

# Shireland Hall Junior and Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103967
<b>Local Authority</b>	Sandwell
<b>Inspection number</b>	323934
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 July 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Doris Bell

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	373
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Gordon McKenzie
<b>Headteacher</b>	Travis Latham
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 May 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Edith Road Smethwick B66 4QU
<b>Telephone number</b>	01215 586331

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 July 2009
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**Fax number**

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

This large primary school has an Early Years Foundation Stage unit that caters for 102 three to five-year-olds, 62 of whom attend the Nursery part-time. There is a mix of single and mixed-age classes in the school, depending on the number in each year group. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups, and for whom English is an additional language, is well above average, as is the proportion of pupils at the early stages of learning English. A sizeable number of these pupils come from refugee and asylum seeker families. Levels of movement in and out of the school are above average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average but the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. The school operates a breakfast club that regularly caters for around 18 children. There have been a large number of staff changes, including at senior management level, since the previous inspection. However, staffing is now stable.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school. The headteacher's excellent leadership and management have successfully turned around the legacy of underachievement evident in previous years. Teaching is now good, resulting in pupils, who start school with skills well below those levels expected for their age, achieving well. Standards are average in Year 6, although there are still some weaknesses in writing. The well-planned curriculum, which includes a focus on promoting basic skills at every opportunity, has halted a previous decline in English, due to writing. Data in school, and an analysis of pupils' work, show that almost all pupils have made better than expected progress since the beginning of this school year. There has been an overall upward trend in standards in the past three years.

Parents are solid in their support of the school. They are particularly complimentary about leadership and teaching. They say 'lots of things are really good here' and are confident that 'parental concerns are looked into straight away'. They appreciate the 'Inspire' workshops because they 'help (us) to see what our children can do', and report that their children 'want to go to school even when (they) are not well'. Pupils, too, praise their teachers, saying that 'they're so caring', they 'encourage us to do things' and 'tell us how well we are doing'. Most of all, they describe the school by saying, 'it's magic.' All of this demonstrates the effective care, guidance and support that contribute to the pupils' good personal development and well-being, and their good overall progress. Behaviour is good and pupils enjoy coming to school. However, attendance is average, although the school is doing everything possible to improve it.

Teachers plan pupils' work carefully, often adapting it as a result of what they find out about pupils' learning on a daily basis. However, this does not extend to ensuring that more-able pupils always make as much progress as possible in class. Nevertheless, improvements in assessment procedures mean that pupils are successfully involved in checking their own and each other's work, and in learning what they themselves could do to improve. Pupils also have some opportunities to pursue their own ideas and interests within an overall well-structured curriculum that meets their learning needs effectively. This adds to their enjoyment and motivates them to learn better.

The school is rightly very proud of what it has achieved so far, but there is no doubting its determination to improve further and become outstanding. The most senior of the school's managers leads a formidable team, focusing all staff on sustained school improvement. This has resulted in substantial and rapid improvements in teaching and learning. Thorough self-evaluation, involving all staff and governors, gives the school an accurate view of what is working and what needs improving next. This, and the strong and effective teamwork evident among all staff and governors, gives the school good capacity for further improvement. The school has improved considerably since its previous inspection.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Staff are skilled at extending children's vocabulary, regularly checking that they understand new words, and where necessary using their first language to help them do so. As a result, they become confident speakers, good listeners and readily engage visitors in their learning. In the Nursery, there is a good balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities, in and out of

doors. This is not always the case in Reception. Here, children sometimes have to sit still for too long, activities are sometimes too adult directed, and there is limited access to learning out of doors. Formal assessments, linked to nationally agreed criteria, record children's progress well over time. However, not all staff are as meticulous as they should be at making notes of children's ongoing achievements during each session.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Provide greater challenge for more-able pupils at all times, especially in English, and particularly in writing.
- In Reception, improve children's access to outdoor learning and provide a better balance between adult-directed activities and those the children select for themselves.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

The good progress pupils are now making is reflected in raising standards throughout the school. As a result, pupils in Year 6 have caught up with learning missed previously, and standards are now average in Year 2 and Year 6. They have risen faster than nationally in the past three years in both age groups. Pupils in Year 6 have exceeded the targets set for them, and pupils in Year 5 have already exceeded those set for them for 2010. The upward trend in overall standards over the past three years is continuing. Writing is still below average overall in Year 6 but weaknesses are being tackled successfully and more pupils are at the expected and higher than expected levels than previously. Grammar and punctuation are better than spelling, handwriting and presentation.

Pupils present their work better in mathematics and science than in English, setting out calculations carefully and taking care with diagrams. They relish the many practical activities they get to do in subjects like mathematics. For example, they solve real-life problems, such as deciding what to take on their residential visit because of the weight restrictions imposed by the travel company. Despite the many improvements, more-able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged in all lessons. On occasions, they were seen to mark time waiting for others to finish a task, or were not moved on quickly enough to more challenging work. Some of the pupils spoken to also said they would like harder work to do.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' understanding of cultural diversity is good. They care for and respect each other regardless of faith, culture or background. The happy laughter heard at breaks and lunchtimes as they play together can also be heard in class as they work together, fully enjoying their learning. Pupils know what bullying is and how to avoid it. They say staff listen to them, talk things through and 'do something about it too' when they have any worries. Behaviour is good. The longer pupils are in school, the calmer, more focused and more ready to listen they become.

Pupils make a good contribution to the school community, for example, as school councillors and buddies to younger pupils in the well-organised breakfast club, and at play and lunchtimes. They know their views are valued, and they say staff always take their views on board. They say school is 'a safe place to be' and they know how to keep themselves safe. They talk knowledgeably about the links between health and hygiene, and appreciate the need for regular exercise. Pupils make some important contributions to the wider community, but this is an area

that is currently underdeveloped. Nevertheless, the pupils' good progress in basic skills and their good ability to work together as a team ensure they are well prepared for their future.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Improvements in teaching and learning are the main reason for the rapid progress pupils are now making. Teachers' planning is effective. Annotations on pupils' work ensure teachers remember how well pupils have done and what they need to do next. However, while teachers usually ensure their planning covers the needs of the least to the most able, there are occasions when more-able pupils are not sufficiently challenged by their work in class. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well in class. The values and procedures clearly instilled in pupils from the earliest age have greater and greater impact on their learning and personal development as they move up the school. Learning support practitioners, bilingual staff and other volunteers make a good contribution to pupils' overall progress.

Teachers' subject knowledge is good. Teachers meet together frequently to moderate pupils' work to ensure their assessments of pupils' learning are accurate. They mark pupils' work well in English and mathematics in relation to what pupils are expected to learn, and pupils usually correct their work afterwards. However, the good practice in marking does not always extend to marking literacy and numeracy skills when pupils use them in other subjects.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The school has clearly taken a lot of time to think about pupils' needs and interests and to compile a curriculum that meets them. The curriculum places particular emphasis on basic skills, including spoken and written language, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). The 'learning together curriculum' successfully involves pupils in determining some of its content. They have an input into selecting the exciting visits or experiences that act as a stimulus for each block of learning. Then, once learning is under way, they can influence its direction to follow some of their own interests. All of this is relatively new but is already contributing to the pupils' enjoyment of school and their improved progress in learning and personal development.

Key skills are identified in all subjects but they are not always as clearly identified in teachers' planning, and not enough use is made of them in marking work in different subjects. Ample opportunities are built into the curriculum to celebrate the many faiths and cultures within the school. Pupils enjoy a good range of extra-curricular activities in sports and the arts, and the opportunity to learn a modern foreign language.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

The excellent relationships throughout the school contribute effectively to the harmonious learning environment in which pupils work and play together. Teaching and support staff from a wide range of cultures and backgrounds provide effective support and guidance for different groups of learners, from the least to the most vulnerable. This also helps pupils at the early stages of learning English to acquire fluency in the English language. Safeguarding procedures,

including those for child protection, meet current guidelines. Parents very much appreciate the way the school reaches out to and involves them in everything it does. The breakfast club provides a good start to the day for a significant number of pupils.

Teachers successfully encourage pupils to mark their own and each other's work and they check the accuracy of this, thereby helping them understand how to improve their own learning. All pupils have targets and most know what to do to reach them. Younger pupils, however, are less secure about their targets than older pupils, although their understanding is developing well.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Staff and governors subscribe fully to the vision presented by senior leaders. Understandably, the major focus has been on improving pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy, both of which are led and managed well. The steps taken to make each teacher accountable for how well their pupils are doing are paying off. Leaders and managers of different phases and subjects are developing their roles well within the new curriculum. However, it is too soon to evaluate fully their impact on pupils' progress across all subjects.

Regular observations of teaching, analyses of pupils' books, and frequent moderations of work to ensure accurate assessment, continue to improve practice throughout the school. Leaders and managers make good use of the comprehensive assessment data now available for literacy and numeracy to deploy support staff to help pupils who are progressing slowly for whatever reason. The school is looking at a similar approach to support more-able pupils.

Governors play their part well in holding the school to account, meeting with staff, visiting classrooms and undertaking joint visits with senior managers to check how effectively their decisions are in improving teaching and learning. The school leadership recognises the need to promote community cohesion as much as possible. To this end, it is continually seeking opportunities for pupils to contribute to their own community and to participate in events and functions that involve the wider community.



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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

**Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

**Achievement and standards**

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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/or disabilities make progress	2

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<sup>1</sup>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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

3 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Shireland Hall Primary School, Smethwick B66 4QU

Thank you for welcoming us so warmly to your school. It was delightful to talk to you and to see the many exciting things you get to do there. You clearly enjoy school very much because you told us 'it's magic' and said that your teachers are 'so caring' and 'encourage you to do well'. It is also clear from what your parents say that you all feel you go to a good school where you are taught well. We agree with this.

The people responsible for leading and managing the school do a very good job. They have helped you make an impressive amount of progress this year. Your teachers plan and mark your work very carefully, making sure that you use your reading, writing and mathematical skills at every opportunity. As you said, they also help you understand how you can improve your own work. You help, because you behave well and want to learn.

We were very impressed with the good understanding you have of each other's different backgrounds, and how well you work and play together. You know how to keep yourselves safe, fit and healthy. It was good, too, to see how older pupils help younger ones, including at breakfast club, and that you have a say in what you learn and what happens in the school.

We are confident that what your school is doing will help you to improve even further but we have asked it particularly to focus on two things to help it in this. They are:

- to give harder work to those of you capable of doing it, especially in writing
- to make sure that reception children have the same opportunities as nursery children to choose what they want to do and learn both in and out of doors.

We wish you well and hope you will continue to enjoy learning for the rest of your lives as much as you do now.

Yours faithfully

Doris Bell

Lead inspector