



Short Heath Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104188
Local Authority Walsall
Inspection number 286874
Inspection dates 11–12 December 2006
Reporting inspector Alison Cartlidge

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Pennine Way
School category	Community		Willenhall
Age range of pupils	7–11		WV12 4DS
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01902 368499
Number on roll (school)	233	Fax number	01902 606560
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Denise Fraser
		Headteacher	Nin Matharu
Date of previous school inspection	19 March 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
7–11	11–12 December 2006	286874

© 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 two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Most pupils in this large junior school are of White British heritage. Only a few come from other ethnic backgrounds and none are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The school has an above-average number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Attainment on entry to Year 3 varies but is above average in most years. The school became part of a federation of three schools with a shared governing body in April 2006. The school is being led and managed by an acting headteacher, who has been at the school for a term.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to pupils' progress and achievement. These are inadequate and make overall effectiveness inadequate.

The school is improving well under the clear and purposeful leadership of the acting headteacher. Recent initiatives are beginning to have a positive effect on the rate of pupils' progress. Pupils' performance in tests is being monitored more rigorously and, as a result, those who have made insufficient progress are being identified and supported. Although pupils are making satisfactory progress this term, standards are below average by the end of Year 6 because there is a backlog of underachievement and standards are too low in mathematics, writing and science. This is because in these subjects teachers do not always use assessment information well enough to provide work that matches differing needs. Pupils do better in reading because improved resources are having a good effect on learning. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities consistently make satisfactory progress because they receive more closely targeted support than other pupils.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Members of staff and governors are fully aware that more needs to be done to ensure that recent improvements are sustained and further developed. There is a clear understanding of what works well and what needs to be improved, and a strong determination to drive up standards. Recent strategies supported by Education Walsall are having a positive effect on improving pupils' progress. For example, the rate of progress of older girls in mathematics was accelerated by providing additional lessons when the school discovered that the girls were not doing as well as the boys. The quality of teaching has improved and is now satisfactory. Marking is being used more effectively to help teachers plan work and give pupils clear guidance about how to improve. Teachers manage behaviour well and they form good relationships with the pupils. However, they do not consistently maintain a quick pace in lessons and at these times learning slows. The school is aware that the monitoring of teaching is not yet rigorous enough to ensure that recent improvements are sustained throughout the school. Subject leaders have been insufficiently involved in checking how well pupils are doing and their impact on raising standards has been too limited. Nevertheless, recent improvements in provision and pupils' faster progress this term have demonstrated that the school has a sound capacity to improve further.

Care, support and guidance are satisfactory, with pastoral care being a particular strength. As a result, pupils' personal development is good. Pupils like being at school, behave well and respond positively to the responsibilities they are given. The satisfactory curriculum is supported well by a wide range of additional learning activities that contribute well to pupils' enjoyment of school. Most parents are pleased with the work of the school and find members of staff to be approachable, although several

would appreciate more opportunities to become more involved in their children's education.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards and progress in writing, mathematics and science by ensuring that work meets pupils' differing needs more consistently.
- Monitor teaching and learning more rigorously and use the outcomes to ensure that recent improvements are sustained and the pace of learning increased.
- Develop the role of subject leaders so that they have a greater impact on improving standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Pupils' achievement is inadequate. Insufficient rigour in the way pupils' progress has been monitored has resulted in some pupils making too slow progress and underachieving. Until recently, this build-up of underachievement has not been tackled quickly enough. Recent improvements in the way pupils are assessed have enabled the school to focus additional support to help pupils who have not learnt quickly enough. This is beginning to show better progress and more positive results. Nevertheless, standards in Year 6 are below average, except in reading, where they are close to national averages. Pupils make less progress in mathematics, writing and science because teachers do not consistently provide work that matches pupils' differing needs. The school has correctly identified the specific weaknesses in writing, mathematics and science and plans are well advanced to remedy them. Progress in reading has been improving because pupils' interest has been increased through new books and specific reading support programmes. Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress because they are often given beneficial additional support from teaching assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy coming to school and, as a result, attendance is slightly above average. This was summed up well by one member of the school council, who said, 'I like everything about this school, there is nothing bad – if you have any problems the school will sort it out'. Behaviour is good and most pupils enjoy a healthy and safe lifestyle and eat well. They understand the need to take exercise and what constitutes a healthy meal. Pupils make a positive contribution to the community. The school council plays a prominent role in the school and suggestions are followed up by the acting headteacher. For example, playground buddies have been introduced to foster and develop friendships in the playground. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils know aspects of world religions but show a limited understanding of the traditions of people from various cultural backgrounds. They are aware of the difficulties of people less fortunate than themselves and talk with

justifiable pride about their fund-raising. Pupils feel responsible and part of the school community and this prepares them satisfactorily for their future economic well-being and their role in the wider society when they get older.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers get on well with the pupils and manage behaviour successfully. These positive relationships ensure that pupils are attentive, develop positive attitudes to their work and collaborate with each other well. For example, pupils worked together sensibly in a science lesson when working out which type of paper absorbs the most water. Interactive whiteboards are used well to motivate pupils, particularly at the start of lessons. The setting of pupils by ability for English, mathematics and science is not always successful enough in ensuring that their differing needs are fully met. This can lead to a slow pace of learning, especially when pupils are not encouraged to work quickly. Recent improvements in the quality of marking and individual target setting are beginning to help pupils know what they need to do to improve and have increased their progress. Targets are regularly reviewed and pupils know which ones they 'should', 'must' or 'could' achieve. Pupils with learning difficulties receive appropriate support from classroom assistants, helping them to remain on task and make satisfactory progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum includes a suitable range of purposeful activities. The school is working closely with Education Walsall to deliver a beneficial support programme in English and mathematics. This is beginning to have a positive impact on improving the rate of progress and raising standards, although occasionally the curriculum is not adapted sufficiently to reflect the differing needs of all pupils. For example, sometimes pupils in different ability sets complete the same tasks and, as a result, not all pupils are challenged enough. Healthy lifestyles are promoted well. For example, good links have been made between the need to bring a healthy meal to school and a competition using design and technology to create a healthy lunchbox. A good range of educational visits and clubs supports learning and adds to pupils' enjoyment of school. For example, a family reading group involving a good number of parents and their children is having a positive effect on standards. An annual 'Arts Week' and opportunities for all pupils to learn to play a musical instrument encourage the development of creative skills well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pastoral care and pupils' health and safety are prioritised well. The school provides a secure environment and pupils feel safe whilst at school. The school canteen provides snacks and lunches that successfully encourage healthy eating, such as toast and fruit juice at play time. Recent improvements in target-setting have enabled pupils to receive clear academic guidance to help them to improve their work. They understand these targets well. The quality of marking has improved this term and is providing a clearer focus to help pupils do better. Academic assessment procedures are satisfactory and are beginning to be used more rigorously. They are still not always used well enough to ensure that work provided builds consistently on what pupils already know.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The acting headteacher is a good leader and has achieved much this term. Her calm and purposeful leadership style has supported members of staff well as they adjust to new ways of working. An accurate self-evaluation provides a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses in provision and standards. Information on pupils' progress is now being used to identify pupils who are making insufficient progress and strategies have been put in place to support them as necessary. These are already beginning to have a positive impact on progress and standards.

Subject leaders are keen to develop their responsibilities and monitor pupils' learning more rigorously in order to improve provision in their subjects. Until recently, there has not been a formal system for the professional development of teachers to help them improve the way they work. Education Walsall has been working well alongside senior leaders, helping them to develop their subject leadership skills in monitoring teaching and learning. Resources have not been used well enough over the last few years to ensure that pupils made enough progress.

The new governing body fulfils its responsibilities satisfactorily. There is a realistic understanding of where the school is now and a clear plan to move it forward. The decision to form a federation between this school and the feeder nursery and infants' schools and the aim to provide 'a seamless education' have been carefully thought through to maximise resources and their impact on pupils' learning. Governors are keen to develop their role further in holding the school to account.

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

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	-----------------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	4
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for being so polite and friendly. We have asked that your school should be placed in a special category. This is because the school is not working as well as it should and you are not all doing well enough in writing, mathematics and science. There are some important things that your school needs to do to put this right.

Here are some other things about you and your school:

- You enjoy school and behave well, even when it is raining and you cannot play outside.
- The acting headteacher is helping the school to improve quickly.
- Teachers mark your work carefully and give you targets so that you can do better work.
- All adults are kind and caring and help you to feel safe and happy at school.
- You can take part in some interesting visits and clubs.
- Members of staff and governors are working hard to make the school better.
- Most parents and carers are pleased that you come to this school.

What we have asked your school to do now:

- Help you to do better in writing, mathematics and science by giving you work that is neither too hard nor too easy.
- Check carefully how well the school is working to help your teachers make sure that you all learn quickly in lessons.
- Help teachers who look after different subjects to become more involved in making sure that you do well at school.

How you can help:

- Continue to help your teachers by behaving sensibly and working hard.

We thoroughly enjoyed talking to you about your work and watching you learn. We wish you all well for the future.