

# Knowsley Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	105670
<b>Local Authority</b>	Oldham
<b>Inspection number</b>	355815
<b>Inspection dates</b>	17–18 March 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Lynne Read

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	307
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Cllr D Heffernan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Jane Goodwin
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 January 2008
<b>School address</b>	Stoneleigh Road Springhead, Oldham Greater Manchester OL4 4BH
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 6334433
<b>Fax number</b>	0161 6334433
<b>Email address</b>	head@knowsley.oldham.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 15 lessons and observed 13 teachers. They held meetings with members of the governing body, managers, staff, the School Improvement Partner and groups of pupils. In observing the school's work, they looked at pupils' workbooks, assessment records, school policies and school development plans. In total 128 parental questionnaires were received, analysed and considered, alongside 101 questionnaires completed by the pupils and 21 by school staff.

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

- Whether lessons are promoting the best possible progress for all groups of pupils, especially in writing and mathematics.
- Whether the assessments of pupils' learning are accurate and how effectively the information is used in planning support and challenge in lessons.
- How effectively the curriculum promotes key skills.
- Whether leadership and improvement planning is effective in taking the school forward and improving learning.

## Information about the school

This school is larger in size than most primary schools. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average, as is that of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Most pupils are of a White British heritage with a minority of pupils from minority-ethnic groups, mainly of Asian or Caribbean heritage.

The school is accredited for its work through the Healthy Schools status, as well as the Active Mark and Eco Schools awards. It is recognised for 'outstanding achievement in sport' by the local authority and is a UNICEF 'Rights Respecting' School.

**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

This is a good school. The headteacher leads the successful drive for improvement: she generates good team work and a shared vision of excellence. Senior managers complete thorough reviews of performance and challenging targets are set. This system of self-evaluation is successful in providing an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and has led to many improvements since the previous inspection. For example, writing has improved and the rate of attendance has increased. The capacity for sustained improvement is therefore good.

Although pupils' attainment on entry to the school is above average overall, a significant minority have difficulties in transferring their confident oral skills into the recording of work in a more formal way. As they move through the school, they make good progress and it is sometimes outstanding in Year 6. The trend of attainment by Year 6 is above or significantly above average. However, in mathematics the rate of progress is sometimes slower, especially for the more-able pupils. Teaching is good overall. Some is outstanding, but there are occasions when the more-able pupils are not sufficiently challenged in mathematics. In particular, their well developed talents of problem-solving and tackling investigational work are not always stretched to the full.

Carefully planned provision and tailored mentoring programmes ensure good progress for pupils vulnerable due to their circumstances and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. On occasions, however, the information on pupils' prior learning is not always used to best effect in planning lessons and making sure that work builds accurately on their strengths. Middle managers monitor the effectiveness of teaching, learning and the curriculum but, currently, these checks are not sufficiently rigorous in focusing on the use of assessments in the classroom. The good curriculum includes a strong emphasis on personal development and pupils enjoy a rich variety of experiences in the arts, physical education and sport. Their understanding of healthy lifestyles is outstanding and they make an excellent contribution to the community, especially through their work on 'rights and responsibilities'. The school is a harmonious community where pupils from different backgrounds get on very well together. Behaviour is good, both in lessons and leisure time.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and improve progress in mathematics, especially for the more-able pupils across the school by:
  - increasing opportunities for pupils to engage in problem-solving and investigational work

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- providing consistently good challenge in mathematics lessons, especially for the more-able pupils.
- Improve the use of assessment to increase its effectiveness in meeting pupils' needs by:
  - ensuring that teachers use the information on pupils' prior learning more fully when planning lessons
  - injecting more rigour into leaders' monitoring of teaching to include a greater focus on checking the quality of assessment and its impact on learning.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Achievement is good for all pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils have good attitudes to their learning and enjoy their lessons. For example, in a philosophy lesson, pupils collaborated extremely well to explore some sophisticated ideas and concepts. All age groups relish the challenge of open-ended tasks where they are free to collaborate, follow their own lines of enquiry and use their knowledge and talents to the full. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils employed all these strengths in the process of producing some excellent writing.

When pupils enter Year 3 they take time to adjust to the new learning environment and the organisation of lessons, both of which are significantly different from their previous experiences. Additionally, a significant minority have relatively weaker skills in spelling, punctuation and handwriting. Once settled, they make good progress overall and it is sometimes outstanding in Year 6. Pupils' recording skills advance quickly. However, attainment and progress in mathematics lags behind that in English, especially at the higher level. There is very little difference between the attainment of boys and girls, and pupils of different ethnic heritages make equal progress. The specific needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified early in Year 3 and programmes of support are put in place. These are very effective and result in good progress.

Pupils respond exceptionally well to the school's health promotion strategies, participating enthusiastically in a very wide range of sport and constructive leisure activities. For example, the 'Freddie Fit' sessions at playtime are extremely popular and pupils have been pro-active in developing healthier lunchtime menus and the Healthy Foods tuck shop. Pupils assert that they feel safe and that incidents of bullying are rare and dealt with swiftly. Attendance is above average; pupils are keen and confident learners and have a good range of skills when they move on to their next schools. School councillors represent pupils' views well and play a valuable part in decision-making. For example, they have contributed to the staff appointment process and made an input into playground design. At the local level, pupils contribute to dance and arts festivals and took a leading role in the borough wide 'Peace Prayer Ceremony'. They have a good understanding of, and respect for, views and beliefs that are different from their own. Behaviour and relationships are good.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

<sup>1</sup> 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?

Lessons have very clear objectives so pupils know exactly what is expected of them. Teachers generally plan tasks to build on pupils' prior learning. There are examples where this is done outstandingly well, for example, where teachers set practical tasks, encouraging pupils to think for themselves and employing their well-developed communication and collaborative skills. However, because assessment information is not always used effectively, work for the more-able pupils is sometimes only marginally more difficult and does not challenge them fully, particularly in mathematics. Teachers keep a check on progress during lessons and adapt the work if pupils are experiencing difficulty. They are less adept at injecting extra pace when pupils learn quickly. The marking of work is good and pupils have useful 'target passports' to help them focus their efforts on specific areas for improvement.

The good curriculum includes opportunities to learn different languages and good opportunities for creative work. Skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology are extended well through other subject studies. A range of intervention programmes and individual mentoring provide very good support for personal and academic development. Provision to extend pupils' gifts and talents, for example, in music, sport or gymnastics, results in some exceptionally high standards of performance. Pupils' needs are met extremely well through some activities that are planned to build on their particular dispositions and learning styles. For example, they learn about angles and

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co-ordinates through practical investigation or extend their mental computation skills through a challenging class game. Such strategies are especially successful in Year 6 but not seen consistently across the school. An extensive programme of extra-curricular activities and competitive sport is well supported by links with other schools and enjoyed by pupils. The annual 'enterprise week' gives pupils a good insight into finance and the world of work.

Pupils' welfare is at the heart of this school's work. All the pupils who filled in their questionnaire agreed with the statement that, 'adults in school care about me'. The learning mentor goes to great lengths to overcome any barriers that might get in the way of learning. Pupils who have emotional or behavioural difficulties are well supported and good links with outside agencies secure specialist materials and expertise to meet individual needs. Through the promotion of the 'rights respecting' policy, pupils develop a strong sense of citizenship. The school works hard to support pupils in the transition from the infant school through induction meetings, visits and joint projects. Staff are continuing to explore ways of developing a smoother continuity in the learning journey.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides strong, focused leadership and clear direction. School development planning illustrates shared, clear ambition and staff are focused on providing the best for children. The school is well run: procedures and policies are consistently followed. The school pays good attention to ensuring that no groups of pupils are disadvantaged, so all have an equal opportunity to succeed. For example, an improved system for tracking pupil progress means that senior managers have an accurate view of achievements for the different groups of pupils in school. They use the information well to target support and provide a boost to learning, where needed. Curriculum leaders make regular checks on classroom provision and the quality of pupils' work but there is insufficient rigour in checking that assessment information is used effectively in planning lessons and that it is having the intended impact on learning.

The school promotes community cohesion well. Good links with a nearby school provide good opportunities for pupils to understand and celebrate the rich diversity of cultures within their local community. Increasing engagement with groups beyond the immediate area and overseas provides pupils with a global awareness of life. Safeguarding procedures are good. Staff have regular updates in their child protection training and are well equipped to deal with concerns. The vetting of staff is thorough and pupils are safe. The governing body brings a wide range of skills to enhance management and its

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members have a secure overview of attainment and progress. Some new members have recently been recruited and are currently undergoing training for their roles. Nevertheless, systems are in place to ensure that governance is good.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## Views of parents and carers

The parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire have positive views and the very large majority agree that their children's experiences of school are happy ones. Quotes that reflect these opinions include: 'The headteacher and her staff are always striving to provide the best possible education and experiences for the children.' and 'The atmosphere is always warm and welcoming.' There are commendations for the good quality of teaching and care. Parents and carers feel that children make good progress and the school does a good job in helping them to be safe and healthy. Inspection findings endorse these views. Some parents and carers noted that different teaching styles are used in this school and in the infant school which most pupils attend and wanted more information on how they could support their children's learning. Others felt that the school does not take enough account of their views and suggestions. Inspection findings show that parents and carers receive some useful information about the curriculum and their views are regularly gathered and considered. Nevertheless, the nature of the comments was passed on to leaders and governors.



## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Knowsley 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 128 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 307 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	71	55	53	41	2	2	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	66	52	59	46	3	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	44	34	74	58	8	6	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	51	40	67	52	6	5	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	55	43	66	52	3	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	46	36	64	50	15	12	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	52	41	69	54	5	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)	39	30	77	60	4	3	2	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	44	34	74	58	7	5	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	40	31	72	56	10	8	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	38	30	66	52	16	13	3	2
The school is led and managed effectively	43	34	72	56	8	6	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	56	44	64	50	6	5	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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



21 March 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Knowsley Junior School, Oldham, OL4 4BH**

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave the inspectors when we visited your school. We thoroughly enjoyed our time with you and appreciated all the help you gave us.

Knowsley Junior is a good school. You all get on very well together and take good care of each other. You are a credit to your families and your teachers. Thank you to the pupils who filled in their questionnaire and those who chatted with us. It is good to hear comments such as, 'I really appreciate my teachers and the things they do for me.' and 'I like being in school.'

You are keen to learn, work hard and are making good progress. Your reading is good and your writing has improved very well. We enjoyed reading some of your 'big write' work. We think some of you could do even better in mathematics so we have asked your teachers to:

- make sure that the tasks in your mathematics lessons give you lots of challenge, especially for those who learn quickly
- provide more of the problem-solving and investigation work in mathematics that you enjoy so much
- ensure that lessons build carefully on your previous learning and your special talents.

We also asked your teachers to check more frequently on that last point by visiting classes and looking at your work.

You can help by continuing to work hard. Thank you once again for the interesting conversations we had and for letting us share your work and play. Please accept our best wishes for the future and continue to enjoy your happy school.

Yours sincerely

Lynne Read

Lead inspector

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