

Sherwood Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122501
Local Authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	359258
Inspection dates	7–8 April 2011
Reporting inspector	Nick Butt

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	201
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Katie Hill
Headteacher	Helen Duffy
Date of previous school inspection	11 March 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspection team visited 23 lessons and observed 10 teachers. Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher of the infant feeder school, members of the governing body, staff, and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a selection of documentation, including planning, evidence of monitoring such as lesson observations, and analyses of pupils' work and other assessment information. The inspection team scrutinised inspection questionnaires returned by the parents and carers of 102 pupils, as well as those 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.

- What is the school doing to ensure that attainment reaches or exceeds the national average in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6?
- How much of the teaching is now consistently good?
- To what extent do subject leaders influence pupils' progress and attainment?
- What is the impact of the new headteacher on driving forward improvement?

Information about the school

Sherwood Junior is smaller than the average junior school. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The school has Healthy Schools status, the Eco-school Silver award and the Activemark award.

The school suffered considerable flood damage from a burst pipe during the winter. A new headteacher took up post in September 2010.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Sherwood Junior provides a satisfactory level of education for its pupils. The new headteacher has brought drive and determination to school improvement, and has won the support of the school community for the changes she has introduced. While it is too soon to see the full impact of all these measures, there are clear improvements in reading and writing this year as a result of the new initiatives. Pupils make satisfactory progress, and their attainment is now broadly average and rapidly improving. Parents and carers support the work of the school. One, reflecting the views of many, said, 'My daughter is very happy here and wants to get up and come to school every day. I am kept up to date with her progress and she is pushed to work harder and achieve more.'

Pupils behave well and are enthusiastic about learning. They say they feel safe at school and know that any concerns will be dealt with promptly by staff. They have a good understanding of managing risks, including safe use of the internet. Pupils benefit from a healthy tuck shop and take plenty of exercise. Sports clubs are oversubscribed and the school enjoys success in local tournaments. The school council makes a difference, negotiating larger portions of healthy food at lunchtime, setting up a buddy system in the playground and putting forward ideas for improving the grounds. Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their above average attendance, which is promoted well through the weekly award of a trophy to the highest attending class. The quality of care, guidance and support is good, and pupils receive effective individual support from an experienced team of teaching assistants.

Teaching and learning are improving as a result of careful monitoring and coaching introduced by the new headteacher. Explanations are clear, relationships are good and behaviour is managed well. However, too much teaching remains satisfactory. Too often the pace of learning slows because the teacher does too much of the talking, questioning does not extend pupils' understanding sufficiently, or tasks do not fully match pupils' learning needs. The curriculum is enriched well through a good range of visits, visitors and clubs, but does not give enough emphasis to investigations and problem-solving in mathematics. While pupils are becoming more proficient at reading and writing, they struggle sometimes to organise and express their ideas because they are not given enough opportunities for extended discussion.

The new headteacher carries much of the responsibility for monitoring and evaluation. The roles of other senior leaders and subject leaders are not fully developed, although there are increased expectations and leaders are beginning to take a more active role in influencing pupils' attainment and progress. For example, they have drawn up action plans to tackle areas of weakness. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and realistic. In view of the accelerated progress since the appointment of the new headteacher and the

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positive response to the changes that have been introduced, the school has a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in English and mathematics so that most pupils reach or exceed age-related expectations by:
 - improving pupils' mathematical problem-solving skills
 - developing pupils' ability to organise and express their ideas clearly, including through discussion in lessons.
- Raise the quality of teaching so that the large majority is good or better, by ensuring that:
 - tasks always accurately match pupils' learning needs, particularly in terms of challenge for the most able pupils
 - questions are used effectively to develop and extend pupils' learning
 - lessons are conducted at a brisk pace.
- Improve leadership and management at all levels by:
 - reviewing the senior leadership structure to distribute responsibilities more widely
 - developing the monitoring role of subject leaders so that they make a more significant impact on pupils' progress and attainment.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is generally below average. In 2010 Year 6 pupils made satisfactory progress overall, but attainment was below average in the national tests, especially in English. Since then, the introduction of focused guided reading sessions and more opportunities to write at length across different subjects have resulted in attainment rising in reading and writing, and the work seen in lessons and pupils' books reflected broadly average standards. Progress is improving, but depends on how consistently good the teaching is in particular year groups. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve satisfactorily. Pupils' particular needs are identified and interventions set in place to provide a wide range of support. The school has been particularly successful in promoting pupils' social skills and helping them to develop positive attitudes to learning.

Pupils enjoy school and show a real enthusiasm for learning; they are very keen to take an active role in lessons. This was observed in a lower ability Year 6 mathematics set, where pupils worked together to sort two-dimensional shapes according to their properties. They showed a good understanding of the difference between shapes such as a rhombus and a parallelogram and enjoyed discussing their findings as a class. Year 4 pupils relished the opportunity to investigate a murder mystery as they wrote up the evidence they had collected about different suspects. At times opportunities are missed for pupils to explore

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and organise their ideas because questioning is not penetrating enough, or insufficient time is available for discussion.

Pupils make a good contribution to the school and the wider community. They take responsibility willingly and with commitment, supporting children at the infant school and undertaking a range of jobs. They take part in the town carnival and help elderly people in their community. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have a good sense of right and wrong, and work harmoniously together. Pupils appreciate the natural world through growing fruit and vegetables on the school allotment, and study the art from a range of cultures.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
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	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
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?

Teachers know what they expect pupils to learn, and often share with them the steps that will lead to successful outcomes. Pupils generally undertake tasks confidently and know what to do. Occasionally the work is not pitched exactly at the right level for all pupils, and the most able pupils, in particular, are sometimes not challenged enough. Pupils like and respect their teachers and find learning enjoyable. Year 4 pupils took pride in designing packages that would protect a packet of biscuits falling from a height. Year 6 pupils had interesting discussions deciding the best items to include in a 'desert island survival kit' from a wide range of choices; most opted for an axe and discarded the teddy bear. The effectiveness of teachers' questioning varies. At its most effective it probes pupils' thinking

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and helps them to organise their ideas in a coherent way. On occasions, however, opportunities are missed for discussion because the teacher does too much of the talking, or questioning is not precise enough. The use of assessment is satisfactory. Marking usually shows pupils how to improve, although there is some inconsistency across year groups in its effectiveness. Pupils know their levels of attainment and what their targets are to reach the next level.

Within the curriculum there is satisfactory provision for developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills across different subjects, with a greater emphasis on improving writing this year. In mathematics, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to use and apply their skills through investigative or problem-solving work. The curriculum contributes well to pupils' good personal development and well-being and their enjoyment of school through visits to places of interest such as Hardwick Hall and Sherwood Forest. An innovative residential journey for Year 2 pupils from the infant school and Year 3 pupils from the junior school was successful in aiding transition and building pupils' confidence. Arrangements for the care, guidance and support of pupils are well organised. Good information that is available as a result of effective liaison with the infant school ensures that transition is smooth between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. There is good provision for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable and effective links with outside agencies support them well. The school promotes attendance well, with a noticeable improvement since the award of the weekly class trophy.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides good leadership that is robustly focused on raising levels of attainment, improving pupils' progress and making more teaching good. She has done much towards meeting these ends in a relatively short time. Staff welcome her collegiate approach, enthusiasm and clear direction. Leadership capacity within the school is developing, but too much of the responsibility currently falls on the headteacher. The school is considering how it may review the roles and responsibilities of senior leaders to ensure that leadership is distributed more widely, and to hold staff fully to account. Subject leaders are beginning to play a more active part in monitoring progress in their areas, taking more responsibility for interpreting data. However, they have not had sufficient opportunities to observe lessons in their subjects to gain a full insight into provision across the school.

The governing body's effectiveness is satisfactory. Governors are well informed and know the school's strengths and areas to develop. Their monitoring this year is more focused on

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the school's priorities, such as how well boys learn. They make regular visits and record what they have found out. The school increasingly makes use of governors' expertise. The governing body is beginning to give the school a strategic lead and to hold leaders to account.

There are good partnerships with parents and carers, who value the school's work. The school communicates well with them and involves them in making decisions. Parents and carers have been represented on several working parties; a recent Mother's day lunch attracted 83 mums and grandmas. The school promotes equality satisfactorily, being fully inclusive. There remain some inconsistencies in the quality of the provision in some year groups. Safeguarding arrangements are good. The school ensures all staff are fully trained and is particularly good at keeping the site safe, and keeping careful records. The aftermath of the floods was managed very efficiently with minimal disruption to pupils. The school promotes community cohesion well, reaching out to its local community successfully and giving pupils a good understanding of the different faiths and cultures represented in the United Kingdom. A partnership with a multicultural school in Nottingham helps to support this work and a link with a school in France gives this work an international dimension.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of parents and carers returning questionnaires was high. Their views were mainly positive, with all agreeing that the school keeps their children safe, informs them about their progress, that the teaching is good and helps them to support their children's learning. A few parents and carers felt their children were not making enough progress and that behaviour could be dealt with more effectively. Inspection findings supported the positive views of parents and carers. Inspectors found that some more able pupils, in

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particular, were not always challenged enough, but that most pupils make satisfactory progress. The school manages behaviour well.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Sherwood 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 102 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 201 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	46	45	49	48	6	6	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	52	51	50	49	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	45	44	57	56	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	41	40	54	53	7	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	47	46	55	54	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	39	38	62	61	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	32	31	65	64	2	2	1	1
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)	38	37	60	59	3	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	39	38	55	54	5	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	40	39	53	52	7	7	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	35	34	59	58	4	4	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	42	41	52	51	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	46	45	52	51	4	4	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).

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">■ 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.



11 April 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sherwood Junior School, Mansfield, NG20 0JT

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school and for sharing your views with us, both in person and through the questionnaires you completed. Sherwood Junior is a satisfactory school. There are good things about it and some areas to improve. We agree that the school keeps you safe and enables you to choose a healthy lifestyle. We think you behave well and make a good contribution to your school and the wider community, for example through the work of the school council. There are plenty of clubs and visits for you to enjoy, and the school cares for you well. Mrs Duffy has made a difference since she arrived, and we saw how things are improving.

We would like you to reach higher levels of attainment in English and mathematics. We have asked the school to give you more opportunities to do mathematical investigations and problem solving, and to give you time to discuss your ideas so that you can organise and express them better. We would also like more of the teaching to be good. We have asked your teachers to make sure that the work is just right for you, not too hard or too easy, and to ask you questions that really make you think. We have asked the school's leaders and managers to play a full part in checking how things are going. We have asked them to think about how more people can become involved in doing this, and ways that they can make more of a difference.

You all can help by telling your teachers what you enjoy about learning and by doing your best at all times.

Our best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Nick Butt

Lead inspector

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