

Sholing Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116107
Local Authority	Southampton
Inspection number	312178
Inspection date	18 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Brian Evans

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	238
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Joseph Alsford
Headteacher	Mr Marc Parnell
Date of previous school inspection	14 March 2005
School address	Middle Road Sholing Southampton SO19 8PT
Telephone number	02380 447448
Fax number	02380 421340

Age group	7-11
Inspection date	18 June 2008
Inspection number	312178

© Crown copyright 2008

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 an Additional Inspector.

The inspector gathered evidence from lesson observations, looking at pupils' work, assessment information, documents, interviews and discussions. He evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following aspects: the dip in achievement in 2007, the impact of new teaching strategies on learning and achievement and how effectively teachers use the recording and the use of assessment in raising awareness of how well pupils are learning. 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

Sholing is an average-sized junior school. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups is well below average. There are few pupils with English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average and most have specific learning (dyslexia) and behavioural and emotional difficulties. The school attained Healthy Schools status in 2007 and has been awarded the Activemark for Physical Education. In 2007 the school was re-accredited with the Basic Skills Quality Mark 2.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Sholing Junior School provides a good standard of education. The positive learning environment is a result of the outstanding levels of care, guidance and support shown by all adults for the personal development and well-being of each pupil. Of the many parents who returned questionnaires almost all highlighted the happy ethos of the school. One parent wrote, 'The school is a hidden gem', and another commented, 'We are very impressed with the level of commitment shown by the staff to the children. From the head to the caretaker they all make the school feel like one happy family.'

Overall standards are broadly average. From their starting points, boys and girls of all attainment levels make good progress. Good achievement patterns in English and mathematics have been sustained because teaching is good and pupils are eager learners. English standards dipped at the end of Year 6 in 2007 and in part reflected the significant numbers of pupils who were admitted late into the year group. Nevertheless, the school still met its challenging targets in English and mathematics and exceeded them in science. It is on course to do so again in 2008.

Literacy and numeracy postholders provide good leadership. Effective monitoring and evaluation leads to the introduction of strategies that further improve pupils' basic skills. For example, the increasing emphasis on phonics for low attainers by teachers and well-trained classroom support staff in Years 3 and 4 motivates pupils to improve their reading skills. Pupils from all years take good advantage of the comfortable 'Ravenous Readers' venue for reading quietly during morning and lunch breaks.

Science test results are consistently high because pupils' learning is heavily based on practical investigative work. For example, skills of observation and scientific knowledge learned in lessons are reinforced through practical application in the very popular school vegetable and flower garden. This, in turn, has a high profile and is sited prominently near the entrance to the school; it also contributes effectively to pupils' excellent understanding of healthy foods and lifestyles.

Teaching is at least good in all classrooms and pupils learn well. Teachers use electronic whiteboards confidently and effectively to support learning. Pupils have good information and communication technology skills and can handle and respond to software programs expertly. Some of the teaching is inspirational. Year 6 pupils of all attainment levels produced some exceptional empathetic writing based on their feelings after watching a brief video excerpt of a man washed up on a sandy shore. Most pupils comment that 'learning is fun'.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Citizenship education is good and has relevance to the real world. It contributes well to pupils' future economic well-being; for example, older pupils run a tuck shop very efficiently and sell healthy snacks at break times. Teachers mark and assess pupils' progress well. Support assistants work effectively in partnership with teachers. Parents confirm that the needs of pupils with learning difficulties (dyslexia) and/or disabilities are met well. Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties receive very effective specific support from a qualified support assistant.

The curriculum is good. However, the school recognises that links in learning between different subjects are not always planned coherently, and that subjects can be perceived by pupils as being taught in isolation from their other learning. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities, which are strengths that add very significantly to pupils' personal and social development and to their enjoyment of learning outside the classroom. This includes residential visits to Wales and France. A high proportion of pupils participate in music, arts and sporting

activities. Pupils especially enjoy singing in assemblies and the many soloists, especially for the Lion King extracts, on these occasions gain great self-esteem by performing in front of their peers.

Parents and pupils are very aware of the importance of an active lifestyle. Topics such as road safety and drug awareness are emphasised effectively in the curriculum and in educating pupils to stay safe. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils described in moving detail their emotional response to the sequence of still photographs in Remembrance assembly seven months ago, which commemorated the death of an old soldier who had previously spoken to them about the war.

Excellent school procedures to counter bullying or name-calling are followed closely. Pupils confirm that they tell a teacher or the headteacher straightaway when they occur and that such incidents are dealt with very quickly and effectively. Behaviour is generally exemplary and attendance is above average. These important factors support pupils' good achievement and confirm their enjoyment of school life. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the wider community. Pupils raise monies to support a school in a poor area of the Philippines; this enables it to improve its learning resources and support practical projects such as resurfacing play areas. School council members carry out their roles in a mature and responsible way. For example, following consultation with pupils in their classes, members decided the 'maze' in the playground had become too dangerous to play on and asked the school to remove it.

Leadership and management are good. Senior leaders are not complacent about standards and accurate self-assessment procedures identify key priority areas. The headteacher, with the full support of his governors, has an excellent vision for the school and leads teachers and support assistants and administrative staff well. All feel valued and keen to respond to the needs of the pupils and further raise achievement. Very strong partnerships exist with other schools and the local and international community. The good progress made on establishing effective tracking systems for monitoring pupils' progress, underpinned by a strong staff development programme indicates the school's good capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Reinforce continuity of basic skills by emphasising links in learning between different subjects.

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.

Annex A

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?	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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
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

01 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sholing Junior School, Southampton, SO19 8PT

I am writing to let you know how much I enjoyed my visit to your school. It was a pleasure to talk to so many of you and I very much appreciated the help you gave me during the day. You will be pleased to hear that I think that Sholing is a good school. You progress well in your lessons because of your positive attitudes and the good teaching you receive. Here are a number of things I like about your school.

- You make good progress in your literacy and numeracy. I saw some excellent writing in your exercise books.
- You are keen to come to school, look after each other very well and enjoy learning. I was very impressed with the enthusiasm and quality of your singing in assembly, especially the extracts from the Lion King.
- You are keen to follow a healthy lifestyle and make an excellent contribution to the life of the school. You run the school tuck shop very efficiently and base it on healthy snacks.
- You enjoy taking part in the very good range of activities outside the classroom especially in art, music and sport. Also, the gardening club is clearly a great success and I hope you will enjoy eating the vegetables you have grown.

The challenge now is to achieve even higher standards in your work. I have asked your teachers, with your help, to:

- reinforce your basic skills by making sure that you learn about the links between different subjects that you are studying.

Once again, thank you for being so friendly and helpful.

Yours sincerely

Brian Evans

Lead Inspector