

Halfway Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107046
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	382329
Inspection dates	9–10 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Katrina Gueli HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	179
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Delia Kay
Headteacher	Beverly Nicholson
Date of previous school inspection	4 March 2010
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. Eight lessons were observed taught by eight different teachers. In addition, a further five lessons were visited. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, representatives of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents including: pupils' attainment and progress data; minutes from meetings of the governing body; school policies including those relating to safeguarding; and examples of pupils' work.

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

- How successfully the areas for development identified at the school's last section 5 inspection had been addressed.
- Whether the school had developed a secure capacity for sustained improvement.

Information about the school

Halfway Junior School is a smaller-than-average primary school serving an area south of Sheffield. In March 2010, the school was judged to require special measures. Subsequently, the school has had three monitoring inspections prior to this term. An acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher are currently in post. Almost all teaching staff and leaders are new to the school since March 2010 and there is a new Chair of the Governing Body. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average overall, and is high in some year groups. The school has achieved an Eco-School bronze award.

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

2

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. The school has improved rapidly since its last inspection in March 2010 and all pupils are now making at least satisfactory progress relative to their starting points. Most recently, progress for many pupils has been good, enabling past underperformance to be successfully addressed. However, some pupils still lack the ability and confidence to work independently at a brisk pace, which slows their learning in lessons. In addition, too many pupils do not always endeavour to consistently produce their best writing during lessons and a few gaps remain in their calculation and mental mathematics skills. Most pupils are polite, respectful of adults and each other and behave well in lessons and around school. Their attendance is high. Pupils' understanding of healthy lifestyles and cultural diversity is less well developed.

Expectations for pupils' achievement are high and their progress is very carefully tracked enabling underperformance to be identified and addressed quickly. Subsequent interventions are effective in helping pupils to address gaps in their learning. Teachers also make good use of assessment information to plan lessons that match pupils' learning needs well, contributing to their improving progress. However, the proportion of good or better teaching is not high enough to enable pupils to make consistently good progress across the school. The care, guidance and support for pupils are good, ensuring that pupils feel safe in school and those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable to underachievement receive the help and support that they need in order to succeed.

The very effective leadership of the acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher has been instrumental in swiftly driving up the quality of provision, developing the skills of middle leaders and bringing about the significant improvement in pupil outcomes that was required. Leaders' monitoring of the school's work is very robust and evaluation is incisive enabling them to accurately identify actions necessary to bring about further improvement. The governing body has a good working knowledge of the school and governors' skills and expertise are being utilised well to shape the school's strategic direction. Their support and challenge has been effective in contributing to the school's improvement. These strengths, in conjunction with the rise in teaching quality and pupil outcomes already achieved, confirm the school's good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure all pupils make consistently good progress throughout their time in school by:
 - increasing the proportion of good or better teaching to 70% by July 2012
 - developing pupils' ability to work independently at a brisk pace
 - insisting on consistently high-quality presentation with good attention to spelling, punctuation and grammar in pupils' written work
 - increasing pupils' competence in relation to calculation skills and mental mathematics.

- Develop the curriculum to increase pupils' understanding of cultural diversity and the importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle.

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.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils' attainment on entry to the school varies between cohorts ranging from broadly average to significantly above average. There is a strong improving trend in the proportion of pupils making at least expected progress, particularly in mathematics. Similarly, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected Level 4 in both English and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2 has risen from below to above average over the last three years. In 2011, the attainment of Year 6 pupils was above average in English and significantly above average in mathematics. This represents satisfactory progress relative to their starting points despite pupils' very limited progress during their first two years in the school. In other year groups, gaps between pupils' current and expected attainment have also closed considerably. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make satisfactory progress; they benefit from work that is well matched to their learning needs and their learning in the classroom is well supported by additional adults.

Most pupils enjoy school and work well collaboratively during lessons, keenly discussing their ideas with talk partners. They also enjoy making choices about the content and presentation of work in their 'learning journal', which is helping to develop their research and independent study skills. Many choose to participate in the good range of activities on offer beyond the school day helping to promote their health, well-being and social development. Pupils say they feel safe in school and they highlighted, during discussions with inspectors, the willingness of staff to listen and respond to their views and concerns. They also have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. Pupils develop a range of personal qualities and basic skills that ensure they are adequately prepared for the next stage in their education. The school council is involved in organising events and other pupils make a sound contribution to the school and local community through fund-raising and other activities. Assemblies provide useful opportunities for pupils to reflect on a range of issues. Pupils get along well with each other helping to create a

calm, cohesive school environment; during discussions pupils demonstrated a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	3
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	3
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	
Taking into account:	3
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Teaching, although satisfactory overall, is improving strongly because good practice within the school, and available through the 'family of schools' partnership, is being used well to support both recently qualified and more experienced teachers to develop their skills. Teachers are planning well to meet the needs of different groups of learners. They are using a good variety of teaching strategies and resources that support the intended learning effectively and promote pupils' enjoyment and engagement successfully. Relationships between pupils and adults are good contributing to the creation of a positive climate for learning in each classroom. Teachers use assessment effectively during lessons to check pupils' understanding, identify misconceptions and adjust teaching accordingly. However, in some lessons observed, pupils had limited time to apply their skills and consolidate new learning independently because too much learning time had been taken-up with whole-class teaching. In addition, teacher and pupil interactions during whole class or independent work are not used consistently well to support and extend learning.

The curriculum has been carefully reviewed and a detailed thematic series of 'learning journeys' has been introduced. This is providing pupils with a broad, balanced and interesting curriculum where subject-specific skills are being systematically developed. In addition, there are regular opportunities to apply and consolidate pupils' literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills in a range of contexts. The new curriculum is also promoting more creative approaches to teaching and enabling pupils to have greater influence on the direction of their learning. However, these significant curriculum improvements are relatively recent and it is too soon to see the full impact of these developments on pupils' outcomes. Partnerships are used well to enhance the curriculum both during

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

the school day and extra-curricular activities. This extends pupils’ experiences and enables their needs and interests to be met effectively.

Good quality care, guidance and support are embedded across the school. Staff know individual pupils and their families well and respond very effectively to their specific academic, social and emotional needs. The acquisition of key staff has further increased the school’s capacity to support pupils and their families enabling individuals to successfully overcome their barriers to learning. Links with external agencies have been extended and improved complementing the work of school-based colleagues effectively. Transition for pupils, both into the school and onto the next stage of their education, has been substantially improved ensuring pupils are well prepared and feel secure at points of transfer. The school identifies however, that activities to support pupils’ academic progression from Key Stage 1 into Key Stage 2 could be further enhanced.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
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?

Senior leaders have provided the school with a very clear direction typified by high expectations of pupils’ progress and teaching quality. The determination and urgency with which they have tackled extensive underperformance across the school to ensure all pupils make at least satisfactory progress has been unrelenting and uncompromising. Nevertheless, they have supported, developed and empowered staff extremely well to ensure that their vision is shared and that all staff take responsibility for improving pupil outcomes. Consequently, middle-leaders are focused and proactive in driving whole school improvement in relation to their areas of responsibility. Teachers are strongly motivated and highly committed to improving their classroom practice; support staff are well-skilled and utilised effectively to support pupils’ needs, and systems to monitor the impact of the school’s work are rigorous and well-embedded. The school analyses in detail the performance and participation of all groups and has taken successful action to address gaps in performance and remove barriers to learning. However, pupils’ understanding of differences and their ability to value diversity remains a priority for development and, consequently, the effectiveness with which the school promotes equal opportunity and tackles discrimination is satisfactory. The governing body has provided good support for the school by securing high quality staff and ensuring resources are targeted to meet emerging needs. Governors have a higher profile in school and have actively sought the views of parents, carers and pupils to enable them to challenge leaders and inform their strategic decisions. The school has established strong partnerships with most parents and carers and created an ethos within the school where parents and carers feel able to raise concerns and are confident that their views will be listened to, and acted upon. Good practice is incorporated in all aspects of the school’s work to safeguard pupils. Staff and governor training is up-to-

date and of good quality in this respect. Effective steps have been taken to promote community cohesion within the school and local community. Appropriate plans are in place to extend the impact of this work more widely.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
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

Views of parents and carers

Parent and carer questionnaires are not normally distributed for inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

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 is 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.



11 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Halfway Junior School, Sheffield S20 4TA

You may remember that I visited your school recently with another inspector. This was the fourth time that I have visited your school and I would like to thank you for talking to us about your work and sharing your views about the school.

I am really pleased to tell you that your school no longer requires 'special measures'. All of you are now making at least satisfactory progress because teaching has improved, and you are well cared for and supported by the staff in school. Learning journeys are ensuring that the curriculum is more fun and interesting, while providing opportunities for you to learn and practice skills in a broad range of subjects. The leaders of the school, including the governors, have worked hard to help you make better progress and fill in gaps in your knowledge, understanding and skills. Your high attendance, good behaviour and ability to work well together in the classroom also help to make sure that you are now making the progress that you should.

There are a few areas where we have asked the school to help you do even better. These are:

- helping you to work at a quicker pace in lessons
- insisting that you are careful with your spelling, punctuation and presentation in all your written work
- making sure you are confident when using all your calculation and mental mathematics skills
- helping you have a better understanding of cultural diversity and how to live a healthy lifestyle
- making teaching and learning good in the large majority of your lessons.

I hope you will do your part and work hard to improve these things so that you can make even better progress. You have my very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Katrina Gueli
Her Majesty's Inspector

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