

Sir John Sherbrooke Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122684
Local Authority	NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Inspection number	292478
Inspection dates	4–5 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Dorothy Bathgate HMI

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 on roll	
School	180
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Alison Taylor
Headteacher	Mrs Sally Hill
Date of previous school inspection	7 October 2002
School address	Flatts Lane Calverton, Nottinghamshire NG14 6JZ
Telephone number	0115 9652291
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Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Sir John Sherbrooke Junior is a smaller than average size school. Almost all of the pupils are of White British background. Socio-economic circumstances are challenging for some families. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities and those eligible for free school meals is just above the national average. Pupils' attainment on entry is average.

Following the retirement of the substantive head teacher almost two years ago, the school has undergone an unsettled time due to uncertainties over a potential merger with the Infant School. A new substantive headteacher has been in post since April 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Sir John Sherbrooke Junior is a happy and welcoming school where pupils' positive attitudes to learning and good behaviour are helping them to succeed. They live and learn in a calm working environment which is conducive to promoting a good work ethic. This is a rapidly improving school which is providing its pupils with a good education.

The determined, highly effective leadership of the new headteacher is providing the school with a fresh sense of optimism. Responsibilities have been delegated to the senior management team, subject leaders and staff and together they have developed a robust school improvement plan. This reflects the greatly raised expectations of the school captured in the new school motto, 'The sky's the limit!' The significant progress being made currently confirms that the school has good capacity to improve further and to go from strength to strength.

Results of national tests at the end of Year 6 have shown an upward trend for the past two years. Results for 2007 now confirm that this trend is continuing and standards in all core subjects are in line with, or above national expectations. Consequently standards are good overall. Although progress has been inconsistent in the recent past, with pupils sometimes making less progress in the lower school, this has been addressed and pupils are now making good progress in all year groups.

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive and have confidence in the school. This was expressed by one parent who wrote, 'My daughter thoroughly enjoys coming to school and I see this as a reflection on the school itself and the happy environment they have created.' Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Attendance is in line with the national average. Pupils are happy in school, enjoy taking responsibility and get on extremely well with each other. An exciting and varied curriculum, combined with good teaching, mean that learning is enjoyable and consequently behaviour is good. However, higher ability pupils are not always sufficiently challenged in lessons and work is not always appropriately matched to their needs. Whilst there is good use of information and communication technology (ICT) in some classes, this needs to be embedded throughout the school to ensure that ICT is used effectively to raise attainment for all pupils. Care, guidance and support are outstanding and this is reflected in the high priority given to promoting both physical and mental health, as well as equipping and supporting children to deal with the many challenging situations which many of them face in their lives. The school is extremely understanding of the most vulnerable children and those who have complex personal and learning difficulties. Tracking and target setting procedures enable teachers to check the progress of their pupils and set them challenging targets for improvement.

The school promotes and develops healthy lifestyles whenever possible. The Healthy Eating Tuck-shop, serving toast, cereal and fruit juice, is enjoyed by almost all pupils. The success of the school's work is confirmed by its achievement of the Healthy School's Gold Award. Value for money is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that higher ability pupils make more rapid progress by providing work which is well matched to their needs.
- To raise attainment further through the effective use of ICT.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement and standards are good overall. Standards have been improving over the past two years from a low point in 2004, and results of national tests for 2007 confirm this upward trend. At the end of Year 6 standards in English and science are now above average, and are average in mathematics. From a broadly average starting point at the beginning of Year 3, attaining these standards means that most pupils have made good progress. This is particularly true of pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities because of the high quality support which they receive from all staff working with them. A concern over the underachievement of some girls in mathematics has been swiftly addressed through booster sessions and individual target setting. Results of national tests for 2007 indicate that the girls perform as well as the boys in mathematics and their progress is now good.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They enjoy school a lot and like taking responsibility. For example, the playground Smile Team carries out its duties with a mature attitude and ensures that playtimes are calm and enjoyable for everyone. Members of the school council represent the views of their peers very well and were recently involved in the recruitment process for the new head teacher. Pupils' behaviour is good and they understand the consequences of their actions. They know the importance of keeping themselves safe and value the structures in place in school to promote this. The school places a high priority on being involved in the local community and participates in the 'Alive and Well' forum, organises visits to senior citizens with harvest parcels and contributes regularly to the 'Calverton Echo.' Pupils are gaining a good range of skills to support them in their next stage of education. The high priorities given to developing pupils' self-confidence, and to encouraging higher aspirations, improve their future life chances.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Assemblies and circle times make a good contribution to this and the rich art curriculum provides many opportunities for developing cultural awareness.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The calm and supportive manner in which teachers manage the pupils and organise their tasks is a consistent and dominant feature of teaching throughout the school. As a result of this important strength, pupils feel secure and work conscientiously. Teachers use a variety of approaches to engage and interest pupils. Teachers make very effective use of literacy and numeracy working walls to support pupils' learning. The quality of pupils' learning is often enriched by good cross-curricular links and the application of key skills of literacy or numeracy. For example, Year 6 pupils enjoyed a religious education lesson which skilfully embraced art and history topic work on the Black Death plague to engage pupils in their consideration of the power of prayer. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively where they are most needed to support specific groups or individuals, including those with learning difficulties. Sometimes opportunities are missed to challenge more able pupils to work

to a higher level and move them on more quickly. Work is not always sufficiently well matched to meet their needs to enable them to make more rapid progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and is very well balanced. A notable feature is the attention given to teaching the foundation subjects while retaining a firm focus on developing pupils' literacy, numeracy and scientific skills. This is achieved through a highly creative approach, which maximises the use of topics and themed days to enhance pupils' learning in a fun and interactive way. The link with a school in Mexico to support the introduction of Spanish has successfully motivated pupils to engage in learning a foreign language. Whilst there is some good use of ICT, it is not yet embedded across the curriculum in a way which fully enhances learning or contributes to raising standards. Pupils enjoy an extensive range of clubs and after-school activities, as well as a residential experience in Year 6. Art is a significant strength of the school and the outstanding art work displayed around school provides a rich, colourful and stimulating learning environment. Personal, social and health education has a high profile, with a particular emphasis on drugs education. It is sensitively taught, encouraging pupils to reflect on their lives, express themselves clearly and listen to others.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Pastoral care is exceptional and pupils say they feel safe and can approach an adult if they have concerns or worries. As one pupil said, 'Teachers are really kind and sort everything out.' Arrangements for ensuring health, safety and welfare are robust and risk assessments are undertaken regularly. Child protection procedures are fully in place. The school has a good level of understanding of the needs of its pupils and their families, and the worries that many of them face in their every day lives. The school works extremely effectively with a wide range of external agencies to promote pupils' well-being. The support for vulnerable pupils and those with social and behavioural needs is exemplary. The school has excellent relationships with parents. Many parents expressed their confidence and trust in all staff.

The quality of academic guidance is a strong feature in boosting pupils' achievement. New procedures for tracking pupil progress are enabling teachers to set challenging targets. Pupils know and understand their group and individual targets and are clear about the next things they need to learn. They know that their targets help them to improve their work and help them learn even faster.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The new headteacher is fully supported by an enthusiastic deputy head, and together they are providing good leadership. They are ensuring that the school is recovering well from an unsettled period. They have shared a clear vision with staff and governors, and promote a strong commitment towards placing the needs of all pupils, regardless of their abilities, at the heart of the school. A sharply focussed school improvement plan is providing a clear strategic direction for the school and identifies priorities which are well founded and concur with inspection

findings. The school's view of itself is accurate. The school is well placed to improve further because the senior management possess a sound understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development, are fully committed to promoting the well-being of all pupils and are acting swiftly to address identified priorities.

Governance is good. Governors, and the previous acting head teacher, have played a key role in ensuring that there has been no complacency in the drive to raise standards during the interim period since the retirement of the previous head teacher and the appointment of the new leadership team. They are effective in their role as critical friends, having a clear understanding of their role in monitoring the school improvement plan, and engage the senior management in challenging dialogue. They have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

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	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

6 July 2007

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Sir John Sherbrooke, Calverton, Nottinghamshire, NG14 6JZ

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed our visit very much and enjoyed talking to many of you in your lessons, at lunchtime, in the playground and in small groups.

We were impressed by your good behaviour in lessons and around school. You all get on well together and respect each other's views and opinions. The Smile Team do an excellent job in the playground making sure that everyone is happy and that playtimes are calm and peaceful. Well done! We will always remember the wonderful art celebration assembly where we were thrilled to see the extremely high quality art work which you produce. Keep up this excellent work! We also very much enjoyed your lively singing. The teachers and other staff take very good care of you and help you to feel safe and secure in school. We were pleased to see so many of you choosing to use the healthy tuck shop and enjoying the excellent choice of breakfast foods. You have many opportunities to participate in after-school clubs and we are pleased that so many of you join in.

Most of you enjoy your lessons and work hard, but some of you sometimes find your work too easy and need to be given more challenging tasks. We have asked your teachers to try and improve this for you. You told us how much you enjoy using the computers and find your lessons more exciting when the teachers use the interactive whiteboards. We would like your teachers to use technology as much as possible to ensure your learning is even better. You can help your teachers by being honest about how easy or hard you find your work and by trying out new ways of using technology to help you in your learning.

Your parents are rightly pleased that you attend a good school. We enjoyed our visit very much and wish you all the best for the future!

With best wishes

Dorothy Bathgate HMI