

Old Hall Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112669
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	357164
Inspection dates	17–18 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Jeremy Spencer HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	250
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Jones
Headteacher	Sharon Stone
Date of previous school inspection	11 February 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 15 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a variety of documents including policies, minutes and the school improvement plan. The inspection team also analysed 14 staff questionnaires, 100 questionnaires from pupils and 95 from parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- Are pupils making improved progress, particularly in writing?
- Is the school raising standards effectively in teaching and challenging pupils sufficiently?
- How effectively does the school use assessment to support learning?

Information about the school

The school is situated on the outskirts of Chesterfield in an area of social and economic advantage and has slightly more pupils than average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. There is a lower than average percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups and very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The headteacher recently returned to the school following a period of absence, during which time she served as the headteacher of another local school, at the request of the local authority. The school is in a Victorian building. During the time of the inspection, significant building work was taking place to improve the school's accommodation. The school has achieved the national Healthy Schools status, a Basic Skills Award and the Food for Life Partnership Bronze award.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The school provides a good standard of education. It has a welcoming and happy environment in which pupils thrive, behave well and work hard. Lessons are calm and orderly, and pupils show good attitudes to their learning.

Achievement is good and pupils reach standards that are well above those expected by the time they move on to their secondary schools. This is because most teaching is good and some is outstanding. Most lessons provide tasks that are tailored specifically to meet the needs of all pupils and ensure appropriate challenge. In these lessons, pupils engage fully in the learning process. This is because teachers are very clear about what the pupils are expected to learn, regularly remind them of the need to focus on their learning, and provide opportunities for them to check on their own learning and that of others. In lessons where activities are not sufficiently challenging pupils make slower progress because pupils' prior learning is not assessed accurately enough and they do not always know what they must do to improve. Strong relationships and teachers' good use of class management skills help pupils enjoy their learning.

Pupils are making improved progress in writing. This is due to improved teaching but also because the school tracks the progress of pupils carefully and systematically and is able to identify and address underachievement effectively. Although writing has improved, the school acknowledges that more work can be done to ensure that pupils make the same progress in writing as they do in mathematics and reading. There are inconsistencies in the school's approach to teaching the basics of handwriting, punctuation and spelling. Opportunities for pupils to develop writing skills in other subjects, such as science and geography, are sometimes missed.

School leaders, at all levels, have good monitoring and evaluation skills. They know the school's strengths and what it needs to do to improve. Development plans show in detail how leaders are going to improve the school's provision. Improvements since the last inspection to many aspects of provision, improving pupils' progress, and consistently high attainment at the end of Key Stage 2, show that the school has good capacity to improve further. The school provides a satisfactory level of information to parents and carers about pupils' learning and progress. However, the school acknowledges that more can be done to improve communication in this area.

Pastoral care, especially for pupils whose circumstances mean they need additional support, is effective. Pupils across the school say they feel safe and well cared for at all times and this is reflected by very high attendance rates and pupils' overwhelming enjoyment of coming to school.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching and learning so that all lessons are consistently good or better by:
 - ensuring activities in lessons always challenge all pupils
 - developing greater consistency and quality in teachers' assessments of pupils' learning in order to inform the next planned steps of learning
 - ensuring that pupils engage more closely in the learning process through the use of success criteria matched accurately to their ability.
- Further increase the rate of pupils' progress in writing by:
 - providing greater opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills across all subjects
 - adopting a more consistent approach to the development of pupils' basic spelling, punctuation and handwriting skills in lower Key Stage 2.
- Improve communication and further engage and enable all groups of parents and carers to support their child's learning by:
 - developing an effective website/learning platform to inform, educate and unite all members of the school community.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Because of pupils' consistently good learning in lessons, all groups of pupils achieve well. Pupils enter Year 3 with standards above average. They leave the school attaining standards well above those expected for their age. Pupils' current work indicates that standards continue to be well above average. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to most other pupils, because their needs are quickly identified and effective teaching assistants provide them with appropriate academic and pastoral support.

Pupils behave well and show respect for each other and for adults. They enjoy their learning and are proud of their school. These positive attitudes, together with their good basic skills give pupils good grounding for their future learning. Pupils have a well developed understanding of the importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle and many speak knowledgeably about types of food and how they affect health. A large number of pupils take advantage of the range of sports clubs offered by the school, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of the factors affecting their mental health and emotional well-being are less well developed.

Pupils make a good contribution to the life of the school. The school's pupil council takes account of the views of all pupils in the school through a well-used 'suggestion box' system. Pupils act as 'peer mediators' and 'mini-leaders' on the playground and talk enthusiastically about the benefits of operating these roles for all concerned. Pupils participate widely in the local community, as evidenced by their visits to a local care home for the elderly at Christmas time and their participation in local bulb and apple tree planting.

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Pupils' good behaviour is indicative of their moral understanding, including being aware of the rights and wrongs in differing areas of life. They know about a wide variety of cultures both within Britain and across the world and this is supported through their active link with a school in Cuba. Pupils actively participate in moments of reflection during school assemblies and sing songs whole-heartedly, indicating their good spiritual awareness. Pupils relate to each other well, and demonstrate well-developed social skills.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
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	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

Relationships between teachers and pupils are respectful and caring, and help to provide a positive climate for learning. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well, providing rewards wherever possible and raising pupils' self-esteem. Although many lessons provide pupils with activities which motivate them, teachers do not always engage pupils' attention enough on the detail of their learning. Hence pupils occasionally become absorbed with completing the activity rather than focusing upon the main aspects which will help them learn more effectively. Teachers ensure that most lessons run at a good pace and plan carefully to ensure that staff supporting lessons are well informed and deployed effectively to improve pupils' learning.

The curriculum is enriched very well through a wide range of out-of-school clubs which are very popular with pupils. A varied programme of visits and visitors make pupils' learning interesting and relevant to their experiences. The school is aware that continuity and

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progression of skills and knowledge in all areas of the curriculum are not fully developed but have plans to resolve this.

Staff know pupils very well. Close liaison with local external agencies helps the school ensure that the most vulnerable pupils and their families receive additional support. Effective induction arrangements when pupils first enter the school in Year 3 help them to quickly settle into their new setting. Pupils who do not currently speak English as their first language are well supported, due in part to effective partnerships established by the school. For example a parent volunteer fluent in Spanish was observed providing support to a Spanish pupil in a science lesson, which enabled him to have full access to the learning.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and her senior leaders communicate high expectations to staff and pupils. Staff share the vision for improvement and work hard to implement it. Areas for improvement are identified through effective monitoring and new initiatives are followed up by senior leaders to ensure their effectiveness. Self-evaluation procedures are sound but senior leaders do not currently contribute to self-evaluation in sufficient depth. This is due in part to the fact that the school's leadership is in a period of transition. Despite these changes, middle leaders have ensured that the school has maintained focus and momentum. On returning to the school the headteacher has evaluated the school's position accurately and has quickly prioritised appropriate actions to drive further improvements.

Pupils' progress is tracked carefully and pupils who are not achieving well because of learning or emotional difficulties are identified early and support put into place. The supportive governing body knows the school well but is not focused sharply enough on improving pupils' outcomes and, consequently, governors are not fully effective in challenging the school to raise pupils' achievement. Safeguarding procedures meet current statutory requirements and staff benefit from regular training. The school's commitment to equal opportunities and tackling discrimination is shown in its good care and guidance for the most vulnerable pupils and their good achievement.

The school makes a strong contribution to promoting community cohesion, based on a clear analysis of its own context and the needs of the community, but evaluation of its impact is not rigorous. Pupils spoke positively about their experiences of learning about other countries and cultures which were very different from their own. During the inspection, pupils learned about the harvesting of crops in Africa, ready for exportation to

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the United Kingdom and were encouraged to consider the thoughts and feelings of the farm workers.

The school works to ensure that many parents and carers engage well with them. For example, a number of parents were involved in a cookery initiative, in which they worked alongside their children. Parents have also attended curriculum information evenings to inform them about calculation techniques used in mathematics teaching, and literacy teaching information. However, this remains an area for further development. The school's website/learning platform is not yet used to its full potential to share information with parents about pupils' learning and their progress, or to extend pupils' learning beyond the classroom.

The school deploys resources well to achieve value for money. This is reflected in the good outcomes secured by pupils.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers were positive in their views about the school. One parent commented, 'My husband and I have been impressed with Old Hall school ever since my son started. He has flourished and grown both academically and socially and we have nothing but praise for the school, the head and all the staff.' A number of parents and carers made similar comments.

While the great majority of parents are happy with the school, a very small minority commented on the lack of challenge for some pupils and poor communication between school and home regarding pupils' learning and progress. These two areas were considered during the inspection and discussed with the headteacher. Inspectors found that most teaching challenges pupils appropriately, but that the level of challenge could be

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greater in some lessons, alongside pupils' improved engagement in the learning process. This forms one of the areas for improvement for the school. Inspectors judged that communication about pupils' learning and progress could be improved and have asked the school to develop a suitable means of improving this aspect of their work. The school is supportive of this development and their progress will be evaluated during the next inspection. Other responses brought up individual concerns. All of these were considered during the inspection and, while preserving anonymity, discussed with the headteacher.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Old Hall 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 95 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 250 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	54	57	32	34	9	9	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	50	53	41	43	3	3	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	39	41	42	44	14	15	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	43	45	35	37	13	14	3	3
The teaching is good at this school	44	46	36	38	12	13	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	40	42	41	43	9	9	3	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	38	40	50	53	6	6	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)	47	49	35	37	7	7	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	38	40	42	44	12	13	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	29	31	46	48	14	15	3	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	24	25	52	55	9	9	5	5
The school is led and managed effectively	30	32	48	51	11	12	3	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	41	43	40	42	10	11	3	3

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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

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.



19 November 2010

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Old Hall Junior School, Chesterfield, S40 3QR

You may remember that I recently visited your school with two other inspectors. I would like to thank you all for making us so welcome and for being so polite and helpful. We had a chance to talk with many of you. You told us that you like your teachers and said that there is always somebody to talk to if you have any problems. You behave yourselves well in school and we noticed how kind you are to each other. This is brilliant to see! I would also like to thank you and your parents and carers for filling in a form that let us know about your school.

We think that Old Hall Junior School is a good school. We found that you receive good support and help from the teachers and that nearly all of you enjoy school and make good progress in your learning. We were pleased to see how well you try to keep healthy and what a good contribution you make to the local community. There are many good things in your school but we think there are some areas to work on to make school even better. We think the things you learn about could sometimes be a bit more advanced and make you think a bit harder, so we have asked the teachers to look a bit more closely at what you can already do, so that the next steps of learning, challenge and make you think at just the right level. We also think that teachers can help you to better understand exactly what you are learning in each lesson. We think that a new school website would help you to share more of your work, progress and learning with your parents or carers and your headteacher agrees with this. Finally, we think that teaching could be a little better organised to develop your writing skills in the lower part of the school. You could also be given more opportunities to practise your writing skills in subjects other than literacy.

Your headteacher, the staff and the governing body work very hard and want the school to continue to improve. You can help too by making sure you continue to keep up your excellent attendance and by working hard all the time. Thank you once again for being so helpful and remember to always enjoy your learning.

Yours sincerely

Jeremy Spencer

Her Majesty's Inspector

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