

Hall Green Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103209
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	376847
Inspection dates	8–9 December 2011
Reporting inspector	Derek Aitken

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	357
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jo Davies
Headteacher	Maxine Charles and Derek Thomas
Date of previous school inspection	6 March 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 17 lessons taught by 15 teachers. A detailed scrutiny of pupils' work in writing was carried out. Inspectors held discussions with the Chair of the Governing Body and the vice-chair, staff and groups of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documents, including policies and procedures relating to the safeguarding of pupils, self-evaluation records and assessment information. The inspectors analysed responses to questionnaires from 117 parents and carers, 101 pupils and 11 staff.

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

- Why do pupils appear to make such good progress in mathematics?
- How well do pupils develop as independent learners?
- Do teachers make effective use of opportunities to develop pupils' speaking and thinking skills?
- What is the impact of actions taken since the previous inspection to improve further the quality of education?

Information about the school

Hall Green Junior is larger than most primary schools. A great majority of its pupils come from Asian backgrounds and one half of pupils are of Pakistani heritage. No pupil is at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The percentage of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. Most of the teachers have joined the school in the last four years.

The school has Healthy Schools status and its other awards include Investors in People and the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

A before- and after-school club for pupils aged from four to eleven years old operates on the adjacent infant school site. This is run by infant school staff and managed by the two schools' joint governing body. The club was observed as part of this inspection.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Hall Green Junior School provides its pupils with a good education. Aspirations for pupils' progress are strong and their achievement by the end of Year 6 is outstanding. Attainment has risen from above average at the time of the last inspection and is now high, especially so in mathematics at the higher level 5. All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make equally good progress and some pupils make exceptional progress, particularly in mathematics.

Key factors in pupils' achievement are the high expectations of staff, spurred on by the headteachers' continuous drive to unearth innovative methods for promoting pupils' learning. The school is a learning community where ambitious new ideas are fully researched and measured steps are taken to ensure these are consistently implemented. Leaders are conspicuously successful in ensuring that recent appointments, including teachers new to the profession, adapt quickly and acquire the expertise necessary to share in the school's good practice. Consequently, teaching is very rarely less than good and some of it is outstanding. Pupils are motivated by their 'learning passport' rewards, enjoy their learning and talk confidently about how they can improve their work. They have a very clear grasp of their personal targets which they review in individually timetabled meetings with their class teachers. This enables them to understand whether they have succeeded in understanding concepts and this supports their capacity to learn independently in lessons. Pupils benefit considerably from the re-designed curriculum; for example, their lessons in the weekly core skills afternoon are to develop enquiry, problem-solving and risk-taking skills. Outside lessons, however, opportunities are missed to promote pupils' collaborative and leadership skills and thereby further extend their personal development.

The school's capacity for improvement is good. The school has maintained its overall quality since its last inspection. Leaders' unrelenting focus on pupils' achievement, the detailed tracking system and secure processes for monitoring teaching and learning ensure that these key aspects of the school's self-evaluation are accurate. The school recently conducted surveys to measure the satisfaction of pupils, parents and carers with regard to the quality of provision. While the statistical returns were positive, inspection evidence indicates some disquiet about the quality of the school's relationship with parents and carers, especially with regard to communication, procedures and the ways in which their concerns are handled.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Enhance the useful skills pupils are acquiring in the new curriculum and their personal development more generally by:
 - providing them with more varied opportunities to participate constructively in the life of the school and thereby develop their leadership and collaborative skills more fully

- Improve the school's engagement with parents and carers by:
 - ensuring that parents' and carers' concerns are always dealt with promptly and in a sensitive manner
 - providing clear explanations for strategic decisions and actions taken to enlist full support for the school's aims and to combat any misunderstandings
 - exploring a wider range of avenues to involve parents and carers more closely in the school's work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' achievement is outstanding. Their attainment when they join Year 3 is above average. Inspection evidence confirms that all groups of pupils make good progress in English, mathematics and science. Almost all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, attain the nationally expected Level 4. Almost two thirds of pupils achieve the higher Level 5 in mathematics. Pupils of Pakistani heritage make consistently good progress, especially in mathematics. Pupils respond well to challenging tasks, cooperate well with each other in paired and group work and persevere when faced with difficulties. For example, more-able pupils in Year 6 demonstrated a deep understanding of their previous learning to work systematically through a range of strategies to solve negative number problems. They explained their thinking very clearly using mathematical language accurately. Similarly, most pupils in a Year 3 lesson were able to justify their reasons for selection of a particular domino to help them win a game. Year 5 pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from teachers' skilled questioning. They demonstrate the capacity to organise and express their ideas using some sophisticated vocabulary when writing short descriptions based on a sound stimulus.

Pupils' positive attitudes and hard-working approach are important factors in their enjoyment of learning and good progress. Nearly all pupils behave well around school and in lessons. They have a good understanding of situations which might be harmful to their safety or well-being. Pupils enjoy physical exercise and most choose to eat healthy snacks and meals. They work very effectively unaided or with their partner when engaged on their independent tasks. While the school council is effective in representing pupils' views, other opportunities for pupils to assume leadership roles and contribute to the school community are under-developed. Pupils'

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high levels of attainment and above-average attendance provide them with a good set of workplace skills for the future.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Teaching has significant strengths and these are reflected in clear, detailed planning in a common format which promotes consistent practice. Teachers manage pupils well, ensure lessons move at a brisk pace and develop pupils’ skills systematically. Learning objectives are linked closely to pupils’ highly structured individual targets so that pupils are left in no doubt about what they are learning and what they are expected to have achieved by the end of the lesson. Work is closely matched to pupils’ needs and staff, including senior teachers, are deployed well to support or extend the learning of targeted groups of pupils. Some teaching, especially in mathematics, is of high quality and this, together with varied opportunities in other lessons to develop problem-solving skills, promotes pupils’ high attainment in the subject. Teachers question pupils well and usually provide good verbal feedback to engage dialogue and enhance their speaking and thinking skills. Teachers mark pupils’ work in detail but their personalised targets are not yet integrated into written assessment practice and opportunities for pupils to respond to teachers’ marking are not fully developed.

The curriculum is planned well and enables pupils to develop their skills progressively. Pupils have good opportunities to reinforce their understanding of key vocabulary and basic skills in other subjects. Pupils develop their speaking and

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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thinking skills well, but on a few occasions, teachers miss opportunities for pupils to share their learning with each other during lesson plenaries. The curriculum is thoughtfully adjusted to encompass the topics and learning styles preferred by boys and girls and takes some account of pupils’ views. It is regularly reviewed to incorporate innovative practice and assessment tests are used particularly well in mathematics to make adjustments to fill gaps in pupils’ learning. Pupils benefit from specialist teaching in some subjects. French lessons, the annual residential trip to France, musical tuition and the annual drama festival enhance pupils’ learning.

Pupils are well cared for by staff, whom they trust to act in their best interests. Teachers and teaching assistants know their pupils well and step in quickly to deal with their pastoral needs. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified at an early stage and their individual education plans are closely integrated with their personal learning targets. Other groups of pupils benefit from skilfully targeted interventions which promote their good progress. Links with external agencies, for example the local autism team, are well established to support pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. The school promotes attendance effectively and has succeeded in increasing it to above-average levels in the last two years. The well-organised before-school club, in particular, provides pupils with a wide range of activities to get their day off to a good start.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The two headteachers are reflective practitioners who articulate a distinctive vision for the school and seek to implement elements of innovative practice. Expectations for staff’s performance are high and it is tribute to the quality of the school’s systems that recent curricular initiatives are being successfully embedded despite substantial changes in staffing. Staff are held closely to account to ensure pupils meet or exceed their demanding targets. New middle leaders are developing their roles and have firm ideas on how to improve their subjects further. Monitoring includes an appropriately wide range of processes and clearly identifies action points to improve learning. Some avenues for supporting pupils’ personal development outside the classroom are less actively pursued, monitored or evaluated which compromises the accuracy of leaders’ judgements on outcomes for pupils other than achievement. A strong feature of the school’s good arrangements for safeguarding is the comprehensive review of fire drills undertaken to inform future practice. Members of the governing body support leaders well and hold them firmly to account for the

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strategic development of the school. The school promotes equal opportunities and tackles discrimination well, as reflected in good outcomes for all groups of pupils. The school understands its local context and, overall, makes a good contribution to community cohesion through its work with the local library and cluster of schools in addition to its developing link with a Nigerian school.

These are the grades for 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	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers view the school’s work favourably, especially with regard to the quality of teaching provided. Contrasting views were expressed, for example with regard to the type and timing of meetings available to discuss pupils’ progress, the management of pupils’ behaviour and the school’s responsiveness to parents’ and carers’ concerns. Inspection evidence partly endorses these concerns and this is reflected elsewhere in the report. Leaders acknowledge the need to address these issues and strengthen links with parents and carers. Inspectors judged behaviour to be good and noted that the school had only excluded two pupils in 20 years.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hall Green 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 117 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 357 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	60	51	51	44	3	3	3	3
The school keeps my child safe	73	62	38	32	3	3	3	3
The school informs me about my child’s progress	63	54	48	41	6	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	46	39	63	54	6	5	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	47	40	61	52	4	3	1	1
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	48	41	56	48	9	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	38	32	67	57	10	9	2	2
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	30	72	62	7	6	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	35	30	70	60	4	3	4	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	37	32	56	48	14	12	4	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	30	26	66	56	14	12	3	3
The school is led and managed effectively	36	31	60	51	11	9	5	4
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	48	41	59	50	4	3	4	3

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 8 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.



12 December 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hall Green Junior School, Birmingham, B28 9AJ

I would like to thank you for your help when the inspection team visited your school recently and sharing your views with us. Yours is a good school and the following reasons are particularly important in explaining why it is successful.

- You all benefit from good teaching. Some of the teaching, especially in mathematics, is outstanding.
- This helps you attain highly by the end of Year 6. Your achievement is excellent.
- You behave well and have a good understanding of how to stay safe and what it means to live healthily.
- The school is well led by the headteachers and senior staff. They are creative in their use of recent research on the curriculum to make your learning interesting and support your good progress.

We have asked staff and members of the governing body to do the following things to improve your education.

- Provide a wider range of opportunities outside lessons to develop your leadership and teamwork skills and to help you contribute more fully to school life.
- Put in place a number of things to help them work better with your families.

You can help by continuing to work hard and enjoy your learning. It is also important to make sure your rates of attendance remain above average.

Yours sincerely

Derek Aitken
Lead inspector

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