

# Harlescott Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123393
<b>Local Authority</b>	Shropshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	327899
<b>Inspection dates</b>	6–7 November 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Carrington

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	275
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Paul Mathison
<b>Headteacher</b>	Martin Lightwood
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 September 2005
<b>School address</b>	Featherbed Lane Shrewsbury SY1 4QN
<b>Telephone number</b>	01743 462087
<b>Fax number</b>	01743 450182

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Harlescott Junior School is a little larger than most primary schools. Nearly all the pupils are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their first language. An average proportion of pupils are entitled to free school meals.

The attainment of pupils when they start school is broadly average, although it includes some higher attainers and a significant number with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The total proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average and includes a relatively high proportion with statements of special educational need. Most pupils with learning difficulties have speech and communication, moderate learning, or behavioural, emotional and social needs.

There have been a number of changes of staff recently, including senior leaders.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Harlescott Junior School provides a satisfactory standard of education. The headteacher leads the school with compassion and great concern for the welfare of all pupils. Senior leaders and the staff share this approach, which ensures that the care, guidance and support for pupils are good. There are a number of vulnerable pupils at school who are nurtured effectively so they settle to learning as well as the other pupils. The personal development of pupils is good and they are safeguarded carefully. Attendance levels are above average and behaviour is good, which reflect pupils' thorough enjoyment of school.

The school has sharpened its systems to check that all pupils are working as well as possible and making appropriate progress. Currently, standards are average and pupils make satisfactory progress. The pattern of achievement in mathematics is not yet as consistent as it is in English and science. Results in mathematics have tended to be below average during recent years, although they are now close to average. There is still work to complete to ensure all pupils have the problem solving skills necessary to unravel mathematical problems, no matter how they are worded. Standards in writing have improved well, and are a little above average. Most groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make similar progress, although the more able are not always challenged sufficiently in their work. Senior leaders recognise this as an area of concern and have raised the expectations and targets for this group of pupils. There has not been enough time for the improved provision for more able pupils to work through to their results in the national tests.

Teaching quality is satisfactory. It has improved because the school is successful in helping new staff follow the agreed policies and procedures from the time they start. Lessons are purposeful sessions where the pupils listen well, concentrate on their studies and work briskly. The curriculum is satisfactory. A good feature is the programme of out-of-school activities, many of which help the vulnerable pupils and those with behavioural, emotional and social needs to show how well they can achieve. In subjects outside English, mathematics and science, the match of work to pupils' abilities is inconsistent and in some cases, pupils of all abilities complete very similar work.

School leaders can point to some notable improvements to systems to ensure pupils know their targets and what they must do next to improve their work. The marking system is a good example of carefully thought out improvement that has been well established across the school. It is helping to accelerate pupils' progress because they know exactly what to focus on each day. Leadership and management at all levels are satisfactory, as is governance. School self-evaluation is reliable and the priorities for school improvement are wisely chosen. The headteacher has successfully shared the responsibility for standards and pupils' progress with senior leaders and this is being extended effectively to year group and subject leaders. The pace of improvement has been appropriate so far. The school has the necessary capacity to make improvement in the future.

### What the school should do to improve further

- 
- Raise standards and pupils' progress in mathematics, particularly in problem solving.
- Make sure the more able pupils reach the highest standards possible by always making their work challenging.

- Improve the match of work to pupils' needs in the subjects outside English, mathematics and science. 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.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Whilst standards are broadly average, this has not always been the case in recent years. Sometimes they have been below average. This was the result of weaknesses in teaching that meant pupils' progress was not good enough. Now, thanks to settled staffing, higher expectations and improved teaching, progress is satisfactory and standards have risen.

The most recent national test results, although not yet confirmed, show standards in mathematics to be about average and a little above this level in English and science. What prevents standards overall from being above average is the relatively small proportion of pupils who reach the higher levels in these tests. This proportion has risen, along with the standards generally, but has still not reached the potential maximum for the school, and remains below the national average. School data suggests that the proportion of pupils set to reach these higher levels in the future continues to rise.

Pupils make satisfactory progress in information and communication technology (ICT), although, as found in some of the other subjects, the work is not always sufficiently different to ensure the progress made by different ability groups is maximised. Pupils' basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT are sufficiently well developed to prepare them for the next stage of education and life outside school.

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

### **Grade: 2**

The concern for pupils' well-being is at the heart of the school. The pupils learn to be kind, considerate and caring. Parents have very positive views of the school, although a very few have concerns about behaviour, which are not a full reflection of the quality of conduct in school. Behaviour is good and the school works effectively with pupils with behavioural problems. Bullying is rare and pupils insist that it is dealt with firmly and fully. Pupils' good personal development shows through at all times of day, but none less than at playtime. The playground is the setting for much happy, harmonious and cooperative play where pupils' good enjoyment of school is evident.

The school's good partnership with others is a key factor in this picture of pupils' good enjoyment, attitudes and relationships. Community police sometimes share the playtime activities and contribute to the fun that pupils have at these times. The same applies to the community play organisers, who work especially successfully with the vulnerable pupils. As a whole, the pupils have a good understanding of their own and the local community and are sensitive to the needs of others. The school works well to foster community cohesion and is a good focus where the community can come together. Pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is good because it builds effectively on other partnerships within the local community.

Pupils have a keen appreciation of the need to eat healthily and older pupils are proud to serve others when they sell the healthy snacks and drinks at break. They all enjoy the physical activities provided, which they say keep them fit and healthy. Pupils also know about safety in school

and at home and understand the need for locked gates, calm movement about school and the risk that might come from strangers.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching is improving steadily as the school introduces and embeds more effective systems to check its quality. The raising of expectations has also gone a long way to strengthen teaching and learning. Teaching has a consistent minimum quality that is satisfactory and there is some good and outstanding teaching in school. In such cases, the pupils have full control of their learning, which is hands-on and includes very good opportunities for them to assess for themselves how well they are doing.

In some lessons, the match of work to pupils' abilities is not demanding enough and at such times the work can be very similar for everyone. This affects the progress of more able pupils especially. The work is much more closely matched to pupils' needs where they have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The teaching assistants are particularly successful in their support of such pupils, enabling them to make satisfactory progress.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

School leaders have worked effectively to make the curriculum more relevant, rich and enjoyable. This is apparent, for example, in ICT and in the creation of links between subjects that support the satisfactory development of literacy skills. At present, school leaders are seeking to improve the development of creativity in the curriculum, which is an appropriate priority.

Another priority is to ensure that in subjects such as design and technology, geography and history, work is matched suitably to pupils' abilities. This focus is fairly new, and senior leaders recognise what work has to be done to accomplish this aim. Their plans for such improvement are well thought out. The curriculum to develop pupils' personal, social and health education is a particular strength. The school is recognised nationally and locally for its effective work to help all pupils develop as caring, friendly and happy people.

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

#### **Grade: 2**

The school has good procedures to ensure the safety and welfare of all pupils, including rigorous checks to ensure the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children. There is good evaluation of the potential risks associated with planned visits, activities in lessons and the school buildings. A key strength is the effectiveness of work to support and develop vulnerable pupils and those with barriers to learning such as particular behavioural needs and learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Although targets have not always been challenging enough, particularly for the more able pupils, staff give good guidance to pupils on their next target and how to achieve it. The marking of schoolwork is particularly effective in this, especially in English and mathematics. School leaders are working to ensure there is a similar quality of guidance in other subjects. The pupils have many opportunities to take part in the assessment of their own work and that of other pupils, which gives them a pride in their achievements and ambition to improve.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The headteacher has done a good job of consolidating the leadership and management of the school and widening the involvement of staff and governors in responsibility for school performance. Management systems have been revamped to bring greater rigour to school self-evaluation and the setting of challenging targets. There is collective agreement on priorities and how they should be reached. In the past, the school was more successful in ensuring pupils made good progress in their personal development than in their academic achievement. The pace of improvement was not always fast enough, especially where pupils' progress and standards were concerned. Now, a proper balance is evident in the focus on academic improvement and standards are rising and progress accelerating. There is still work to do and in some cases there has not been enough time for improvements and innovations to work through to standards.

Governors are well involved in the school's work and are supportive. Whilst they know why the priorities are such as they are, they have yet to take the lead in assessing the school's performance. On the other hand, governors make sure financial management is secure, that the school meets all statutory requirements and that it uses resources and staff efficiently.

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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?	3
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	3

**Achievement and standards**

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

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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	2
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	3

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
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>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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**

10 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Harlescott Junior School, Shrewsbury SY1 4QN

We all enjoyed our recent visit to your school, especially because you were so welcoming. Thank you for helping us find out why you enjoy school so much and what needs to be done to make improvements. Your parents are pleased you come to Harlescott Junior School. We think it is giving you a satisfactory education, but also that Mr Lightwood and the other adults want to make it even better.

We hope some of you will read our report. If you do, you will know that we have made some important judgements about its work and your progress.

- You make satisfactory progress and reach average standards.
- You are helped to become friendly, caring and well-behaved people.
- Your lessons are enjoyable and you learn new things. They are taught satisfactorily.
- You are well looked after and given good guidance so you can improve your work.
- All the adults work together to lead and manage the school satisfactorily.
- Mr Lightwood and the senior teachers have well-thought-out plans to improve your school.

To help your school improve we have listed three things it should work on.

- Help you improve your work in mathematics.
- Make sure that those who are more able are given work that is hard enough.
- Check that your work in subjects like geography and history is suitable for everyone.

We are sure that you will want to help your teachers in these things. You can start by telling them when your work is too easy or too difficult.

We think you will make even more progress in the future. Good luck with your work.

Yours faithfully

David Carrington Lead inspector