 July 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Pickhurst Junior School, West Wickham BR4 0HL

You may remember that inspectors visited your school recently. Thank you for making us so welcome and for taking time to explain the things you do in lessons. We enjoyed talking to the school council members who gave us much information about all the things you do in lessons and around the school. This letter is to explain what we found out.

You attend an outstanding school, which means that you are exceptionally well prepared for secondary school. We hope that Year 6 pupils found the transition day helpful in preparing them for their new school in September. There are many excellent things about how the school helps you to develop as young people. You have an outstanding understanding of how to look after yourselves and to lead healthy lifestyles. We saw how keen you are on sport and how active you are at playtimes. You make good progress in your learning. It was good to see how you concentrate in lessons and take a pride in sharing your talents and achievements with one another, for example in assembly. It was also good to hear that you find learning fun so that you are kept busy without even realising it. We were only able to see a few of the many exciting and interesting things you do, for example in your philosophy lessons. Even outstanding schools can improve further and we have made some recommendations for your headteacher and teachers to help you to make even faster progress. We have asked them to:

- share with each other the types of lessons that help you to learn most effectively and make the fastest progress
- give you more opportunities to respond to the comments teachers make when they mark your work and to review your targets so that you all know your next steps.

We know that you already share your views in a variety of ways and will continue to do this, including about the lessons where you learn best. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Helen Hutchings
Lead inspector

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