

Shirley Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116104
Local Authority	Southampton
Inspection number	312176
Inspection date	22 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Gehane Gordelier 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	476
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr S Boxall
Headteacher	Mr M J Brogan
Date of previous school inspection	12 January 2004
School address	Bellemoor Road Southampton SO15 5XE
Telephone number	02380 771434
Fax number	02380 771434

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Introduction

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

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement and standards, pupils' personal development and well-being, teaching and learning, aspects of the curriculum, care, guidance and support and the effectiveness of leaders and managers. Evidence was gathered from seven part-lesson observations, the inspector's discussions with staff and pupils, feedback from parents, data about the performance of pupils as well as school documentation, samples of pupils' work and information about attendance. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments as given in its self-evaluation were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school is larger than most other primary schools. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is much lower than is the case nationally. There are no pupils with a statement of educational need, but a small number have learning difficulties or disabilities. The majority of pupils are of white British heritage; the percentage from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language is broadly in line with national averages. The school has been awarded the Activemark for two years in succession and is part of a Sports Partnership with a local secondary school.

In the last few months, there have been some significant staff changes at both senior and middle management level, with staff moving on because of promotion.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Pupils, parents and staff are rightly proud of Shirley Juniors because it is a good school with some outstanding features. One parent states, 'A fantastic school, the staff are doing a superb job'. The overall quality of leadership and management is good. The headteacher provides excellent leadership, and he is well supported by an effective leadership team. Staff work extremely well together and are totally dedicated to their pupils. This contributes to the school's ethos that every child matters and to pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being.

Most pupils arrive in Year 3 with standards that are above levels expected for their age. They make good, and many make excellent, progress so that by the end of Year 6 standards are outstanding. Pupils excel in science and most are doing extremely well in English. The 2007 test results show that the school's targets for the expected Level 4, as well as the higher Level 5, in English and science were either met or exceeded. Although standards in mathematics are also high, and targets for Level 5 in mathematics were met, targets for Level 4 were not. The school recognises the need for a renewed focus on mathematics to enable more pupils to achieve equally well in this subject. Standards in subjects across the curriculum are good and the school achieves outstanding results in music and physical education (PE) and sporting activities.

The school is particularly effective at providing challenge for the more able pupils. However, staff are not all equally well skilled at meeting the needs of some of the lower attaining pupils and the needs of a minority of pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL). Although these pupils progress well, they do not achieve as well as their peers. Despite some very good additional support, for pupils who speak English as an additional language, the school has yet to track and monitor fluency levels.

The quality of teaching is good overall and ranges from satisfactory to outstanding. Pupils appreciate the effort their teachers put in to making lessons fun and exciting. Teaching is particularly effective in upper Key Stage 2 and this accelerates the rate of progress made by pupils in these year groups. Most lessons include lively and dynamic teaching and include good opportunities for pupils to share and discuss ideas. Where teaching is less effective, pupils are unclear of the purpose or the focus of the lesson; key words are not sufficiently well taught. There are also missed opportunities for encouraging pupils to apply and develop basic literacy and numeracy skills. In some of these lessons, teachers do not assess sufficiently well the extent to which pupils are progressing or if pupils have understood how to improve.

The school provides a rich and exciting curriculum, which is enhanced by a good range of visits to places of interest, as well as visitors who come to the school. Staff are eager to build on the good curriculum provision; consequently, the school has identified links between subjects. This helps teachers to put new learning into a meaningful context. Teachers and pupils make better use of information and communication technology since the time of the last inspection; however, teachers still miss opportunities to use this resource as a learning tool in class based lessons.

The school provides an increasingly popular breakfast club and a wide range of after school activities.

The school cares for its pupils extremely well and provides them with excellent pastoral support and guidance. The pupils themselves contribute to this high level of care by offering support to others through the 'Be a pal at Shirley' (BAPS) scheme. Pupils with special educational needs who are on the School Action Plus list receive good support and make good progress. This is often much better progress than some of the other pupils with special educational needs or

who are of low ability. Attendance levels are good, but further progress in this area is impeded due to holidays taken during term time.

Pupils are extremely well behaved and considerate towards each other. While at the school, pupils learn how to make a difference to their community and those around them, by being respectful, sharing their talents and helping others. They demonstrate an extremely good understanding of how to keep themselves safe including the occasions when they use the Internet. Pupils also know what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and benefit from plenty of exercise as well as ease of access to drinking water while at school. However, they have yet to make healthier choices about the food they eat.

The good quality of school self-evaluation and the support and guidance provided by senior leaders ensures the school has a clear view of its strengths and areas that could be improved further. As a result, those staff who have recently taken up new posts and are new to the school have a good understanding of how to develop their roles. Middle managers are contributing well to the development of their subject areas; however, their action plans do not all clarify sufficiently well the intended outcomes for learners. The quality of governance is good, but governors have yet to monitor the impact of the school's policy on equality of opportunity, and feedback their findings to parents/carers and the full governing body.

The school has made good progress since the previous inspection and demonstrates that it has the capacity to continue to improve. It helps pupils to develop an excellent range of educational, personal and social skills that will serve them well for the future.

What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate the rate of progress made by lower attaining and EAL pupils in the core subjects by ensuring that staff are equally well skilled at meeting their needs.
- Embed the use of assessment to support learning during lessons, so that pupils know what they need to do to improve and teachers have a more accurate view of what pupils understand and how well they are progressing.
- The governing body need to ensure that all statutory requirements are met in full.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

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?	2

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

30 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Shirley Junior School, Southampton, SO15 5XE

Your school was recently inspected; I am writing to thank you for your help and to share my findings with you. While at your school, I spent time observing lessons, talking to some of you, looking at the work you have been doing as well as the work of the school and finding out what your parents think. This helped me to understand how well your school is doing and what would help it to become even better.

I agree with you that Shirley Juniors is a good school and that some aspects of the school's work are outstanding. The staff at the school care about you a lot and want to do their best for you. Those responsible for leading and running the school do a good job and your headteacher is extremely good. I was particularly impressed with how well you all behave and how you help each other. You know a lot about how to keep yourselves safe and you make an excellent contribution to your school and local community. You work hard in lessons and enjoy the fun activities your teachers plan for you. Many of you do extremely well at school and reach very high standards. Standards at the school are particularly excellent in English, science, music and PE.

I have made some suggestions to help your school become even better than it is already. These are as follows.

- Make sure that staff help some of you to make even better progress, especially those pupils who are learning to speak English, as well as those of you who struggle a little with your work.
- Make sure that you all know how to improve during lessons, and that your teachers check that you all understand what is being taught and the progress you are making.
- The governors need to make sure they tell parents, carers and all governors how well the school is doing in making sure that you are all treated fairly.

It was a pleasure and a privilege to come to your school. I know you will continue to work hard and help each other to your best. I wish you every success and happiness for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Gehane Gordelier

Her Majesty's Inspector