

Harlescott Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123393
Local Authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	380649
Inspection dates	26–27 September 2011
Reporting inspector	David Driscoll

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	265
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Malcolm Price
Headteacher	Stephanie Peters
Date of previous school inspection	6 November 2008
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Age group	7–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors, who observed 23 lessons taught by 10 teachers. They held meetings with groups of pupils, staff and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at records of pupils' attainment and progress, the school's development plan, records of checks on teaching and documents relating to the safeguarding of pupils. They also analysed responses to questionnaires completed by staff, pupils and 72 parents and carers.

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

- How effectively are the school's leaders addressing the apparent decline in achievement since the last inspection?
- Are checks on lessons providing a sufficiently robust and accurate picture of strengths and weaknesses in teaching?
- How effectively is information from assessments used to meet the needs of individual pupils, especially in those classes containing a mix of ages and abilities?

Information about the school

The school is larger than most junior schools. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is high, as is the proportion with a statement of special educational needs. Almost all pupils come from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. A new headteacher was appointed from January 2011, replacing an acting headteacher who had been in post for two terms. The school governors manage a breakfast club, which is open each weekday morning.

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?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

4

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

The school provides an inadequate education for its pupils. Too many pupils underachieve because they make insufficient progress as they move through the school. Consequently, levels of attainment by the end of Year 6 are generally low. The quality of teaching is inadequate and teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. As a result, pupils are often given work that is too easy for them. In those lessons where pupils are initially given suitably demanding tasks, they frequently finish these and sit quietly, but are inactive, for long periods. The curriculum is not matched to pupils' needs. It fails to build progressively on what they already know, understand and can do. The school carefully tracks individual pupil's progress and leaders are aware of the widespread underachievement. However, self-evaluation is weak. Checks on teaching fail to identify the causes of inadequate progress, so the school's leaders, including members of the governing body, are unable to pinpoint key weaknesses and draw up effective plans for improvement. As a result, pupils' achievement has fallen progressively since the previous inspection and the school no longer provides value for money. The school's capacity for sustained improvement is inadequate.

Nevertheless, the school has areas of strength. The well-planned programme for personal, social and health education makes a good contribution to aspects of pupils' personal development. This is further strengthened through partnerships with other organisations. It is particularly successful in enabling pupils to have a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle, for example Shrewsbury Town football club visit the school to talk about healthy eating and exercise. The support offered to pupils with special educational needs related to their behaviour, has led to significant improvements in their personal development. Those pupils with statements of special educational needs, for physical disabilities, are fully included in the life of the school. Pupils feel safe at the school and have a good degree of confidence that staff will look after them and take their concerns seriously. They have a particularly good understanding of how to stay safe on the internet. The school has good links with parents and carers and their views are sought. For example the school has responded well to their requests for more information about

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what happens each week in relation to the curriculum.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching as a matter of urgency in order to raise levels of attainment to at least the national average by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - making better use of information from assessments to set tasks that pupils of all abilities find suitably challenging
 - ensuring that the curriculum for individual pupils builds progressively on what pupils already know, understand and can do.

- Ensure leaders and managers at all levels, including the governing body, are effective in driving forward improvements by:
 - using assessment and tracking information to identify weaknesses in teaching, particularly in those classes and subjects where pupils make the slowest progress
 - using the results of such checks to set more precise and challenging priorities for improvement
 - implementing plans to address these priorities and accurately evaluating their effectiveness in driving improvements in the quality of teaching and learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

4

Attainment has fallen each year since the previous inspection. In 2011 the proportion of Year 6 pupils gaining Level 4 in both English and mathematics fell below the government's Key Stage 2 floor targets. Just under half of all pupils in Year 6 failed to meet the nationally expected level in both English and mathematics. Attainment in writing improved significantly in 2011, but this improvement was offset by a decline in reading and mathematics. Pupils are not developing the basic skills they will need in later life. The reasons were apparent in the lessons observed, where progress was inadequate. Pupils arrive at lessons keen to learn. They work hard at the tasks they are given, but often complete them very quickly. When this happens, most pupils sit quietly, although some become bored and start to distract others, reducing behaviour to a satisfactory level. Some pupils try independently to move on to more challenging work. More-able pupils, for example, hid their earlier worksheets so they could get on with more difficult tasks in mathematics. Usually though, pupils are compliant and simply do as they are told. Progress is inadequate for all groups. Pupils with special educational needs are often given academic work that does not meet their requirements. This is because the targets on their individual education plans are not used when teachers plan lessons.

Pupils' moral and social development is good; their spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils behave well outside of lessons. Exclusions are rare. Pupils move

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sensibly around the school and treat each other with respect. They have good manners and are keen to engage with adults. Pupils enjoy coming to school. Their attendance has been above average in recent years, but this fell significantly last year because of increased absence for treatment of medical conditions; a circumstance beyond the school’s control. Several pupils underwent surgery or were in hospital for long periods of time. When this is removed from data, attendance is average. The school council play a good role in the life of the school, but opportunities to participate in the local and wider community are more limited.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	4
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils’ behaviour	3
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	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Teachers often give all pupils the same task to do, irrespective of their ability, rather than setting them work that builds on what they have learnt previously. In Years 3 and 4 where pupils are taught in mixed-age classes and the spread of ability is greatest, the impact of this approach on slowing progress in learning is most significant. The school has identified ‘focus groups’ of pupils who are performing just below the level expected for their age. The teachers often work with these groups so they make good progress in individual lessons. However, the rest of the class, other than a few pupils who are supported by teaching assistants, are sometimes left to work by themselves. Their progress is not checked and the pace of learning falls considerably as they run out of work to do. In one English lesson, for example, some pupils finished well before the end of the lesson. They closed their books, folded their arms and sat waiting for something to happen. This contrasted with a mathematics lesson where the teacher’s rapid questioning and excellent use of mini

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

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whiteboards identified misconceptions in pupils’ understanding of angles from the work they had done previously. Different tasks were given to each group according to their ability, while the teacher went over how to measure angles with a small group. As a result, all pupils worked on tasks that accelerated their learning and they made good progress. The information from assessments is rarely used as effectively in other lessons, where too often tasks neither stimulate nor challenge pupils. In the worst cases, pupils were told to copy simple sums from the whiteboard, some of which were incorrectly set out.

Recent changes have been made to the curriculum, which have made it more relevant and stimulating for pupils. This is particularly true of the topic based lessons, where learning is good. However, for too many pupils the curriculum does not promote learning effectively. This is because the curriculum fails to build progressively on what pupils already know, understand and can do. Pupils value the good range of extra activities available to them, especially those related to sport and fitness.

The breakfast club provides a safe, healthy and welcoming environment. Learning mentors play an important role in the good support provided for pupils whose circumstances may leave them vulnerable. Such pupils feel they always have someone to talk to about their problems and appreciate the care provided. They are given clear guidance and effective strategies on how to modify their behaviour. Relationships between those pupils with physical disabilities and their assigned teaching assistants are warm and constructive. The teaching assistants often know pupils’ individual needs well. However, they sometimes provide too much help by doing the work for them, rather than making pupils think for themselves. Despite some strengths, care, guidance and support are only satisfactory because there are inconsistencies in the implementation of policies on a day-to-day basis. Checks are not in place to ensure that staff carry out their assigned duties effectively, for example ensuring that gates are locked at the correct times.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	4
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	4
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has been in post for two terms. She has implemented plans for improvement that are starting to show results, but the plans have not been in place long enough to show any great impact. Staff feel proud of their school and support the headteacher and other leaders. The school worked to raise attainment in writing

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last year and this was successful. However, the improvements were offset by the decline in reading and mathematics. The drive for improvement, leadership of teaching and governance of the school are all inadequate. The school’s leaders, including members of the governing body, have not driven the school forward. They have been unable to tackle the decline in achievement sufficiently well. This is because evaluation of teaching is not accurate; around half of all lessons observed during the inspection were inadequate. Almost, every lesson observed by senior leaders in the past year was found to be either satisfactory or good. Inadequacies in teaching, leading to inadequate progress have not been correctly identified. Priorities for improvement, and the criteria by which success is judged, have been too vague. Members of the governing body have been supportive of the school and kept a tight rein on finances. They ensure that the school meets statutory requirements, including those for satisfactory safeguarding, where they have a good level of expertise. However, they have not challenged school leaders sufficiently about declining attainment and inadequate rates of pupil progress. This weakness has been recognised and all members of the governing body have training planned to help them carry out their role more effectively.

The school goes to considerable lengths to tackle discrimination. Racist incidents are few and acted upon appropriately. However, because pupils’ attainment is inadequate, their learning is not monitored sufficiently well to ensure all make the progress of which they are capable and this leads to inadequate equality of opportunity. Links forged with the local infant and secondary schools have enabled shared training and curriculum initiatives to take place. There is evidence these partnerships are contributing positively to learning. For example, during the inspection a joint activity for gifted and talented mathematicians was held, where pupils successfully learnt from one another’s different approaches to problem solving. Additionally, the support offered to pupils with special educational needs has led to significant improvements in their personal development. The school’s work to promote community cohesion is satisfactory.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	4
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	4
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3

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The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4
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Views of parents and carers

Those parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire are generally pleased with the quality of education that their children receive. They particularly appreciate the way that the school keeps their children safe and helps them to lead a healthy lifestyle. Their views are similar to those of inspectors in relation to these points. However, inspectors found that pupils are not making the progress expected of them because the quality of teaching is not good enough. Some parents and carers were concerned about poor behaviour. The inspectors observed behaviour in and out of lessons. The inspection findings show that behaviour is satisfactory.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Harlescott 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 72 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 265 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	39	54	30	42	3	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	45	63	24	33	2	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	30	42	34	47	2	3	2	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	27	38	37	51	0	0	3	4
The teaching is good at this school	32	44	32	44	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	29	40	35	49	4	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	40	56	30	42	1	1	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)	35	49	29	40	1	1	2	3
The school meets my child’s particular needs	34	47	29	40	2	3	2	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	35	32	44	8	11	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	29	40	28	39	6	8	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	22	31	40	56	4	6	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	40	56	27	38	0	0	3	4

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 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.



28 September 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Harlescott Junior School, Shrewsbury, SY1 4QN

Thank you for all the help that you gave us when we visited your school. We found you to be polite and respectful. You told us that you enjoyed coming to school, but that the work was sometimes too easy. Your school looks after you and makes sure you feel safe. You have a good understanding of how to stay fit and healthy but you don't make enough progress in English and mathematics. The tasks you are given are often too easy for you, or you finish them quickly.

We have asked your teachers to use what they already know about you to set work that is more challenging, and to make sure that you always have work that helps you learn new skills and acquire knowledge as you move through the school. You can all help by telling your teacher as soon as you have completed your work. Your school works well with others in the area to provide you with opportunities to learn with other pupils, as we saw on the shared mathematics day.

The school is doing less well than at its last inspection. The people who are responsible for leading it forward know that you do not make as much progress as you should but have found it difficult to identify exactly what has been going wrong. We have decided that your school needs special measures. This means the school will receive some help to make sure that it improves as quickly as possible. Other inspectors will visit the school regularly to check that progress is being made.

Yours sincerely

David Driscoll
Lead inspector

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