

The Sherwood School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102646
Local Authority	Merton
Inspection number	355227
Inspection dates	9–10 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Natalia Power

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	482
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Suzanne Gorden
Headteacher	Kenneth Tyzack
Date of previous school inspection	17 October 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 32 lessons, taught by 16 different teachers, and talked to parents and carers, members of the governing body, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked in particular at its self-evaluation documents and plans for improvement, the data collected on pupils' progress, safeguarding information and the governing body minutes. They considered the responses in 123 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

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

- What is the quality of the teaching and learning, and how effective are leaders and managers in ensuring consistency across the school?
- How successful are leaders and managers in using information about the attainment and progress of pupils to bring about rapid and sustained improvement in their achievement?
- How effective are the steps taken by the school to improve pupils' attainment in writing?

Information about the school

This school is larger than others of its type. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than usual. Around two thirds of pupils come from a wide range of minority ethnic heritages. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is higher than average, but few are at an early stage of learning the language. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than usual. The governing body manages the breakfast and after-school clubs.

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

- This is a satisfactory school where the pupils are happy and protected. Pupils told inspectors that the school is friendly, and a typical comment from one parent was 'My child loves coming to school each day.' In this warm and welcoming environment, pupils develop good personal qualities. They are good ambassadors for their school, and are friendly and polite to visitors. They have a good understanding of how to keep healthy. Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school, and the pupils are considerate towards one another.
- Pupils' overall achievement is satisfactory. They make faster progress in some classes than in others, and this reflects some inconsistency in the quality of the teaching. Examples of good teaching were seen during the inspection but, overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory. Pupils' enjoyment is greatest when their involvement in their learning is most active. In some lessons, the pace of learning is too slow, tasks lack challenge, and pupils are sometimes no more than passive learners. Marking does not always show pupils clearly enough what they need to do to improve. The classroom observations made by leaders and managers are not always rigorous enough to ensure that teaching and learning are good at all times.
- Leaders and managers keep careful records of how well individual pupils are doing, and use the information to provide sound support for pupils with a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result of this tracking, and also of helpful support given by teaching assistants, these pupils make similar progress to their classmates. However, the school is less successful in analysing patterns of attainment from year to year for all groups and, as a result, some White British pupils have not been given sufficient targeted support to raise their attainment as quickly as others.
- The school is improving in some areas. Measures to improve pupils' writing have been particularly effective in increasing the proportion of pupils reaching the highest levels and in raising pupils' overall attainment in English. However, not enough has been done to raise pupils' overall achievement from satisfactory to good throughout the school. Leaders and managers have a broadly accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for development of their school, but their plans for the future sometimes lack detail on how to bring about rapid and sustained improvement. Overall, the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

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.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning to at least good overall in order to raise attainment by:
 - raising the level of challenge for all pupils
 - improving the pace of learning in lessons, with more opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning
 - ensuring that marking is consistent across all subjects and all classes, so that pupils understand how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management in driving school improvement by:
 - sharpening up the school's planning to include more detail on ways of bringing about rapid and sustained improvements
 - improving the programme of classroom observations by matching assessments to clear and rigorous criteria
 - monitoring and evaluating rigorously pupils' outcomes, particularly the performance of groups, so that patterns of underperformance are quickly identified and addressed.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils report that they enjoy school and like their teachers. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities which vary, but which are generally in line with those expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress from their starting points, and this pattern continues in Years 1 to 6. National data show that pupils' attainment is average, and this is confirmed by inspectors' scrutiny of lessons and pupils' work throughout the school. Not all groups achieve equally well, and this is related to how effectively the different groups are supported. Some pupils from a White British background achieve somewhat less well, though their performance remains broadly satisfactory. The relatively small proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified early, given timely assistance and make sound progress. The small number of pupils at an early stage of learning to speak English as an additional language make satisfactory progress in line with others, because their needs are identified early and met through targeted and sound support. In lessons which engage pupils in their own learning, they make faster progress than in others where they are passive learners. For example, in one lively science lesson, Year 2 pupils were engaged in sorting electrical appliances into categories according to whether they produce heat, make sounds, light up or move. The task provided exciting opportunities for them to think for themselves, and to share their findings with others. Some lessons, however, do not fully exploit the pupils' natural curiosity, and in these cases they make slower progress.

Pupils are friendly, confident and polite to visitors. They are proud of their school and value its special qualities. For example, in one assembly, Year 3 pupils shared their love of reading with the rest of the school. Their fellow pupils listened intently to their celebration of books, and applauded spontaneously, clearly proud of Year 3's confident performance. This warm whole-school ethos reflects pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural

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development. They have a good understanding of the importance of taking exercise and eating a healthy diet. They feel safe in school and one commented, speaking for many, 'Because we are all friends, there isn't any bullying.' Pupils have satisfactory opportunities to take responsibility within the school, but the school does not fully exploit their enthusiasm and energy, for example by using them to promote improvements in their local environment. Pupils acquire satisfactory basic skills in literacy, numeracy and in information and communication technology, and this, together with their average attendance, prepares them adequately for the next stage of schooling.

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	3
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	3
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 manage pupils' behaviour well in lessons, and there are warm relationships in the classroom. A typical comment from one pupil was, 'Teachers are very kind and give you encouragement.' In the best lessons, teachers set a fast pace and use challenging tasks to stimulate pupils to think for themselves. For example, in one absorbing Year 6 art lesson, pupils enjoyed studying closely a painting by L.S Lowry. The teacher's questioning was sophisticated, and the pupils rose to the challenge, finding nuances of colour and texture in the painting. Here, the pupils' learning was rapid, because they were all engaged in discovering ideas for themselves, rather than being told. However, this is not the case in every lesson. In some lessons, too little is expected of the pupils and in these

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cases they make slower progress. Marking is sometimes insufficiently detailed and does not always indicate what pupils need to do to reach the next level.

Pupils report that they enjoy the varied trips and visits to places of interest, and spoke enthusiastically about how much they had learnt from their trip to the Horniman Museum, as an example. These visits promote their personal development well. However, there are currently too few of these, and too few visits from outside speakers. The curriculum has a sound focus on the basic skills, but does not always provide all pupils with sufficiently challenging tasks to raise their overall attainment.

Pupils are given satisfactory care and support, and the care of children whose circumstances may make them vulnerable is a particular strength. Each individual is known and cared for by 'the warm and welcoming staff', to use one parent's words. However, there has been a slight decline in pupils' overall attendance over the past two years and this has not been tackled with sufficient vigour. The breakfast and after-school clubs offer healthy food and provide an interesting range of activities, and the pupils concerned enjoy sharing activities with others from different age-groups. Transition arrangements are sound at each new phase of schooling.

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	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and assistant headteachers have together created a cohesive team and a happy school. Leaders and managers promote equality of opportunity adequately. Pupils respect one another, and those from all backgrounds get on well together, because discrimination is not tolerated. Leaders and managers take satisfactory action to remove barriers to learning for groups of pupils and all groups make satisfactory progress overall. Within this, some of those pupils with a range of additional needs do a little better, and some White British pupils a little less well.

The effectiveness of the ambition of leaders and managers to improve the school is satisfactory. Their plans for the future identify the broad areas in which the school needs to improve, but sometimes lack detail, and the timescale for improvements is not always tight enough. As a consequence, pupils' overall attainment is not improving as rapidly as it could. Leaders and managers check the quality of teaching and learning adequately, and provide valuable support and advice to teachers. However, lesson observations are not always sharply enough focused on how and what pupils are learning, and the evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning tends to be overgenerous. The governing body has a broadly accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and governors are fully involved in the life of the school. However, governors do not always

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hold the school to account sufficiently, particularly in relation to pupils' attainment and progress.

The school's safeguarding procedures are secure. Appropriate policies are in place and the school's procedures ensure that pupils are kept safe. Vetting procedures of adults who work with children are consistent and up-to-date. Staff receive regular training, and the child protection arrangements are regularly updated. However, not all administrative procedures are sufficiently rigorous. For example, record-keeping about minor injuries is not always sufficiently thorough. The school's promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. Leaders and governors are beginning to foster international links, and pupils have an adequate understanding of how other people live and worship in this country and abroad. Leaders and managers keep parents and carers adequately informed about their children's progress. However, they do not always do enough to involve all parents and carers in the life of the school, as a number indicated to inspectors.

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	3
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Home visits enable children entering the Nursery to settle quickly into school life, and the Nursery and Reception classes provide them with a safe and secure start to their education. The school builds and maintains warm relationships with parents and carers. Adults provide kind and calm support and, as a result, the children develop good social and emotional skills. They play together well, and are ready to share and take turns. There is generally a good balance between activities which children choose for themselves and those which adults suggest they should try. However, the activities vary in quality. One good activity, for example, involved the children in scooping up glass beads with sieves and colanders. The adults encouraged the children to think about why the beads would not go through the holes and to explain their findings, and this developed the

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children's speaking and listening skills. Other activities, however, especially those which involve keeping the children sitting on the carpet for too long, are less stimulating, and in these cases the children make slower progress. Children with additional needs are given well-planned activities, and those who speak English as an additional language receive effective specialist help. The Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactorily led and managed. The new leader has rightly identified the need to track and measure children's progress more accurately, and to integrate the planning of the Early Years Foundation Stage with that of the whole school to ensure that the children do not miss out on whole-school improvements.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Almost all those parents and carers who returned questionnaires, or who spoke to inspectors, considered that the school keeps their children safe and healthy, and most felt that their children enjoy school. The findings of the inspection are that safeguarding is sound and that pupils are healthy, happy and enjoy school. Most parents and carers consider that teaching is good. Inspectors found that some teaching is good but overall it is satisfactory. A very small minority of parents and carers express concerns about behaviour. The inspection team observed pupils' behaviour in and around the school during this inspection and found that pupils behave well. A few parents and carers consider that the school takes insufficient account of their suggestions and that it does not help them to support their children's learning. Inspectors found that, while the school's engagement with parents and carers is satisfactory, it does not always do enough to involve all of them in the life of the school. Overall, most parents and carers were happy with their children's experience at the school. One parent commented, 'The school gives my child a lovely start to her lifelong learning journey.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Sherwood 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 123 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 482 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	84	68	33	27	6	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	77	63	44	36	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	64	52	53	43	6	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	55	45	60	49	6	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	65	53	55	45	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	54	44	59	48	8	7	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	54	44	65	53	4	3	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)	44	36	73	59	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	46	37	70	57	3	2	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	37	30	74	60	5	4	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	33	27	71	58	11	9	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	56	46	58	47	7	6	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	64	52	55	45	3	2	1	1

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.



13 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Sherwood School, Mitcham CR4 1JP

Do you remember when four visitors came to your school recently to watch you learn and play? Thank you for making us so welcome, and telling us your views. Here are some of the things we found.

- Your school gives you a satisfactory quality of education, which means that it does some things well but that some things need to be improved.
- Your school keeps you safe and healthy. You behave well and pay close attention in lessons. You are polite and respectful to visitors.
- You make satisfactory progress and leave school with results which are very much like those of pupils in the country as a whole. We want you to do even better. We have therefore asked the adults to make all teaching as good as the best, by giving all of you tasks that challenge you to do your best and give you more chances to take charge of your own learning. We have also asked them when they mark your work to be even clearer about how you can improve it.
- Those in charge work really hard for your benefit. We have asked them to have a good think about how to make your school even better. For example, we have asked them to visit more of your lessons, to check carefully how well you are learning, and to make sure that all of you, whatever your backgrounds or needs, do as well as you can.

You told us how much you like your school, and you also showed us how much you care about one another by listening so carefully to the other pupils in the Year 3 'talk for writing' assembly. All of you can help in making your school even better. Try not to miss any school, unless you are ill, and always ask if there is anything you do not understand.

We wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Natalia Power

Lead inspector

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