

Shirley Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116104
Local Authority	Southampton
Inspection number	367407
Inspection dates	5–6 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Christopher Grove

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	480
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julie Reynolds
Headteacher	Christine Bulmer
Date of previous school inspection	28 January 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They observed 21 lessons taught by 16 teachers. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, with members of the governing body and with staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at analyses of pupils' attainment and progress, records of governing body meetings, the school's development planning and documents relating to monitoring, safeguarding and the curriculum. Inspectors analysed inspection questionnaires returned by 237 parents and carers as well as those completed by 27 members of staff and 124 pupils.

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

- How well teaching provides challenge for the different pupil groups, and how successfully assessment is used to support pupils' learning and progress.
- The impact of leadership and management in improving pupils' performance and the quality of teaching and learning.
- How well the school promotes the strands of community cohesion, especially at the national and global levels.

Information about the school

Shirley Junior is much larger than most other primary schools. Most pupils are of White British heritage, and others are from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is broadly average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, principally moderate learning difficulties, is also average. The headteacher has been in post since April 2009. The school has recently become part of a trust with other local schools and businesses. It has also achieved national accreditations, including the Healthy Schools and the Activemark awards.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

The school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory. The very positive ethos ensures that pupils are happy at school, as most parents and carers who took part in the survey agreed. One family described it as 'a happy and dynamic place. My child enjoys coming to school.' The warm atmosphere is sustained by the high morale of the team of teaching and support staff. All the members of staff who returned a questionnaire agreed that they are proud of the school, and know what they are trying to achieve. One summarised this well in writing, 'There is a good feeling of togetherness here.' Parents and carers expressed their appreciation of the developments that are taking place. As one wrote, 'The school has made significant improvements since the arrival of the new headteacher.'

The school has an inclusive ethos, and offers good care and support for pupils, with the result that their personal development is good. Most pupils who participated in the survey think that the adults care about them. As a consequence, they feel entirely safe, are attentive in lessons and behave well. Positive action by the leadership has raised attendance, which is now above average.

By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is above average. In past years, pupils' progress has been satisfactory, indicating satisfactory achievement. However, more recent evidence shows that pupils are making accelerated progress, though this is not yet consistent across the school. The quality of teaching in recent years has been satisfactory overall, and some is now good. The tasks that teachers set are on occasions not well matched to pupils' previous attainment so as to ensure that there is well-judged challenge for all groups. Sometimes, tasks are set without sufficient prior preparation, for example a lack of clear explanations or of worked examples, which means that pupils are not always secure in what they are asked to do. The use of assessment information is satisfactory, because teachers' marking of pupils' writing and of their mathematical tasks does not consistently offer advice about how pupils could improve their work. Furthermore, the school's target-setting arrangements do not direct pupils sufficiently to the next steps in their learning.

The headteacher, with good support from other members of the senior leadership team, communicates a confident vision for the school. Much is done to promote community cohesion within the school itself and in the locality, but pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to reflect on life elsewhere in the United Kingdom and in different societies in the world.

Information from tracking pupils' attainment and progress, and from monitoring the quality of teaching, is used with increasing rigour to plan improvements in provision. The school's self-evaluation is secure and accurate. The school has responded effectively to the previous inspection report. For instance, pupils who speak English as an additional language are now making comparable progress to that of others. In the light of this, and

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also the evidence of the pupils' improving progress, 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?

- Ensure that more teaching is consistently good or better by:
 - setting tasks which better challenge all groups of pupils to make at least good progress in lessons
 - providing precise explanations and good examples for pupils in order to clarify expectations for their learning tasks.
- Improve the use of assessment across the school so that pupils develop a better understanding of the next steps in their learning in writing and mathematics by:
 - ensuring that marking regularly gives pupils clearer feedback about how to improve their work
 - developing target-setting arrangements to enable teachers to indicate more precisely to pupils the improvements necessary to reach higher levels of attainment.
- Heighten pupils' awareness of issues of community cohesion by incorporating into the curriculum a wider range of contacts, nationally and internationally, in order to promote their understanding of cultural diversity.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. When pupils enter the school, their attainment is typically above average. In recent years, overall attainment by the end of Year 6 has been consistently above average. School records show that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same satisfactory progress as other pupils.

In a very successful lesson, all groups of pupils in a Year 6 class made good progress in solving mathematical problems through learning to draw inferences. The teacher built very well on her strong rapport with the class by adopting a rapid pace to learning and setting high expectations, while offering frequent encouragement. The clear explanations that she provided before pupils started work ensured good understanding, and the tasks set offered appropriately high levels of challenge for pupils of different abilities. However, not all teaching is so secure. In a satisfactory lesson about using decimals, for example, the teacher used exciting video material, but did not ensure that pupils understood a key concept, so that some were confused about their tasks. Furthermore, the task set for higher-ability pupils was hardly more challenging than that for others.

The secure building, lack of bullying and adults' good care give pupils a very strong sense of feeling safe. Pupils also show an excellent understanding of the importance of internet safety. Almost all parents and carers judged that their children feel safe at school, as did every member of staff who took part in the survey. The great majority of pupils also agree. The close relationships between staff and pupils lead to good behaviour around the school, and to high levels of attentiveness in classrooms. Pupils' good spiritual, moral,

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social and cultural development is seen in assemblies, for instance, in their respect for the feelings of others. It shows, too, in pupils' mature cooperation in lessons, for example when they act as talk partners, and in their good participation in the broad range of extra-curricular activities. There are various opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities within the school, for example as 'eco-warriors'. The school council has good opportunities to make decisions, for example, about the successful lunchtime charter, which has improved play and behaviour. Older pupils also act as buddies to younger pupils. However, pupils' opportunities to contribute to the wider community beyond the school are limited.

Pupils have a good awareness about healthy eating and about the value of keeping fit through physical activities. The school's Activemark and Healthy Schools awards provide good support for the practice of healthy lifestyles. Pupils' good skills in literacy and numeracy, together with their well developed problem-solving skills and above average levels of attendance, indicate that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

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	2
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	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	3
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	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?

Most teaching is characterised by the good relationships between adults and pupils, and teachers' good organisation and behaviour management. This creates the positive atmosphere for learning. Most lessons are also well paced. Teaching assistants regularly

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offer good support for learning, especially for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Planning for English and mathematics includes matching tasks to the learning needs of different groups of pupils. However, the match is not consistently good and this limits the extent of challenge for pupils. For instance, the tasks set for higher-ability pupils are sometimes little different from those for others. On other occasions, work is not well enough adapted to the needs of lower-ability pupils. In addition, teachers do not prepare pupils consistently well for their learning tasks, by giving clear explanations or by providing examples so that pupils understand clearly what they are expected to do. When they mark writing and mathematics tasks, teachers frequently offer pupils encouragement, but do not consistently give advice about the next steps in learning or about how work could be improved. Although there are arrangements for teachers to set individual targets for pupils, the impact is limited because targets do not consistently direct them towards higher levels of attainment in writing and mathematics.

The curriculum is appropriately broad and balanced, and is being adapted to increase its relevance for pupils. For the same reason, a new reading scheme has been successfully introduced. An Ofsted survey judged that the school's provision for music is good. Themed events, such as World War II Day and 'Now I Know Weeks', which address issues of safety, represent effective curriculum enhancement. Visits and visitors, and the sports partnership with a secondary school, supplement the curriculum well. A strength of the school is the wide range of extra-curricular clubs offering an extensive variety of sporting, musical and other cultural activities, in which pupils participate well. Despite these good features, the curriculum is satisfactory because it is not sufficiently well adapted to meet the needs of the different pupil groups.

The school has a welcoming and supportive ethos for pupils. One satisfied parent commented, 'Many of the staff are absolutely brilliant at dealing with children individually, taking account of their personalities.' The school demonstrates a strong commitment to the care of pupils, especially any whose circumstances make them vulnerable, through its specialised support staff and, where necessary, close liaison with external agencies. The arrangements to ease pupils' induction into the school and transfer to secondary education are very effective. Concerted action has improved attendance in a short period of time.

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 and the senior team have set a fresh direction, and are intent on further improvement, as evidenced by their effective development planning. To date, the impact of leaders' ambition and drive has been satisfactory. The greater accuracy of the school's

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tracking information, and its better use, together with the rigorous monitoring of the quality of teaching, are leading to improved self-evaluation. This is resulting in improving progress by pupils. The new roles of the four heads of standards, which bring together leadership of the main subjects and of four year groups, have recently been developed. These new middle leaders are committed and enthusiastic, but it is too soon to judge their impact. Members of the governing body ensure that all statutory requirements are met. They demonstrate a strong commitment to the school, and work closely with the leadership team. They show an especially good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and play the role of critical friends to good effect, for example in analysing the school's performance data.

The broad range of partnerships with local services supports the school's caring stance that leads to pupils' good well-being. Good use of local authority consultants, coupled with membership of the local trust, has provided significant professional development, for example to support the new middle leaders in their roles. Links with partner schools also extend aspects of the curriculum well. Leaders are committed to ensuring equal opportunities and to tackling discrimination. However, the promotion of equal opportunities is not better than satisfactory because of gaps between the performance of different groups of pupils, which, however, are narrowing.

At the time of the inspection, the school's systems and procedures met all the requirements for safeguarding. Risk assessments for a wide range of circumstances are rigorously undertaken. The implementation of the school's policies for child protection, anti-bullying and health and safety safeguards pupils very effectively. The school has assessed its provision for community cohesion and has an action plan. The inclusive ethos and good links with the neighbourhood ensure effective contributions at the school and local levels. However, the school acknowledges that there is more to be done to foster pupils' understanding of cultural diversity at the national and international levels.

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	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

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Views of parents and carers

The rate of return of completed questionnaires was above average. Most parents and carers feel that the school promotes a healthy lifestyle. The great majority believe that the quality of teaching is good, and most think that their children are making enough progress. Inspectors found that, although some teaching is good, overall it is satisfactory and pupils make satisfactory progress. The great majority of parents and carers think that the school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour, and inspectors endorse this view.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Shirley 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 237 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 480 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	96	41	129	54	10	4	2	1
The school keeps my child safe	128	54	106	45	3	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	59	25	155	65	15	6	6	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	58	24	146	62	29	12	4	2
The teaching is good at this school	77	32	145	61	9	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	56	24	157	66	17	7	4	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	63	27	158	67	12	5	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)	68	33	137	58	8	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	59	25	143	60	29	12	3	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	64	27	145	61	18	8	5	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	60	25	141	59	20	8	2	1
The school is led and managed effectively	102	43	118	50	8	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	105	44	115	49	14	6	2	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.



9 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Shirley Junior School, Southampton SO15 5XE

We would like to thank all of you for your help during the inspection. We enjoyed seeing you in your classrooms and talking to you at breaktimes and lunchtimes. We especially thank those of you who filled in the pupils' questionnaire. Inspectors judge that you go to a satisfactory school.

These are the main things that we found out about your school.

- Your school is welcoming and sets a positive climate for your learning.
- You enjoy school, and your behaviour in lessons and around the school is good.
- You have good relationships with the adults who take good care of you.
- You feel very safe in school and have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles.
- You make good contributions within your school, but your opportunities to contribute to the wider community are limited.
- The teaching and the curriculum in your school are satisfactory.
- Most of your parents and carers are pleased with your experience at school.
- Your attainment in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 is above average. Progress across the school has been satisfactory, but is improving.

We have asked your school to make some improvements.

- Make sure that more teaching is consistently good or better, by ensuring that all teachers set you work that is suitably challenging, and by giving you precise explanations and good examples so that you are clear about the learning tasks that they set you.
- Help you to understand more about what you can do to improve your writing and your mathematics work, by making sure that marking tells you the next steps in your learning, and improving the target setting so that you know what to do to reach a higher level.
- Give you more opportunities for contact with other people, not just in your local area but also elsewhere in the country and in different parts of the world.

You can help too by working hard and taking advantage of the improvements that your school will be making. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Chris Grove

Lead inspector

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