

Harrington Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112582
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	325638
Inspection dates	10–11 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Raymond Jardine

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)	237
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Roger Farr
Headteacher	Rachael Wilmot
Date of previous school inspection	12–13 December 2005
School address	Derby Road Long Eaton NG10 4BQ
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons, and held meetings with governors, senior and middle leadership and with pupils from every year group. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's improvement plan, self-evaluation documents, pupil assessment information, key policies, including those for ensuring pupils' safety and welfare. Inspectors also looked at 112 parental questionnaires.

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

- how well pupils make progress, particularly girls, higher attaining pupils and in mathematics
- the consistency and quality of teaching and how it can be improved further
- pupils' adoption of healthy and fit lifestyles, taking responsibility and working independently and their understanding of other cultural traditions
- how effectively assessment data and targets are used to guide pupils and the school's work
- the extent to which leadership drives improvements, focussing on middle leaders and governance.

Information about the school

The school serves the local community in Long Eaton and is about average in size. The great majority of pupils are of White British origin. Others come from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds; very few are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is about average; most of these have specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia. An average proportion is entitled to free school meals. Attainment on entry to Year 3 has varied from above average in past years to average currently.

The school has received additional pupils in September 2008 as a result of another school's closure. This has necessitated a change in the number of Year 6 classes from two to three. There are privately run breakfast, after-school and holiday clubs on the school site.

Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

3

Capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Harrington Junior School provides a sound education for its pupils. Staff and governors work hard to provide an attractive, welcoming and encouraging learning environment. This is a very harmonious community and pupils contribute much to it. They take responsibility readily, behave well and are respectful of their peers, adults and visitors, reflecting the school's ethos and values. Pupils feel safe and secure. They much enjoy school life, as reflected in their good rates of attendance.

Most pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning and, in some areas, their progress is good. Progress varies considerably between subjects and groups of pupils, as the school is aware from its own analysis. Standards in Year 6 are typically about average, and in some years, above. Pupils make good progress in science. This is the result of consistently good teaching where activities are varied and challenging and pupils achieve well, attaining above average standards. In contrast, achievement in mathematics has lagged behind both science and English and it continues to do so. Boys tend to do better than girls in both English and mathematics and too few pupils attain above the expected level by Year 6. There are a number of underlying causes. Teaching quality varies across year groups and this affects the progress of different groups in lessons and over time. There is some good teaching on which the school can build, but in too many lessons, assessment is not used well enough to ensure that all pupils progress well. In mathematics, more practical and relevant tasks are being introduced to build pupils' confidence to solve problems.

The headteacher and deputy are leading initiatives to address these weaknesses. Systems for tracking pupils' progress to their targets have this year been revised to provide better information to guide teaching and provide early identification of those pupils falling behind. These systems are still being implemented and their impact is not yet evident in ensuring that pupils' make consistently good progress. Some pupils know how well they are doing, most reliably in English, but in mathematics, too many are unsure. Staff are now focussing on ways of helping pupils to better understand their next step but much remains to be done to embed such approaches into the school's work. However, regular and helpful guidance and correction is provided through marking.

There are good arrangements for ensuring pupils' welfare and safety. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of a good diet and fitness to their health and they take full advantage of the many additional activities, sports and clubs provided.

Morale is high and staff work well together, but the drive for improvement is most evident from senior leadership. Trends in standards are carefully analysed to focus the school's work. However, there is not enough emphasis given to the impact on pupils' learning and progress in lessons when monitoring classroom practice. Middle leadership shows commitment and enthusiasm but the skills of some curriculum leaders in monitoring provision in their subjects and trends in pupils' progress are not developed enough. School targets have been reasonably challenging in the past. However, current targets did not adequately reflect the school's ambitions to raise the capacity for improvement from its current satisfactory level and these have now been revised. The school's improvement plan has the right priorities but criteria for checking their progress are not specific enough to enable governors to challenge how rapidly the school is meeting them.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the rate of pupils' progress, particularly that of girls and in mathematics, so that more than 80% attain the expected level and about half exceed it in English and in mathematics by 2010.
- Improve teaching quality so that it is consistently good or better by
 - ensuring that assessment is used effectively within classes to guide the tasks and support provided for pupils, particularly in mathematics
 - focussing monitoring by leaders more closely on pupils' learning.
- Develop the use of assessment across the school, particularly to ensure that
 - revised systems for tracking pupils' progress become embedded into its work
 - pupils understand how well they are doing and their next steps in learning.
- Accelerate the rate of improvement by
 - developing the skills of middle leaders in monitoring their subjects
 - involving governors integrally in monitoring and challenging the progress made in school priorities.

How good is the overall outcome for individuals and groups of pupils?

3

Pupils' progress was good in about half of the lessons observed. Pupils enjoy their learning, behave well and are attentive in the great majority of lessons. Those few from minority ethnic groups progress as well as their peers. Pupils most enjoy the challenge of practical and investigative tasks, particularly in science where their progress is good and attainment above average. In English, while some pupils

progress well, too few are attaining above the expected level by Year 6 and consequently, standards are close to average. The school has worked hard to raise the achievement of boys in English, with some success. In mathematics most pupils' progress is satisfactory, although some girls do not do as well as they should, given their capabilities. Inspectors and senior leaders have noticed that some girls can be slow to start activities, are less confident and may choose less demanding tasks when working from a worksheet, while the boys tend to move on more quickly. Where this is not picked up promptly by adults, girls tend not to gain as much from the lesson. Although classes are set by ability in English, mathematics and science, the extent to which pupils are challenged within these classes can vary, often affecting the progress of more able pupils. The school is working to improve the proportion attaining the higher level 5, particularly in mathematics, to match the good proportions working at this level in science. Vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties do as well as others and some make good progress, for example, when specific support is provided from the well trained teaching assistants.

Pupils are tolerant, polite and considerate and they have a good understanding of spiritual, moral and social issues. They gain a good understanding of some other cultural and religious ways of life. No racist incidents or exclusions have been recorded in recent years. Pupils eagerly take responsibility and contribute to the school and wider community in many ways, such as through charitable fund raising and the influential school council. They acquire sound basic skills to prepare them for their next stage in education and work collaboratively and independently when given the opportunity.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

The quality of the school's work

Teaching quality is satisfactory; there is some good teaching on which the school can build further. Inspectors worked with senior leaders to look at the progress of

¹ Grades for attainment are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; 4 is low

different groups of pupils. A key characteristic of the good teaching was the way in which the assessments that are now kept on each pupil were being used well to adapt tasks and activities within classes. Importantly, these records were used effectively to decide which pupils to monitor and support more closely where individuals were showing signs of falling behind. However, such good practice is not yet consistent across the school. In satisfactory lessons, too little attention was given to the range of abilities when setting tasks and there were not enough on-going checks on progress to move those who were capable to higher tasks. Teaching assistants support and guide vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties effectively. Other features seen which contribute to effective learning were:

- clear learning objectives that were regularly referred to during the lesson to reflect on what has been learned
- good questioning in class discussions, founded on a secure subject knowledge
- very good relationships and management of pupils so that time was used well.

The school has revised its assessment and tracking system this year to help it close the gap in progress among pupils by monitoring them more closely. This is work-in-progress and is currently class based. Alongside this initiative, pupils are also now getting next step targets for their learning in English and mathematics. So far these are proving more effective in English. Pupils in Year 5 who were clear about their English current working level were keen to use their next steps to help them move on and review their work. Such practice is not yet routine to pupils' learning, nor is their knowledge of how well they are doing always secure, particularly in mathematics.

The curriculum has improved since the last inspection, principally through better use of information and communication technology (ICT) to aid teaching and by pupils to support their learning across subjects. This is the result of recent investment in a well equipped computer suite. The curriculum meets most pupils' needs well; plans for gifted and talented pupils and those with learning difficulties are discussed with parents and carers. Extensive and well attended additional activities, clubs and out of school visits add interest and help to promote pupils' well-being. The school works very well with parents to guide pupils through transition in and out of school. There are very effective arrangements for promoting good behaviour and attendance. The staff work well with outside agencies, families and carers to help reduce barriers to vulnerable pupils' progress; inspectors learned of some striking examples in this respect. Staff work very hard to create displays that celebrate pupils' achievements and contribute to an attractive and encouraging learning environment.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

High quality teaching and purposeful learning	3
Effective assessment	3
An appropriate curriculum which meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, provision through partnership with other organisations	2
Support, guidance and care	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and deputy work well together, providing good leadership and uniting the staff around the school's aims and values. Staff and governors provide good standards of care and there are good systems for safeguarding pupils' welfare, safety and security, including their knowledge of how to stay safe. Since the last inspection, there have been some improvements, to the curriculum, for example, through a major investment in computer technology. However, standards have been slower to improve, most evidently in mathematics. The school is aware of this because senior leaders accurately analyse and compare the school's standards and consequently priorities are soundly based. Leadership is ambitious to accelerate the pace of change, but more focus is required on pupils' learning and progress in lessons and across year groups when monitoring, particularly by middle leadership, to better diagnose where support and developments are most required. The lack of a central database to collate classroom based assessments and targets has made such analyses cumbersome. The school has plans in place to set up such a system. This is an important step in helping to reduce further the differences in progress between groups and to promote equality of opportunity.

Governors understand the school's strengths and weaknesses and fulfil their statutory duties. They are involved in planning priorities, although they are less adept at challenging how well the school is tackling them and evaluating their impact. The school's clear understanding of the local community context is reflected in its religious, social and parental links. Pupils from diverse backgrounds work well together in the school community. Leaders have begun to evaluate the impact of strategies to promote community cohesion; the school is currently working to extend links abroad to provide pupils with a better understanding of world issues. There are good partnerships with other schools and outside agencies to benefit specific pupils, and also with parents and carers to involve them in their children's learning and consult regularly about school decisions.

These are the grades for leadership and management

Communicating ambition and driving improvement	3
Promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination	3
Ensuring that safeguarding procedures are effective	2
Ensuring that the governing body provides effective challenge and support so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities are met	3
Promoting the school's relationship with parents and carers, including their involvement in decision-making about matters relating to learning and well-being	2
Developing partnerships with other providers, organisations and services	2
Ensuring the school contributes to community cohesion	3
Deploying resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

Parents are very satisfied with the school's work. Parents have confidence in the staff, particularly the headteacher. Those who completed the inspection questionnaire were almost unanimous that their children enjoy school. They value the warm and encouraging environment that the school provides and the many additional activities and clubs available. Several parents commented on how well staff support children who have learning difficulties. They say that staff are very approachable and that the encouragement they give boosts children's self-esteem. They appreciate the good transition arrangements in and out of school, but a few would like more information about how well their children are progressing in their work. Inspectors found that the school is beginning to provide this.

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 2007-8, 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 2007-8, 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 2007-8, 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 2007-8, 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:** an overall measure of the pupils' success in their academic learning. The term combines attainment and progress. Pupils might make good progress, for example, but if their attainment remains low, inspectors may judge that their achievement is only satisfactory.
- 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.



12 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Harrington Junior School, Long Eaton, NG10 4BQ

Thank you for the warm welcome that Mrs Barnes and I received when we visited your school recently. We spoke with many of you and visited every class. We would now like to tell you what we learned about your school. It is very clear that you enjoy school life and the warm relationships with other children and with adults. You contribute much to the school and wider community, through your good behaviour, willingness to take responsibility and your charitable fund raising; well done! We were also impressed by your good understanding of how to live safe, healthy and fit lives. In lessons, you try hard and work well together in group tasks. You enjoy practical and challenging work, particularly in science where you reach above average standards by the time you leave. Mrs Wilmot and the staff would like you to do as well in other subjects, particularly mathematics, and we agree. Although some of the teaching is good, it does vary, and we have noticed that some of you make better progress than others. That is why the school is improving its systems for checking on your progress so that those who are falling behind can be helped more promptly. You can help too. Some of you know how well you are getting on and are using next step targets to guide your progress with your teachers. This is not yet working for everyone and is more effective in English than in mathematics.

The staff and governors look after you well and work hard to keep you safe. They have made some improvements, for example, by providing you with a new suite of computers, which I know you are using to aid your learning. They are always looking for ways to make your learning even better. These are the things that we have agreed will help them to achieve this.

- Work together to make all the teaching across the school good or better.
- Help subject leaders to make better checks on your progress and pinpoint what needs improving so that you all do as well as you can.
- Encourage governors to check how quickly the school is tackling the priorities that it has set for the school's improvement.

With all good wishes for your future at Harrington Junior School.

Ray Jardine
Lead inspector

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