

Killamarsh Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112578
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	325637
Inspection dates	26 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Lynne Blakelock

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	247
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Chris Morrison
Headteacher	Mr Stuart Turner
Date of previous school inspection	15 – 16 June 2006
School address	38 Sheffield Road Killamarsh Sheffield South Yorkshire S21 2EA
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 16 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, a local authority officer, and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at performance data, policies, arrangements for safeguarding pupils and 63 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at:

- the achievement of pupils through the school during 2008/09, particularly in English
- behaviour in relation to pupils' attitudes towards school and learning
- the extent to which the curriculum promotes achievement and enjoyment for all groups of learners
- the effectiveness of the school's assessment practices and procedures, and the management of these
- how leaders at all levels impact positively on the quality of education.

Information about the school

Killamarsh Junior School is larger than average. A lower percentage of pupils than average are eligible for free school meals. Almost all pupils are of White British origin. A lower percentage of pupils than is found in most schools have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and statements of special educational needs.

In 2008, the school was awarded Activemark and achieved the Financial Management in Schools Award (FMSiS). This year it gained the Healthy Schools and Artsmark Silver awards. It has been working very closely with Derbyshire local authority because it is categorised as a 'school causing concern'.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

4

Capacity for sustained improvement

4

Main findings

In accordance with Section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvements in the school.

The school judges itself as providing a satisfactory standard of education, but the inspection outcome is that it is inadequate. Since the previous inspection, the school has failed to improve sufficiently. It has deteriorated in key aspects of its work. This means that, from 2006 onwards, pupils have made inadequate progress and the standards that they reach are significantly below average overall. Numerous initiatives to drive improvement have been put into place, with varied impact. The very recent improvement in Year 6 national test results indicates that the gap between the school's results and the national averages is narrowing. However, a below average percentage of pupils reach the expected standards in English. Provisional 2009 national test results show that standards in English have risen. However, inspection findings do not support this improved picture. There is little evidence of a secure foundation on which the school can bring about sustained improvement. This is borne out in lessons where the inconsistency of teaching and learning as well as the application of strategies intended to raise standards hinder pupils' progress, and do not enable them to make adequate progress over time.

The leadership and management of the school have failed to address the decline in achievement and standards quickly enough. Two issues from the previous inspection have not been addressed satisfactorily and contribute to the school's ineffectiveness. Monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance by all layers of leadership, including governors, have not been rigorous to judge learning accurately, to identify strengths or to address issues promptly enough. The situation is aggravated by insufficient management time for leaders. The roles of middle leaders and teaching assistants are insufficiently well defined. Improved assessment practices are in place but as these are not used to inform next steps in pupils' learning, pupils do not make the progress that they should. Whilst training to assist staff in accurately grading work has been undertaken in some subjects, this is incomplete.

Some aspects of the school's work are more positive. Effective pastoral support is in place because adults know pupils well. There are good systems and procedures in

place to keep pupils safe and they feel secure because of these. The satisfactory curriculum offers an increasing range of subjects. Attendance has risen to above average. Pupils have a good understanding of the need to live healthily and to stay safe. The school council has developed well and pupils are pleased to take on the additional responsibilities this offers. Behaviour is sound overall and some pupils behave very well because of the established routines that are generally consistently applied.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards, particularly in English, to above the national average and accelerate the rate of pupils' progress by the end of Year 6 by:
 - improving the quality of teaching and learning so that it is at least good, and ensuring there is consistent effective practice throughout the school
 - ensuring that assessment information is used effectively to set work that accurately matches the next steps in all pupils' learning
 - providing training for staff to ensure accurate grading of pupils' work in English, mathematics and science according to the National Curriculum levels.

- Strengthen the effectiveness of leadership and management across the school by:
 - increasing the amount of weekly management time for the deputy headteacher and the wider leadership team, to enable them to organise, structure and implement the monitoring, recording and evaluation of the performance of the school
 - using the information from monitoring and evaluation to address identified needs promptly and to record the outcomes
 - defining and developing the role of middle managers, subject leaders, coordinators and teaching assistants to help ensure that they have a consistently good impact on pupils' achievement and standards.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

4

From 2006 onwards, the overall standards attained by pupils at the end of Year 6 have been significantly below average. They reflect pupils' inadequate progress through the school for the last three years from their average starting points when beginning Year 3. The school finds it difficult to explain the decline in standards, particularly in English. There was a slight improvement in standards in 2008 in mathematics and science, although pupils' progress remained inadequate. However standards fell further in English. Provisional results for 2009 indicate that standards have risen in all subjects, narrowing the gap between the school's results and national averages. English results have also risen but fewer pupils reach expected levels than nationally. Mathematics results show an improving trend over three years. However, the school's self-evaluation states that a significant number of pupils in Year 6 have not made the expected progress through the school. Inspectors' observations of teaching and learning support this. Progress through the school

remains inadequate in English and mathematics. Improvement is too little and too slow because the quality of teaching is not good enough to drive standards up. This is so for most pupils, including those who find learning difficult.

Pupils say that they like school. Their improved and above average attendance supports this. Behaviour is satisfactory. It has improved in lessons and at break times, because it has had a major focus since 2005. Most pupils respond to the clear rules and are proud to receive rewards for hard work and for showing respect towards others. Pupils say that they feel safe and that the school regularly reminds them of dangers and how to deal with them. This includes bullying which pupils say it 'gets sorted out by staff'. Attitudes have improved because pupils have more regular opportunities to work in teams and as leaders which engages their interest. The school council provides a lead in important initiatives such as healthy eating. The excellent playground, field and outdoor learning area provides lots of space for playing and learning. Pupils have a range of opportunities to develop the personal skills that they will need when they are older. However, their academic skills are not preparing them sufficiently well for secondary school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. The school is promoting understanding of the lifestyles and beliefs of other cultures through the curriculum and through the resource centre.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	4
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	4
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	2
How well do pupils behave?	3
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	2
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	3
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	4
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	3

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Pupils are not making the progress that they should because teaching is inadequate. It is not consistently strong enough to raise standards. Although there is some positive practice in lessons and many initiatives are in place to drive improvement, there is inconsistency in their implementation. This includes inconsistencies with regard to the teachers' expectations of what pupils can do, the pace of learning and the degree of challenge in pupils' work. Consequently, tasks can be too hard or too easy and do not always sufficiently engage pupils' interest. The purpose of lessons is shared with pupils, although sometimes the objectives are based on keeping pupils occupied rather than them learning new concepts. Often, the way that objectives are worded is beyond pupils' understanding. A more consistent aspect of teaching is the positive relationships between staff and pupils, which are generally happy and constructive. The development of information and communication technology as a teaching and learning aid adds interest and variety to learning and allows pupils to learn more for themselves.

The headteacher has implemented appropriate systems to assess pupils' learning. However, the evidence from the lessons observed indicates that assessment is not used regularly or accurately in planning lessons. Therefore, there is not a good match of work to pupils' learning needs. The school is uncertain whether the pupils who find learning difficult make adequate progress. Information about their progress is not up to date. The knowledge, understanding and skills of teaching assistants are highly variable. Similarly, their input into lessons varies and they often do not have any role during the vital introductory part of lessons. Other aspects of teaching assistants' practice during lessons are more effective and encourage pupils' progress. Marking of pupils' work is inconsistent and pupils are not consistently given specific guidance on how they can improve their work. In some books, marking is irregular and cursory.

The school makes learning more interesting by broadening learning experiences in and out of lessons. After school clubs are popular and wide ranging. Personal, social and health education offers coverage of a wide range of topics. Such activities help to improve pupils' attitudes towards learning and encourage their personal development through more active participation. The school has held music and multi-cultural arts weeks and is developing a resource area to extend pupils' understanding of the cultural diversity of the world. The curriculum is balanced, with appropriate provision for literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. French is established throughout the school. Provision for pupils with specific gifts or talents is underdeveloped.

Every child's welfare is important to staff. This makes a real difference to the attitudes and confidence of pupils and enables them to concentrate on learning. Parents express their appreciation of the care given to pupils who are ill, have worries or who need specific pastoral support. The youngest pupils say that they settle down quickly in school because of good transition arrangements. Similarly, pupils in Year 6 are confident that the school's advice and their visits to their secondary school are preparing them well for the next stage in their education.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	4
The use of assessment to support learning	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and senior leaders realise the importance of school improvement but this has been too slow and the impact on pupils' progress and standards has been inadequate. The headteacher, as a priority following his appointment, improved the environment for learning and the quality and range of resources significantly. Both aspects have helped to improve the ethos of the school and pupils' attitudes. Some positive changes in the provision continue, for example, improved sports partnerships and links with other outside agencies.

The decline in standards, however, was not addressed promptly or effectively. Monitoring and evaluation of the school's work has not been rigorous enough until recently. The local authority's comprehensive action plan has directed improvement and focused the leadership of the school on strategies to improve achievement. However there has not been sufficient time for the impact of this plan to show through. Staff work hard to improve the quality of education but are trying to put in place too many initiatives at the same time. Therefore, changes are not well embedded and have yet to make a significant difference.

The monitoring of teaching has not been systematic enough. Lesson observations have been too brief and the findings have not been coordinated sufficiently well to ensure consistent practice in lessons. Leaders, in particular the deputy headteacher, who has a full time teaching commitment, do not have adequate time to develop their leadership roles effectively. A side effect of this has been the withdrawal of the specific literacy provision for gifted and talented pupils, which has had a negative impact on their equality of opportunity. Until the school became a local authority 'school causing concern', governors had too little knowledge of the severity of the issues facing the school and were not holding it sufficiently to account. Currently, their regular and rigorous monitoring means that they have the potential to help move the school forward. They acknowledge that they have not had enough time to make a positive impact on the achievement of pupils. Their overseeing of safeguarding procedures is good. Although the school is promoting community cohesion locally and is starting to promote international links, formal planning for this is not in place.

There has been no sustained improvement since the previous inspection. The school's judgements about key areas of its work are inaccurate. The improvement shown in the 2009 Year 6 provisional test results have not been supported by inspection evidence and targets have not been met. Two areas for improvement at the previous inspection relating to teachers' use of assessment information and planning for pupils with different capabilities have not been addressed effectively. The school provides inadequate value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement	4
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	4
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Views of parents and carers

The majority of parents say that their children enjoy school and feel safe, always or most of the time. They are also happy overall with the progress that their children make although a small number of parents have individual concerns. These include wanting to have more information about the progress that their children make and more help from the school to enable them to support their child's learning. Inspectors agree with parents about these two points for improvement.

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Killamarsh Junior School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. If a parent has more than one child at the school, we ask them to record an answer against all the questions, for each of their children.

The inspection team received 63 completed questionnaires. In total, there are 220 parents and carers registered at the school.

	Always	Most of the time	Occasionally	Never
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	38	23	2	0

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007/08, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007/08, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007/08, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007/08, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, training or development. This may refer to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, understanding or desired attributes. Attributes include qualities or personal competencies which are important to the development of the pupil; for example personal, social, cultural, emotional or health.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.



29 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Killamarsh Junior School, Killamarsh, S21 2EA

Thank you for welcoming us into your school when we inspected it recently. We were delighted to be able to meet so many of you in lessons and around the school and to be able to find out from you about many of the activities that take place. Thank you also for showing us around. I am writing to tell you about the judgements that we made about your school.

There are ways in which your school has improved. Your attendance is better than it was at the previous inspection. Your behaviour is satisfactory overall. The school cares for you well and tries hard to keep you safe and to encourage you to live healthily. You enjoy the after school clubs.

We have found out that your school is not doing as well as it should in helping you learn and make progress. There are weaknesses in important parts of its work. For the last few years, the school has not helped you to make enough progress in lessons. This is partly because the work that you are given is sometimes too hard or too easy.

Your headteacher and the staff are very keen to improve. As a result of this inspection, inspectors will visit the school regularly to check on its progress. We want the senior staff to have more time to look at the work of the school so that they know exactly what needs to be improved. Subject leaders need to develop their roles, as well as teaching assistants who support some of you in your learning.

We hope that you will help the staff to put these changes in place.

I send you our best wishes.

Lynne Blakelock
Lead Inspector

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