

Shirley Heath Junior School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	104050
Local authority	Solihull
Inspection number	395347
Inspection dates	10–11 July 2012
Lead inspector	Martyn Groucutt

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	323
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andy D'Albert
Headteacher	Gail Knight
Date of previous school inspection	9 June 2009
School address	Coombe Road Shirley Solihull B90 3DS
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Age group	7–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Martyn Groucutt

Additional Inspector

Helen Prince

Additional Inspector

Heather Phillips

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. A total of 23 lessons were observed, taught by 12 teachers and accounting for 11.5 hours of inspection time. Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at: pupils' work, curriculum documentation, schemes of work, pupil-progress data and a range of policies and procedures, including those for safeguarding. The inspectors also took into account the views expressed in questionnaires from 165 parents and carers, together with those submitted by staff and pupils.

Information about the school

This school is larger than the average-sized junior school. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Most pupils are White British and the proportion from minority ethnic groups is broadly average, but few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported by school action plus or by a statement of special educational needs is broadly average, but rising over time. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which represent the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. The governing body provides a before- and after-school club each school day. Several staff appointments have been made for September 2012.

There is a children's centre on the same site but this was not inspected at the same time as the school.

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	1
Achievement of pupils	1
Quality of teaching	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	1

Key findings

- This is an outstanding school. It is fully inclusive and makes outstanding provision for its disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and all other identified groups.
- Most pupils join the school with standards above average and all make sustained and accelerated progress from their starting points so, when they leave, attainment is high in relation to national standards and their achievement is outstanding.
- A majority of the teaching is outstanding and never less than consistently good. Teachers and other adults, including parental volunteers, work together extremely positively to maximise learning for all pupils. Inspirational learning opportunities make pupils eager to learn and sustain their excellent progress and outstanding achievement throughout the school.
- The behaviour of pupils in and around school is exemplary. Pupils, staff, parents and carers all agree that the school is a safe environment, making provision in this area outstanding. Such positive behaviour underpins pupils' excellent attitudes to learning. Attendance is very high because pupils enjoy school so much.
- Leadership and management are outstanding, with drive and vision that inspire all staff to seek excellence and show outstanding commitment. Senior leaders are unremitting in their drive for constant improvement, while systems for monitoring teaching, performance management and professional development promote excellence. Staff induction arrangements are, currently, being refined and evaluation will be possible next term. The school's broad and inspiring curriculum is reinforced by a very wide range of clubs, visits and activities that creates enthusiastic and empowered learners and greatly promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, reflected in assemblies and displays around school that are of the highest quality.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Building on outstanding practice, ensure that arrangements for the effective induction of new staff are fully in place in readiness for September 2012.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils' excellent progress throughout the school enables them to leave Year 6 attaining highly in all subjects, illustrated by the high numbers reaching Level 5 and, increasingly, Level 6. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make outstanding progress from their starting points. Where there is a gap between their attainment and that of others, it is narrowing, sometimes dramatically so. Compelling evidence from case studies shows that individuals with quite complex levels of need are making exceptional progress because outstanding support enables them to excel relative to their starting points.

Standards in reading, writing, communication and mathematics observed in lessons are considerably above those normally found and pupils' apply these skills confidently across the whole curriculum. Reading by Year 6 is of a very high standard, promoting effective learning in all subjects. The school uses sophisticated data analysis to evaluate the performance of a range of identified groups of pupils. In each group there is a common picture of performance and progress better than that found nationally. When pupils join the school late, their rate of learning increases quickly. In lessons, teachers constantly demand the highest standards, reflected in the pupils' presentation of work in books, which is of very-high quality. Pupils show a great tenacity in achieving positive results from challenging tasks set by teachers, all of whom have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils demonstrate mastery of a wide range of skills, including thinking skills and the ability to apply these in problem solving. Pupils' achievement in class is, therefore, of a very high standard, but also reflects their great enjoyment of learning.

Inspection findings are fully endorsed by parents and carers. The school sees parents and carers as key partners, and their questionnaire responses show them overwhelmingly supportive of the efforts put in place for their children and sustained through partnership, whatever their children's ability.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is outstanding because teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Supported by excellent subject knowledge, detailed planning of learning and the use of a range of learning strategies, teachers challenge and engage all pupils. Parents and carers reflect the inspection's findings and give overwhelming support and appreciation to teachers and support staff, with many commenting on the

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excellent progress made by their children.

Pupils are enthusiastic learners across all subject areas because teachers motivate them and their high level of participation reflects confidence and independence in tackling the most challenging tasks. Teaching and learning have pace, rigour and engagement, with skilful questioning challenging pupils and requiring them to demonstrate their understanding. Pupils' depth of understanding is regularly checked throughout lessons, with help given when necessary. Information and communication technology (ICT) is skilfully used to enhance teaching and pupil engagement. From the outset, there is an emphasis on accuracy, reflected in a Year 3 French lesson where correct use of singular and plural nouns was insisted on, or a Year 5 science lesson where there was an insistence on the use of precise scientific language, reflecting high standards and expectations. Teachers take care to link learning across the curriculum, such as in physical education in Year 4, where running and jumping were linked to work done in science on how the human body works. This reflects the effective way in which curriculum planning underpins high quality teaching. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strong feature, illustrated in a Year 6 ICT lesson, where pupils were reflecting back over their time in the school as they produced a 'memory movie'.

Marking and assessment are systematic and detailed with the clear school policy followed carefully, leading to consistency in practice and expectation. Pupils have frequent opportunities to assess their own work and that of other pupils in the class. Individual needs are highlighted in detailed planning of learning, together with strategies for meeting them. When individuals' progress is not above the rate expected nationally, they are identified and additional support provided, with the teacher subsequently held to account for progress at termly progress reviews. Teachers' marking provides detailed suggestions for improvement of written work and 'next steps' with time built in for work to be improved or developed. Pupils have a clear understanding of the challenging targets to which they aspire, whatever their level of achievement.

The teaching of reading, supported by an inspiring library, is a priority. It is very effective and as a result pupils are eager readers who tackle challenging books with relish.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs benefit from carefully targeted additional support and from the excellent collaboration between teachers and support staff that allows individual needs to be met and outstanding progress to be sustained whatever the starting point.

Staffing in recent years has been very stable, but following two resignations and two end of contracts there will be an influx of new staff in September 2012 for which careful planning to ensure smooth transition is underway. Evaluation of new induction arrangements will be possible next term.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

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Behaviour in and around school is, typically, outstanding and pupils show a high level of maturity in their relationships, helping and supporting each other and creating a positive learning environment. It means that school is a very happy place, reflected in assembly time's demonstration of the strong sense of community. A large majority of parents, carers, staff and pupils are positive about behaviour and safety. In recent times the school has admitted several pupils who display very challenging behaviour, but with effective support they quickly become comfortable with the routines and high expectations of the school and do well. Pupils show excellent attitudes and are very positive in class because they enjoy learning, so disruption is very unusual. Pupils are clear that bullying is extremely rare, but where there have been instances they have been dealt with immediately and effectively. Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes bullying, including cyber-bullying and that based on prejudice. A recent review of anti-bullying policy and strategy was very successful, in part because it set out to work in partnership with parents and carers and to seek their views. The school has done a lot of very effective work on creating a safe environment which promotes effective learning, reflected in positive displays around the school. It results in the vast majority of pupils saying they feel extremely safe in school. Since pupils enjoy coming to school so very much, punctuality is the norm.

Leadership and management

The leadership team is focused on maintaining the school's very highest levels of achievement and excellence. Team and school are held to account for performance by the inspirational headteacher. Accurate self-evaluation and setting of priorities ensure the school continues to move forward. The school's commitment to maintaining high standards and achievement with outstanding teaching, and pupils' excellent attitudes to learning point to a strong capacity to sustain excellence into the future.

Teaching of high quality is expected of staff, but they also receive strong support to maintain their performance, resulting in the school becoming a reflective learning community committed to excellence. Embedded systems for classroom observation and performance management support the needs of the school but also the professional development of its staff. Leaders have a clear understanding of the school's performance and staff skills and attributes. One parental comment reflected many others. 'This is a remarkable school offering outstanding education to my child.' There is extremely effective communication with parents and carers and strong links with external professionals who provide specialist support. Increasingly, the school is taking pupils who have found it hard to succeed elsewhere and it enables them to thrive.

The governing body is highly effective because it is closely involved in the life of the school and has a good understanding of the data on pupils' progress to enable it to hold the school to account for its performance. The close attention given to individual pupils and to maximising their talents, supports the school's strong commitment to

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equality of opportunity. There is no discrimination in this harmonious, purposeful community. Similarly, arrangements for effective safeguarding, including child protection training for all staff, are exemplary and all statutory requirements are met.

The curriculum provides memorable learning opportunities that are reinforced by many visits and visitors. Pupils' acquisition of the key skills of literacy and numeracy is at the heart of their high attainment, but the positive promotion of the arts, humanities and sciences adds to the rich tapestry of learning. The formal curriculum is powerfully reinforced by the many and varied clubs and activities run by staff and by the extremely popular breakfast- and after-school clubs. Here a range of activities, a colourful environment and lively staff provide wider opportunities for enjoyment and social development. Excellent assemblies are just one example of the strong commitment to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and there are many powerful examples of this reflected in the outstanding displays around the school.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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 July 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Shirley Heath Junior School, Solihull, B90 3DS

I am writing to thank you for the extremely warm welcome you gave to the inspection team when we visited recently. A special thank you to those who spoke to us and the many who filled in their questionnaires. We have taken your views into account in writing our report.

I am delighted to say that you go to an outstanding school that helps you do your very best, whatever your starting points. This means that your achievement is much better than that found in most schools. Those of you who find learning more difficult are also given excellent help so you also do very well. Mrs Knight and the staff work really hard on your behalf but it is clear that you appreciate this because you show such positive attitudes in return. Teachers challenge you by setting high standards, but you respond very positively and enjoy the hard work that allows you to reach your targets. As well as reaching such high standards in English and mathematics you are able to learn a lot from your exciting curriculum and from the many trips, activities and clubs that help you widen your learning. I know that many of you really enjoy the clubs that staff run, and you are lucky to have so many to choose from.

Your behaviour is excellent and we enjoyed seeing you all getting on so well together. You told us there is very little bullying and you know about what this means and the different ways in which bullying can occur. You obviously enjoy school and you attend really well.

There is one thing we have asked your school to ensure is in place. Several staff are leaving at the end of term. We want your school to ensure that there are good arrangements to help the new staff so they can step into the leavers' shoes without any drop in the excellent standards that you reach now.

If you continue to work hard and achieve your best, you will certainly play your part in helping the new staff keep your school moving smoothly forward.

Yours sincerely

Martyn Groucutt
Lead inspector

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