



Harlescott Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 123393
LEA Shropshire
Inspection number 281464
Inspection dates 28 September 2005 to 29 September 2005
Reporting inspector Ian Knight RISP

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Featherbed Lane
School category	Community		Shrewsbury
Age range of pupils	7 to 11		Shropshire SY1 4QN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01743 462087
Number on roll	346	Fax number	01743 450182
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr M Owen
Date of previous inspection	8 November 1999	Headteacher	Mr Martyn Lightwood

Age group 7 to 11	Inspection dates 28 September 2005 - 29 September 2005	Inspection number 281464
-----------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Harlescott Junior School is a large junior school serving the northern part of Shrewsbury. Almost all pupils transfer directly from the nearby infant school. The number on roll is falling because of local demographic factors. Almost all pupils in the school are from white British homes, with a handful who are either Chinese or of mixed heritage. The proportion of pupils who receive free school meals is broadly average. Fifty-two pupils are on the special needs register, a higher proportion than usually found. However, the number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is about average. No pupils speak English as an additional language. When pupils join the school in Year 3, their standards are about average, and have been so for the last few years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Inspectors agree with the school's view that it provides a satisfactory standard of education. The pupils' behaviour is good, as are the care and support that the school provides to pupils. Pupils have made satisfactory progress over their time in the school. A main reason that progress is not better is that, although learning is satisfactory, pupils are not always involved in their own learning and they do not take an active part in some lessons, especially in Years 3, 4 and 5. Not all pupils have rigorous targets to aim at, or know just how well they are doing and how they might improve, so the momentum of their learning is steady rather than brisk. Teaching in Year 6, however, is good and the pupils learn much more productively here than elsewhere. The school is led and managed satisfactorily. Owing to some past shortcomings in the monitoring of its work and other barriers to improvement, the school's progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory rather than good, as shown by the movement in the pupils' performance in the English and mathematics test results. It has taken more rapid steps recently to improve things. The improved pupils' behaviour and the better quality teaching in Year 6 indicate that the school's capacity to make further improvement is satisfactory. It provides sound value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the pupils' achievement, especially in English and mathematics, by sharing the good practice in the school, making better use of the outcomes of assessment, and by monitoring and evaluating more rigorously.
- Involve pupils more in their own learning so that they learn more actively, know how well they are doing and how they can get better.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards in the national tests for pupils in Year 6 in 2004 showed that standards in English were above average, with average standards in science and below-average standards in mathematics. The provisional results for 2005 paint a similar picture in mathematics and science, but standards in English declined. There has been no secure trend of improvement in results over the past few years. The school's targets for the pupils who took the tests in 2005 were largely reached. These pupils entered the school with standards that were about average. Pupils' progress in lessons and over time is satisfactory in most year groups and is good in lessons for pupils in Year 6. School data shows that pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are supported effectively and make the same satisfactory progress as their peers. This indicates that achievement for all groups of pupils within the school is satisfactory. The school has identified that boys do not do as well as girls in English and has made this issue a focus for development, but no groups of pupils underachieve significantly.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Most pupils enjoy coming to school. Attendance is average and improving. A system in which parents are called on the first day of an unexplained absence is a factor in this improvement. Arrangements to promote the pupils' healthy living are satisfactory and include a breakfast club. A range of physical activity is on offer, both in physical education lessons and during lunch and playtimes. External visitors support the work that the school does in science, personal, social and health education, and design and technology lessons to promote safe practices and healthy lifestyles. The pupils treat each other well, feel safe, and agree that there is little bullying. They say that adults are quick to sort out any problems that do occur. When teaching is good, such as in Year 6, pupils are enthusiastic and enjoy themselves. However, in some lessons, pupils' attitudes are no better than satisfactory because they are not involved in their own learning as much as they should be. The pupils behave well in and around the school. This is a testament to the hard work the school has put in to improve behaviour. Although a number of pupils have been excluded in the last 12 months, the better behaviour means that none are now on the pathway to exclusion.

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory, with particular strengths in moral and social development. For example, the pupils consider the needs of others and raise funds for different charities, including a good response to the Tsunami Disaster. Year 6 pupils are being trained as mentors for younger pupils. An active school council contributes positively to school life, making suggestions about how it can be improved. The school is aware that the provision it makes for pupils to understand multicultural Britain is less well developed.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are good in Year 6 and satisfactory in the other year groups. Lessons are orderly but pupils do not have enough opportunities to work independently. In some lessons, especially in Years 3, 4 and 5, the teachers' tight management of behaviour prevents pupils from taking a full part, and this prevents good progress from being made. The best lessons in Year 6 involve pupils well in making decisions about their learning. However, there were examples of lessons in which pupils were too passive and were simply told facts that they could have found out for themselves. Even in the better lessons, pupils are not always expected to be sufficiently independent: for example, when pupils wrote a report about Victorian children, they were given a digest of facts rather than researching sources and questions for themselves using the library or the Internet.

The use of targets for learning to enable pupils to know exactly how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve is in its infancy. Pupils in Year 6 were able to talk about their targets, but even they did not know precisely the level they were

working at. In other classes, although targets are set for the whole class, they are not referred to in lessons to encourage pupils to improve, therefore their usefulness is limited.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum generally matches pupils' needs, although the school has correctly identified that pupils are not always challenged enough in mathematics or in using literacy skills in other subjects. Pupils' work in lessons and their participation in a good range of activities outside lesson times help them understand how to adopt healthy practices, stay safe and enhance their enjoyment of school. Most pupils take part in sporting competitions with other schools and this contributes well to their social development. Visitors to school stress the importance of achieving well to raise pupils' sights for the future. Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for work at their next schools.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school has worked hard and successfully to provide a caring environment and pupils say that adults look after and support them well. The co-ordinator for special educational needs manages pastoral staff effectively, maintains good links with parents and provides very good support for vulnerable children, as well as those on the register of special educational needs.

Child protection arrangements are thorough. There are good links with local infant and secondary schools for receiving and transferring pupils. Links with the local community, and with outside agencies for the safety and welfare of pupils, are good, as seen in the recent development of the local multi-agency centre sited in the school grounds. However, assessment is not yet fully used to enable pupils to know what they need to do to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school is led and managed satisfactorily. The headteacher has set in motion a number of initiatives to improve provision. Some of these have borne fruit: following ongoing outside support requested by the headteacher, and consistency across the school in addressing the issue, behaviour has much improved, as confirmed by the pupils themselves. The school knows itself well: inspectors find that judgements the school makes about itself are accurate and based on good evidence. Nevertheless, strategies to improve standards, especially in English and mathematics, have not been consistently successful because monitoring their effectiveness has not been rigorous enough. Some monitoring procedures are only now being set in place. The school recognises that pupils are not involved enough in their own learning, and that this is affecting the progress they can make. However, improvements have been difficult to make because the process of convincing all staff of the desirability of change took

longer than anticipated – this is no longer an issue in the school. For example, the recently appointed deputy headteacher is a good role model for other staff so that teaching in Year 6 is now good under his leadership.

The governing body is committed to, and supportive of, the school. Governors spoken to are knowledgeable about the school and understand its strengths and weaknesses well. However, in the past the governing body has been too ready to rely on the headteacher for its information. Minutes of meetings show that there have been few instances when governors have kept a check on the school's work directly, or when they have formally challenged the school, for example, about whether standards are high enough.

The school's capacity to improve, based on the improvements it has both made and set in motion, is satisfactory.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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
--	-----------------------	--------------

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	NA	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	3	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	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	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?	2	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 being so welcoming to us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and hearing what you had to say about what you like and don't like. Thank you for being so polite and helpful to us when we weren't sure where to go or which way a door opened!

Your headteacher and teachers have worked hard with you all to make behaviour better, and you have helped too. Well done! You told us that pupils now behave better and we agree that nearly all of you behave well in the school. This helps your teachers to help you to learn.

However, we think that sometimes your teachers do too much for you in lessons. This means that you can't always find things out for yourselves or think hard about problems. We've asked your teachers to help you to do this more. You can help by trying to do whatever teachers ask, even if it's different to how your lessons have been before. We think it will be worth it because your lessons will be more enjoyable.

Some of you know how well you are doing in lessons and most classes have targets for you to aim for. However, your teachers don't always mention the targets in lessons. We've asked them to try to do this more often so you know just what you need to do to get better. You can help by remembering your targets when you are working and trying very hard to do the things in them all the time.