



Shireland Hall Junior and Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103967
LEA Sandwell
Inspection number 277036
Inspection dates 18 May 2006 to 19 May 2006
Reporting inspector Bogusia Matusiak-Varley AI

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Edith Road
School category	Community		Smethwick
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		West Midlands B66 4QU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 5586331
Number on roll	363	Fax number	0121 5586331
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr G McKenzie
Date of previous inspection	13 November 2000	Headteacher	Mr Travis Latham

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3 to 11	18 May 2006 - 19 May 2006	277036

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Shireland Hall Junior and Infant School is situated in Smethwick, West Midlands. The numbers of pupils entitled to free school meals and those in the early stages of using English as an additional language are well above the national average. The number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is slightly above average and a few have statements of special educational need. Nearly all of the pupils are from Indian, Pakistani, Black African, and other minority ethnic backgrounds. Attainment on entry is particularly low. The headteacher has been in post since January 2006.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils and satisfactory value for money. School self-evaluation is accurate and inspection findings confirm the school's view of itself. By Year 6, standards are below average but pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall and improving. Higher-attaining pupils make satisfactory but inconsistent progress throughout the school. Since the appointment of the headteacher, many rigorous systems have been put in place to raise standards but it is too early to see their full impact.

From very low standards when they first start school, the children make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage. The quality of provision is better in Reception than in the Nursery, where teachers' planning and the learning intentions are not sufficiently clear. Teaching and learning throughout the school are satisfactory but inconsistent. Teachers' marking and their use of information from assessment do not move different groups of pupils on well enough in their work, especially the higher attainers. The curriculum is satisfactory, with good enrichment. In Years 1 to 6, teachers' planning does not always take into account the needs of pupils who are at the early stages of learning English or those with learning difficulties or disabilities. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory, as are pupils' personal development and well-being, but too few opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their skills of independent learning.

Leadership and management are satisfactory but governors do not yet evaluate the cost effectiveness of their spending decisions or hold the school to account for the standards pupils achieve. The headteacher has a clear vision and has won the hearts and minds of the whole school community. Senior leaders and managers give good support but they still need to improve their skills in monitoring the teaching and learning. The school is well placed for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science by bringing the quality of all the teaching up to the best, strengthening the marking and use of assessment, and giving the more able pupils greater challenge.
- Raise the rates of children's progress in the Foundation Stage, especially in the Nursery, by ensuring clearer planning and purpose for the activities provided.
- Improve curriculum planning by ensuring that the work undertaken by pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, and those who speak English as a second language, better reflects the targets in their learning plans, and that all pupils become more independent learners.
- Improve the leadership and management by ensuring that governors hold the school accountable for the pupils' standards, and that all senior staff further develop their skills of monitoring the teaching and learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are below average in English, mathematics and science but, given their starting points, the pupils' achievement is satisfactory. This is reflected in the 2005 Year 6 test results. In information and communication technology (ICT), pupils make good progress and attain the standards expected. Children's attainment on entry is well below that expected in all areas of learning. A high proportion of pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities and nearly half of the current cohort is at the early stages of acquiring English as a second language. They make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage.

In Years 1 to 6, the progress pupils make has improved since the headteacher's appointment, but it is inconsistent because of the short length of time that the present systems for raising achievement have been introduced. As a result, higher attainers in particular are not always challenged to their full potential, largely because of weaknesses in the use of assessment data. The school has rightly recognised that boys have been underachieving in the past. As a result, better use of ICT has been successfully implemented as a means of raising boys' achievement. Standards in mathematics are improving due to the emphasis placed on a whole-school approach to problem solving.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is satisfactory. Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are also satisfactory. All pupils show good understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles as a result of good provision for physical education and the promotion of healthy eating at play and lunchtimes. Pupils have a good knowledge of keeping safe both in and out of school. Their learning of basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT prepares them satisfactorily for the next stages of education, and their future lives. They show good skills in teamwork. However, their skills of independent learning are not sufficiently well developed.

Attendance is satisfactory and broadly in line with national averages. Both the headteacher and deputy headteacher have done much to improve attendance by implementing good monitoring procedures and ensuring that parents understand the importance of not taking extended holidays in term time.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory but are inconsistent throughout the school, ranging from some outstanding teaching in Year 6 to weaker elements in the teaching

of the younger pupils. In the most effective lessons, teachers demonstrate good questioning skills and explain key vocabulary well, which challenges pupils' thinking. Good relationships and use of humour in lessons, and consistent management of behaviour, are also present so that pupils are motivated and kept on task. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace, support staff are deployed effectively and ICT used well. Under the new leadership, much has been done to improve the quality of teaching and this is now starting to pay dividends.

In the weaker teaching, a number of factors slow down pupils' rates of progress. Assessment information is not used effectively enough to plan tasks that meet the needs of all pupils, especially higher attainers. The marking does not enable all groups of pupils to improve their work. Planning of tasks does not take enough account of the needs of different groups of pupils in order to move them on in their learning. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities and English as a second language learn satisfactorily and, when they receive targeted support from learning mentors and support assistants, they make good progress. However, in general, the teaching does not always take sufficient account of the targets in their learning plans. In the Foundation Stage, especially the Nursery, staff do not intervene sufficiently in the children's activities to exploit the learning potential of them.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and is well enriched with visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities, especially in sport. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage, whilst satisfactory overall, is better in the Reception classes than in the Nursery. In the Nursery, too often learning intentions are not sufficiently clearly identified in the activities provided and, as a result, the children are not learning enough from them. The senior leadership team is currently reviewing the curriculum and has satisfactory plans to develop it further by making connections with other subjects to ensure that it is better matched to pupils' interests and capabilities. However, too few opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their skills of independent learning. The physical education and personal, health and social education programmes are used well to reinforce the school's encouragement of safe practice and healthy lifestyles and the ICT curriculum is contributing well to pupils' skills of achieving economic well-being.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The care, guidance and support of pupils are satisfactory, with several elements of good practice, such as the arrangements for child protection and the links with outside agencies for vulnerable learners.

All staff maintain satisfactory levels of care and concern for the well-being of all their pupils. This ensures that pupils work in a safe learning environment. Support for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, and those who are at the early stages of acquiring English as a second language, is satisfactory. However, the school lacks formal systems in short- and medium-term planning to identify these pupils' needs.

Data from assessment is not used to set work that challenges the higher attainers. Most pupils successfully meet the targets that help guide their progress through the sound work of learning support assistants and learning mentors.

A good start has been made in making pupils clear about specific things that they need to work on in order to improve their work but, as yet, these practices are inconsistent across the school. This is an area which the school is in the process of addressing.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher is moving the school on at a very fast rate and has won the respect of the whole school community. A renewed sense of purpose has been brought to the staff and the members of the new leadership team feel involved and valued in the decision making process. They all have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development in their subjects but not all of them are secure in monitoring teaching and learning. However, a rigorous approach to developing effective strategies to improve standards has been put in place. Good improvements have been made in consulting parents about all aspects of school life, and parents are seen as true partners in their children's learning. The school development plan provides a good basis for further improvement.

Governance of the school is satisfactory. Governors fulfil their statutory duties and have developed a greater understanding of their role. However, they are at the early stages of development in using information from assessment test data to evaluate the effectiveness of their spending decisions and hold the staff accountable for the academic standards the pupils attain.

The headteacher has been particularly successful in bonding staff and creating a harmonious team. School self-evaluation is accurate and specialist help is sought from the local education authority to overcome any weaknesses, such as help with increasing the rates of pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	3	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for making us feel so welcome in your school. We thoroughly enjoyed ourselves looking at your work and finding out about all the interesting things that you do. Here are some of the things that we think you do well and also some suggestions for your teachers to help you learn even more. We are pleased with:

the wonderful things that you do in ICT

your behaviour, attitudes to learning and the way that you attend school regularly

your knowledge of healthy eating and your participation in sport and extra-curricular activities

the changes your headteacher is bringing about and the way your teachers look after you.

We have asked your headteacher, staff and governors to make the following improvements:

Help you get higher standards in English, mathematics and science by using information from marking and assessments to challenge you even further, especially those of you who find learning easy, and provide you with more opportunities to become independent learners

Ensure that children in the nursery get more help when they undertake free choice activities

Get teachers with responsibilities for subjects to spend more time evaluating how you learn and ensuring that they check teachers' planning for pupils who are at the early stages of learning English

Ensure that governors look carefully at how well money is spent on improving your learning and ask teachers more questions about your rates of progress.

We wish you the very best for the future.